

Feeling Spicy - Mild - Ask the MoodWing

Campbell Mithun and Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen, Jan 1, 2013

Summary: 2013 Silver Anvil Award of Excellence Winner — Marketing Consumer Products — Retail Stores and Restaurants

Popeyes asked digital agency Campbell Mithun for a spicy idea to support its Spicy or Mild Bonafide® Chicken product. Enter the MoodWing.

The agency developed an app (utilizing sentiment analysis and natural-language processing algorithms) to rate social media posts as Spicy, Mild or Mixed. Users logged in via Twitter/Facebook and, much like the iconic mood ring, the app generated a mood rating -- with Spotify music suggestions, menu tips, and funny “mood horoscopes.”

The MoodWing served up tasty results, achieving gains in social followers, a soaring Social Engagement Score and a whopping 71% increase in traffic driven by social sites.

Marketing consumer products includes programs designed to introduce new products or promote existing products to a consumer audience.

Full Text: Situation: Generate Bona Fide Buzz for Spicy or Mild Bonafide® Chicken

In May 2012 Popeyes® Louisiana Kitchen chose to bring consumer attention to its Spicy or Mild Bonafide® Chicken. It ran a month-long sales promotion and asked digital agency partner Campbell Mithun to develop a digital/social communications extension (requiring no paid media support) to add momentum – and to highlight for consumers the spicy or mild preparation options for the Bonafide Chicken product.

Research

Research identified the opportunity by revealing the following about our key audience:

- They eat quick-service restaurant food often -- up to 35 times monthly, switching brands regularly.
- They talk about their food. Popeyes diners are digital exploiters, active on social media.
- They share everything (except food!). Social-behavior analysis defined 57% of diners as “Conversationalists” (Forrester’s Social Technographics profiles) who use social media to express/share what they love.

This data confirmed our target’s predisposition for digital sharing and reinforced our challenge: grab the attention of these “switchers,” stay top-of-mind during the sales promotion and harness their digital behavior to create buzz.

Research guided development: the team conducted primary qualitative research with an informal competitive scan to test if our proposed concept already existed. It also conducted primary qualitative analysis of digital programs that increased engagement and drove incremental visits to a targeted website or social media outlet.

Planning - Getting Serious About Spicy Engagement

Goal: Create buzz and engagement to support the marketing of Popeyes Spicy or Mild Bonafide® Chicken

Objectives

- Increase Popeyes Engagement Rate by 25% from January 2012 versus May 2012.
- Generate at least 5,000 visits to a program-specific landing page during the promotion period.
- Drive 25,000 incremental visits to Popeyes.com during the month of the Bonafide® Chicken promotion.
- Garner media coverage in key industry (marketing, digital, restaurant) publications/blogs to raise awareness of Popeyes digital efforts and support the Spicy or Mild bone-in chicken promotion.

The Spicy Idea

Recommendation: Create an app that delivers a customized “spiciness rating” of users’ existing Twitter and Facebook posts – and, tapping the iconic power of the mood ring, call it the “Popeyes MoodWing” (yes, as in chicken wing). Use the app to anchor an entire digital campaign which, shaped by irresistible (and shareable) “spicy / mild” content, would power and sustain interest in Popeyes Spicy or Mild Bonafide® Chicken.

Audience

- *Primary:* Key target who eats at QSRs often and uses digital media regularly, often sharing via social media.
- *Secondary:* influential media and bloggers in the marketing/digital/restaurant industries.

Strategies

- Leverage passionate Popeyes fans to move the Bonafide® Chicken promotion message for the brand by developing the MoodWing app to be a personalized, entertaining and shareable experience.
- Promote via Popeyes’ owned- and social-media channels to reach loyalists and make sharing easy.
- Use spicy/mild messaging to keep product characteristics central to entire communications campaign.

Budget: A budget of \$40,000 was approved for the project (actual project cost \$37,000).

Execution - Feeling Spicy? Mild? Ask the MoodWing!

With no budget for paid media support, the entire execution of the MoodWing program – from app development to communications efforts -- needed to generate self-sustaining and momentum-building engagement.

App development

The team created the app to generate the following four very personal and highly shareable “deliverables”:

- *Personal spiciness ratings:* Technologists used sentiment analysis and a natural-language processing algorithm to enable the app to assign “Spicy,” “Mild” or “Mixed” ratings to social media activity based on combinations and frequency of certain words, punctuation, capitalization and emoticons.

- *Corresponding horoscopes*: With their spiciness ratings, users received Spicy, Mild or Mixed “horoscopes” reflective of Popeyes online brand voice and personality such as:
 - *Spicy*: “!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (I think these belong to you.)”; “You could brush your teeth with jalapenos.”
 - *Mild*: “Smokey Robinson called and wants his velvety grooves back.”; “People call you ‘Mild Thing.’ And you make their hearts hum softly.”
 - *Mixed*: “Some like it hot. Some like it mild. You like it all.”; “You’re hot! You’re not! You’re hot! You’re not! (Repeat 73 times.)”
- *Spotify*: The app offered “mood music” with playlists delivered via interface with Spotify, FB and Twitter.
 - *Spicy tracks*: “Set Fire to the Rain,” “Wild Ones,” “Hot in Here,” “Sexy and I Know It,” etc.
 - *Mild tracks*: “Quiet Storm,” “Smooth Criminal,” “Love Theme,” “Vanilla Twilight,” etc.
 - *Mixed tracks*: “Pumped Up Kicks,” “Midnight City,” “Lights,” “Ignition Remix,” “We Are Young,” etc.
- *Menu recommendations* for related Spicy or Mild product items were sent to encourage users to purchase

Strategic communications overlay

To generate/encourage word-of-mouth momentum, the team executed these earned- and social-media tactics:

- *Social-media seeding*: Given the robust digital behavior of the target, the team relied heavily on Popeyes’ Facebook and Twitter channels to launch the app and sustain momentum among its engaged loyalists.
- *Social-media functionality*: Sharing was encouraged by giving users control of sharing their Spicy, Mixed or Mild “status” in social channels just once, daily or weekly. They also could share related Spotify tracks/playlist.
- *Owned media support*: Popeyes spread the word to loyalists via its website and email database properties.
- *Media/blogger outreach*: The team prioritized outreach to influential national writers across trade segments.

Evaluation: Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Overall, the MoodWing program generated strong cross-traffic activity between social platforms and Popeyes.com to create buzz and engagement to support Spicy or Mild Bonafide® Chicken. It also drove strong improvements in social engagement rates, with the primary engagement activity on Facebook. Results included:

- **9,174 visits** to the MoodWing landing page on Popeyes.com.
- **4,114 active users** of the MoodWing app (45% conversion).
- **10% chose to auto-share mood**, primarily on Facebook.
- **54% of those who auto-shared did so weekly**, with the remaining 46% doing so daily.
- Drove an incremental **36,000 site visits to Popeyes.com** during sales promotion; 8% higher than benchmarks.
- Drove a **71% lift in site visits to Popeyes.com** via social sites.
- Drove a **48% increase in Engagement Rate** from Jan to May 2012 (based on likes, comments and shares/post).
 - More than **500 responses** to Facebook Poll (What kind of Mood are you in this week?).
 - **390 Mood Wing** related tweets, majority of them related to Spicy/Mild status.
- The *New York Times* broke news of MoodWing app; articles appeared in key trades like *GigaOM* and *QSRweb*.

- A full **16 articles** about the Mood Wing app appeared across industry segments and were **retweeted 335 times**.

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