

Burger King, McDonald's, and more food marketing gets nostalgic

Article

Burger King, McDonald's, and Crispy Fantasy (yes, this is work-friendly) have all launched marketing campaigns that make what's old new again.

Why it's smart: A January 2022 Journal of Brand Management article found that study participants judged a brand extension more favorably if presented with **marketing that evoked nostalgia**.

- Another study found that in times of unrest (not like we've had any of that lately) people **seek comfort in what's familiar**. More than half of consumers sought out nostalgic content in TV and music due to COVID-19.

TV ads: “And let’s face it, the song is irresistible, whether or not you remember the old jingle—we’re hoping it’ll be the earworm you can’t shake off,” said Tom O’Keefe, CEO at OKRP, about **Burger King’s new ads** that hearken back to the famous 1970s jingle, “**Have It Your Way.**”

- Burger King says the **new campaign** is “celebrating everyday royalty, and puts the Guest at the forefront of everything the brand does.” The fast-food chain is also hoping the new ads help drive sales following **flat** same-store US sales in the second quarter.

Giveaways: McDonald’s has resurrected its **Halloween Happy Meal buckets**, which were first introduced in 1986.

- This year’s characters—McPunk’n, McGoblin, and McBoo—closely resemble the ones from the 1980s. The chain hopes this throwback will engage older consumers who grew up with the originals. The chain is also offering adult Happy Meals.



Packaging: Cereal is another category that got boosted by the pandemic. Sales were **declining before 2020**, when people could grab a bowl at home and eat their breakfast.

- Post Consumer Brands' CMO Claudine Patel called it "**kidult**" **culture**, which helped drive adults back to their childhood breakfast favorites. Post Consumer Brands is the maker of cereals like Fruity Pebbles.
- Jumping on the cereal nostalgia train is **Crispy Fantasy**, a product line the company says fills the gap between healthy oats and sugary cereals. The packaging, though, employs tactics of those childhood beloved brands by using animals and colorful packaging. It may not be **Tony the Tiger**, but Crispy Fantasy is hoping you'll say it's great.



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