



## TGI Friday's The Last Friday

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Peppercomm and T.G.I. Friday's, Jan 1,2013

**Summary:** 2013 Silver Anvil Award of Excellence Winner — Events and Observances (Seven or Fewer Days) — Consumer Services

The Peppercomm team for T.G.I. Friday's was looking at the calendar of events for Q4 and spotted an opportunity. If the Mayan calendar had it right, Friday, December 21, 2012, would be earth's last day. What if the casual dining restaurant could make it a day to go out in style for customers old and new? In a matter of eight weeks, "The Last Friday" was conceived and carried out across the U.S., attracting significant media and online attention for the brand and – more importantly – an increase in traffic by up to 170 percent.

Events and observances (seven or fewer days) includes programs or events scheduled for one to seven consecutive days (not including planning and preparation). Events may include commemorations, observances, openings, celebrations or other special activities, and must occur within a time span of one week.

**Full Text:** .

### **SITUATION ANALYSIS**

It is the End of Days.

Or so the end of the Mayan calendar portended in December 2012. How does one prepare for Armageddon? For the Peppercomm team working with T.G.I. Friday's, the answer was simple: what other way to spend your last few hours on earth than to party like there's no tomorrow?

The Last Friday campaign was designed to draw new customers, reengage lapsed ones and reward regulars during the all-important holiday season. It would also offer the opportunity to continue the repositioning of the brand – important if the world survived – as a great place to gather with friends for a fun evening. Friday's popularity originated with young adults thanks to the restaurant's popular bar scene. Over time, it essentially aged right along its original target audience and became more family focused. Recent market research revealed the importance and business value for Friday's returning to its roots. The Last Friday campaign provided an excellent opportunity to engage bar patrons once again.

### **RESEARCH**

As described above, market research determined that Friday's best opportunity for continued growth lay in reconnecting guests to its bar heritage and innovation. Research also showed that the holiday season was overcrowded with casual dining promotions that looked exactly the same, leaving little room for differentiation. These two points were critical to success in drawing a larger share of this market during the holidays. So how could Friday's stand out from other casual dining restaurants and pay homage to its bar heritage?

As Peppercomm conceived The Last Friday campaign, it began to track the level of discourse on the subject of the Mayan calendar. It found that in Q3"2012, mentions over various media

channels averaged 15,000-20,000 per day. Clearly, interest in the subject was high. Already, the tourism industry was capitalizing on the 'holiday,' promoting trips to Latin America and encouraging people to live life to its fullest now, while there was life to be had. But no one had staked a claim in the restaurant industry. Peppercomm research revealed that the Mayan End of the World theme was Friday's to own.

## PLANNING

The team, along with Friday's advertising agency The Richard's Group, created an integrated campaign that aimed to bring the Mayan Empire to markets across the country, enabling Friday's to seize on a unique opportunity and stand out from other casual dining operations. Patrons could memorialize The Last Friday in true Mayan – and Friday's – fashion. Think pyramids, tropical flora, food of the gods, and thirst-quenching drinks. Peppercomm's plan called for full integration across communication channels, requiring digital, events, creative and media teams to spring to action – and accomplish the task at hand within a six-week period.

The team, composed of Friday's in-house group, Peppercomm, and other partner agencies, identified 14 markets that:

- a) needed to reengage the customer base,
- b) wanted to reward a loyal customer base, and/or
- c) wanted to build out its customer base.

Planning would require working with local markets to secure permits, manage logistics and support with materials and promotions – as well as layer in with the messaging at a national level.

## EXECUTION

Peppercomm created **14 signature events**, which served as the core of the campaign to commemorate The Last Friday – Friday, December 21, 2012 (how fitting that the last day on earth would actually fall on a Friday). These pop-up events were executed under three tiers.

**Tier A** events, designed to draw new patrons, took place at four off-site and unexpected locations – Hollywood & Highland in Los Angeles, Wrigley Field in Chicago, Union Station in Washington, D.C., and at 11 11 Lincoln Road event center in Miami. They featured fun, **custom-built production elements** that ranged from replicas of Mayan pyramids to themed table-top settings and from branded photo booths to special DJ stands. Friday's created a custom menu for the occasion, which offered patrons a specialty Mayan Margarita and Friday's menu favorites such as boneless wings, pot stickers and peanut butter pie.

**Tier B** parties were a replication of efforts in the Tier A markets, and held outdoors, but on the premises of T.G.I. Friday's locations in Tampa and Orlando, Fla.

Finally, eight **Tier C** parties were held in select T.G.I. Friday's locations across the country from Denver to Dallas and Atlanta to New Orleans.

Each location featured live entertainment, food and drink specials and trivia. These events required full participation by each restaurants' respective team members, as well as onsite Peppercomm staff, to fully execute.

Campaign elements included:

- A special **invitation** for loyalty club members, which also entitled attendees to special members-only **gift bags** that included a limited-edition Last Friday t-shirt and bottle opener.
- Paid, earned, and owned media.
- In-restaurant promotional materials, such as "The Last Friday" cocktail napkins, menus, etc.

- Media engagement.
- A dedicated **microsite** ([www.thelastfriday.com](http://www.thelastfriday.com)) and an **online media buy**, which provided details of the event and an opportunity to enter a sweepstakes to win a survival kit that included a cocktail shaker, bottle opener, and other key bar supplies needed in an apocalypse.
- Guerrilla wall projections, street team activation, flyer and collateral hand-outs and **wild postings**.
- Whether passersby happened upon a pop-up event during their evening commute or going out for a drink with friends, consumers were transported to a Mayan-themed experience complete with production elements, food, beverages and entertainment. Guests danced to the music, sampled food and drink, and partook in the branded photo booths. The hashtag **#TheLastFriday** was used both by Peppercomm team members live Tweeting the event, as well as consumers sharing their experience. To add that special Friday's touch, each event had Friday's signature bartenders entertaining the crowd with Friday's world-famous flair style of bartending.

## EVALUATION OF SUCCESS / MEASUREMENT

Key results include:

- Year-over-year sales increased as high as **170%** in targeted locations, particularly among the bar crowd.
- **36** street team members passing out more than **44,000 flyers** over two days; **16,000** wild posting flyers posted in key target areas and **2,000** temporary tattoos distributed to consumers.
- **222,248,674** media impressions from **60+** placements, including **CBS This Morning and the LA Times**.
- **56,000,000 multimedia news release** online impressions and **25,000** views of the CEO's video message.
- **2,720,953** Twitter impressions from more than **1,000** tweets using #thelastfriday, and **1,535,423** Facebook impressions.

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