

FAST FOOD AD CAMPAIGN *Evaluation*

“I know half of my advertising dollars are wasted; I just don’t know which one” is a familiar phrase of David Olgivy, the oft-referred to “father of advertising.” Knowing which marketing strategy will resonate with customers, generate sales, and advance the brand is the core challenge of brand managers, advertising agencies, and creative directors alike.

Challenge

A leading national fast food chain engaged its advertising agency to develop a strategic marketing plan with three goals: reinvigorate the brand identity, recapture lost market share, and position the brand as the fast food chain of choice.

The challenge was simple – determine which of the advertising agency’s recommendations would increase brand awareness and increase market share among the chain’s competitive set.

Solution

Thoroughbred Research Group worked collaboratively with the restaurant chain and advertising agency to develop a scientific approach to measuring and projecting the success of the creative strategies.

The research team developed a set of success metrics by which to evaluate and score the test campaigns. The next step was the development of a comprehensive quantitative telephone tracking study that included all major markets segmented by Direct Marketing Association.

The tracking study ran for over four years, with approximately 4,000 surveys conducted annually. The study was dialed continuously with weekly quotas by Direct Marketing Association to closely monitor any fluctuation in brand awareness or perception that may be directly attributed to specific advertising strategies. The study was designed to provide an accurate measurement by competitive set of:

Brand awareness

Advertising awareness and recall

Share of wallet

Visit frequency segmented by dine-in and takeout

Overall brand performance segmented by breakfast/lunch/dinner

Outcome

The tracking study proved to be very valuable to the restaurant chain and its advertising agency. Thoroughbred Research Group submitted detailed reports on a monthly and quarterly basis, as well as numerous in-person presentations that highlighted the implications of the findings along with recommendations on particular areas of focus. The research results provided rich insights on:

- The most profitable promotions
- The most profitable customer segments
- Lower-usage segments and ways to entice customers to visit more often
- Perceptions of new menu items
- Ways to increase meal share
- Customer demographic data by mealtime

Conclusion

As the client noted, setting the success metrics at the onset was a brilliant stroke by the team at Thoroughbred Research Group. Everyone knew what the benchmarks were. The marketing axiom of “what can be measured can be managed” was proven true by the use of the tracking studies. The studies resulted in:

- Increase in frequency of dining at restaurant
- More dollars spent per visit
- Successful launch of new menu items
- Overall increase in profits

The final component in this successful outcome was the consistent collaboration and sharing of information by the fast food chain, advertising agency, and the research team.

