

Kettle Brand Gets Hot Reaction from Facebook Launch

Executive Summary

In 2008, Kettle Foods dipped its toes into the social marketing water with the launch of Kettle Brand® Death Valley Chipotle™ Potato Chips, the winner of its fourth annual People's Choice campaign that lets fans choose its next potato chip flavor.

Seeing a drop off in media coverage of new People's Choice flavors over the past couple of years, Maxwell PR knew the program needed an interesting PR hook for the launch of Death Valley Chipotle™. Inspired by the media attention garnered by a partnership with the National Wildlife Federation to launch the Kettle Brand® Backyard Barbeque™ Potato Chip flavor in late 2007, Maxwell PR recommended partnering with the Death Valley National Historic Association (DVNHA) for the Death Valley Chipotle™ launch. The goal of the partnership was to raise funds for its Death Valley ROCKS program which provides opportunities for urban youth to visit the national park and experience nature.

To facilitate the fundraiser, we created a branded Facebook application which offered the chance to expose the brand in a creative, cost-effective way to a vocal new audience. The application was designed to engage and entertain fans while keeping the new flavor top of mind leading up to in-store availability. The DVNHA fundraiser provided the timeliness and credibility needed to extend the campaign's reach past previous flavor launches.

Objectives

The objective of the program was to build on the success of previous People's Choice flavor launches in order to:

- Generate media coverage of Death Valley Chipotle
- Increase the number of Kettle Brand™ Potato Chip fans, acquiring 5,000-8,000 new leads
- Give money to the DVNHA's Death Valley ROCKS program, donating \$1 for each Facebook application download (up to \$5,000)

Target Audience

With headlines and news stories appearing every other day about brands looking to tap into the "social marketing movement," it's no wonder social networkers are weary of corporate intrusion and disingenuous participation.

Facebook is the most important site for social marketing campaigns, according to JupiterResearch, yet marketers are still figuring out the best way to tap into the community of 70 million members. Many companies are trying to figure out how to make money using branded applications, but smart marketers know that the benefits of being on Facebook go beyond dollars and cents. Our approach was to tie a fun and whimsical brand experience to an online fundraiser that would appeal to a younger, more connected consumer than we had previously targeted.

Strategy

Social networking sites offer a litany of enticing marketing options to outsiders. You can create profiles, events, applications, groups or gifts - using Facebook, MySpace, Friendster or LinkedIn, among others. We chose Facebook as it allowed third-party application creation and reached the largest and most diverse group of potential chip lovers.

The team knew Facebook fundraisers such as Free Rice were wildly popular, but that a good cause alone wouldn't be enough to get Facebook members to download the branded app onto their

personal pages. We figured out how to meet this need creatively and authentically – true to the Kettle Brand®. We worked with Concrete CMS of Portland, Ore., to build the app.

Here's how the Death Valley Chipotle app worked:

- Our strategy was to partner with a nonprofit, the Death Valley Natural History Association to raise the profile of the application and encourage Facebook users to spread the word. For every download of the app Kettle Foods donated \$1 to the DVNHA.
- The app included a real-time temperature gauge that allowed users to track the temperature in Death Valley for a chance to win free chips for a year. Users were challenged to keep an eye on the temperature in the desert and once it hit 120 degrees in Death Valley, a prompt would appear inviting them to enter to win free chips for a year. The first 5 to respond after the goal temperature was recorded won a case of chips every month for 12 months.
- The app itself was an animated scene of a desert with animals jumping in and out, surprising people who visited the user's profile page and allowing us to express the brand's personality. The animals had different voices and said things like, "Hot, Hot, Hot!" and "ssssspicy" – they were funny. The design was meant to feel professional but slightly homespun and quirky while still aesthetically clean.
- Once the fundraising goal had been met and the temperature reached 120 degrees the application no longer had a function, yet we found that most people did not delete the app from their pages. An application's lifespan on each user's individual profile is potentially infinite, instilling brand awareness on thousands of Facebook user pages forever (okay, maybe not FOREVER, but for a very long time.)

Outcomes

While the media coverage earned for the new flavor was comparable to previous years, the added non profit partnership and social networking application created additional media interest and engaged consumers in new ways. By the time the temp got to 120°, Kettle Foods had introduced its brand and new flavor to more than 13,000 Facebookers, increased its email database, generated news coverage and raised money for a good cause, exceeding the initial campaign objectives.

Here's what we learned along the way:

- **Make it Entertaining:** The application Kettle Foods created had animated creatures, audio, and was constantly changing (either the sky went from morning to night or the animals changed that ran through the desert each day). The temperature feed appealed to weather watchers who would be rewarded for their diligence. This kept Facebookers involved, checking their profiles, and being exposed to the Kettle Brand®. Plus, the thing was funny to watch and people wanted to tell their friends about it.
- **Involve a Worthy Cause:** Facebook is made up of 70 million active users, many of which are younger, cynical, educated and outspoken in their concern for cultural and environmental issues today. Partnering with the Death Valley National Historical Association, whose goal is to educate kids and help them experience the natural world, hit home for Facebookers.
- **Free Product Works Just Fine:** We enticed Facebookers to check the temperature gauge on their application every day until it hit 120 degrees in the Death Valley desert. Within minutes of the temperature hitting its mark, Kettle Foods had its five winners of free chips. We didn't need to spend a lot on a big fancy prize and we got intimate consumer engagement.