

MCDONALD'S GEO-TARGETS WITH TWITTER



With its massive franchise base and regionalized operations, McDonald's faces a challenge common to global brands – making its mass media as relevant to its local markets as it is to its national and even international ones.

To merge mass and local, the QSR giant has started beta-testing Twitter's new geo-targeted Promoted Accounts, which enables advertisers to reach users in particular metropolitan markets. It allows the brand to increase awareness around local initiatives such as limited time offers and regional menu items, Karin Campbell, senior manager, external communications, McDonald's Canada, explains. It's also being used to boost the QSR's CSR outreach.

The trial run kicked off prior to a number of brand initiatives, notably a hiring event in April and McHappy Day in May, when one dollar from the sale of every Big Mac, Happy Meal and coffee will go to children's charities across the country.

"Eighty percent of our restaurants are locally owned and operated by Canadians, so there was a great opportunity to really talk to where we are geographically," explains Campbell. **JP**



TACO BELL BATTLES BEEF DISBELIEF

Taco Bell's got a beef and it's with misconceptions surrounding...its beef. The Yum! Restaurants Canada brand's newest campaign seeks to clear the air and establish its quality cred with Canadians once and for all, especially following a recent lawsuit filed in the U.S. (later withdrawn by the plaintiff) alleging that its meat isn't up to USDA snuff. It garnered widespread media attention and set off a furor across the Twittersverse fuelling latent skepticism.

In the U.S., the QSR defended itself with an effort promoting education around its product, and Taco Bell Canada quickly followed suit, but Dan Howe, Yum!'s CMO, says the beef-defence strategy was already in development in both countries, as a result of brand image tracker exercises, before the lawsuit was filed. It just forced Taco Bell to take things more seriously.

"Taco Bell is a lighthearted, fun brand and we were going to address the issue in a lighthearted, fun way," says Howe. "When the lawsuit occurred we felt that wasn't the right tone so we completely changed it."

The campaign includes a TV ad created in the U.S. by Draftfcb and repurposed for Canada by Grip, in which actual Taco Bell employees tell the story behind its beef, as well as POS and promos at Tacobell.ca and on Facebook.

"In today's digital society, creating a two-way dialogue with consumers in many digital touchpoints, especially Facebook, is critically important, especially when you're trying to set the record straight," says Howe.

Led by Adrienne Chow, Yum!'s senior marketing manager, and Teresa Mui, associate marketing manager, the national effort launched in April with "Taco Libre," a week during which all Taco Bells across the country, as well as a travelling branded truck, gave out free Tacos. **JP**

INDIGO OFFERS PLUM REWARDS



Indigo has stepped up its game in the loyalty program department by offering a free one. Called Plum Rewards, the program works on a points system, whereby users earn 10 points for every dollar spent in the store, which can be traded in for money off future purchases (2,500 points equals \$5 off).

"It's so much more than just points, the rewards program really is about connecting with the customer on a very personalized level," said Indigo's VP marketing Deirdre Horgan at a launch event.

A user's Plum account will keep track of the purchases and make recommendations whenever they log in online or swipe their card at an in-store kiosk. They will also get personalized offers, such as extra points when they buy certain titles, based on their preferences or on deals Indigo makes with publishers and suppliers. The program will not replace Indigo's current paid program, iRewards, but will rather cater to those who may purchase less frequently, explained Indigo CEO Heather Reisman. Customers can choose one program or the other, but will not be able to join both.

The program will be pushed through Indigo's direct channels including its email database, in-store through signage and employees, via Facebook and Twitter, and on the Chapters Indigo website.

"We don't own the market," said Reisman, noting big competitors like Costco and Walmart, "and we believe that every single day we need to re-earn the loyalty of customers. What we do believe is that we are the authority on books, and in that we invest every waking minute of our lives." **EW**