



## International Olive Council Adds Life to Olive Products Promotion

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Exponent PR and International Olive Council, Jan 1, 2013

**Summary:** 2013 Silver Anvil Award Winner — Reputation Management / Brand Management — Nonprofit Organizations

On behalf of the International Olive Council, Exponent PR developed the Add Some Life campaign, designed to showcase the flavor, versatility and health benefits of olive oil and olives and show consumers how the products add excitement to everyday life. In just 18 months, the campaign generated more than 342 million impressions, connecting with key media, influencers and consumers through exclusive tasting events, extensive media relations, recipe development and promotion and key health and nutrition findings, fueling passion for the products and igniting the olive and olive oil industry in North America.

Reputation management / brand management includes campaigns are designed to enhance, promote or improve the reputation of an organization with its publics or key elements of its publics, either proactively or in response to an issue, event or market occurrence. The nonprofit subcategory is specifically intended for health and welfare organizations, as well as educational and cultural institutions not included in other subcategories.

### Full Text: **SUMMARY**

North American olive oil consumption has persistently lagged behind European countries, where 80 percent or more of households use it in their daily cooking, about twice that of North American homes. Furthermore, North American consumers are bombarded with messaging about cheaper cooking oils. Canola oil is a case in point. With similar health benefits of olive oil, a cheap price and huge industry campaign budget, canola oil has steadily taken share from olive oil.

The nonprofit International Olive Council (IOC) was created to protect quality and promote consumption of olives and olive oil. Due to lagging sales and category competition, the IOC turned to Exponent to grow sales in North America.

### **RESEARCH**

The IOC commissioned research that showed the greatest threat for olive oil in North America comes from cheaper fats and oils, such as canola, vs. any other fat. DataMonitor analyzed the promotion and consumption of olive oil and olives in the US and Canada and found:

- Olive oil volume growth will largely come from users of less healthy oils, such as canola. However, the lack of compelling health information means that consumers have little incentive to substitute olive products for other foods in their diets.
- Current consumers of olives and olive oil are eager to increase consumption but seek inspiration for how to cook with olives and olive oil. These consumers are influenced by several factors, including the “foodie” culture and positive nutrition news.

In 2011, IRI reported that canola oil represented 22 percent of the total volume share of

pourable oils in the U.S.; olive oil represented 14 percent.

Exponent utilized Experian Simmons to gather insights on consumer attitudes, product/brand preferences, media consumption habits, and lifestyle characteristics.

### **Key Research Insights**

**Consumers need education.** The most promising consumer segments care about health and nutrition and want to make smart eating choices. “Better-for-me” products are increasingly sought as consumers temper indulgences.

**Consumers seek inspiration.** The most promising consumer segments seek inspiration to help them incorporate olives and olive oil into everyday life.

### **PLANNING**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Increase consumption of olive oil and olives in North America.
2. Increase awareness of the health benefits and versatility of olives and olive oil.
3. Create advocates for olives and olive oil.

**Target Consumer Audiences:** Research helped define more complete consumer audience segments with the greatest potential for increased usage:

- **Savvy Socializer:** Average age of 29, single; values socialization, ambition, indulgence; HH income of \$85k.
- **Status-Conscious Mom:** Average age of 41, married; values status, wellness, harmony; HH income of \$150k.

**Secondary Audience:** Registered dietitians and nutritionists who influence health preferences.

#### **Strategies**

1. Introduce a communications platform to establish IOC as a new resource for North American media and culinary influencers.
2. Leverage research to promote health benefits of olive oil and olives.
3. Inspire diverse product use by leveraging seasons and culturally relevant events.

**Budget:** \$1.4 million (18 months)

### **EXECUTION**

Noting the opportunity for growth in North America usage, the IOC was committed to defending olive products. The IOC challenged Exponent to make the case to North American consumers to enhance their enjoyment of olives and olive oil while simultaneously establishing the IOC as a new resource for media and influencers.

#### **Strategy 1: Introduce a communications platform.**

Exponent defined the attributes that differentiated olives and olive oil from canola oil or other fats. They add “life” due to their health benefits, versatility, and unique flavors.

*“Add Some Life” Platform:* When a person helps make an event or social gathering a success, he or she is referred to as the “life” of the party. And we all strive to find things that can add more “life” to our experiences. Olives and olive oil do just that. They add flavor. They improve our health. And they add a sense of excitement to everyday life.

The North American *Add Some Life* communications platform was simple and memorable and spoke to the versatility, taste and health benefits of olives and olive oil. The theme served as a lively call-to-action throughout the campaign. Infrastructure included campaign messaging and

logo/design guidelines that established platform consistency.

*Add Some Life at Fashion Week:*

To launch, Exponent chose a high profile, culturally relevant event to reach food and fashion influencers and thought leaders important to the target audience. The 2011 Mercedes-Benz Fall Fashion week in New York City was the perfect venue to unveil the campaign platform and jumpstart advocacy for olive products.

- A highly visual Add Some Life event space served as the backdrop for the event.
- Representatives from the IOC introduced the campaign goals and resources for media.
- Chef spokesperson shared inspiration for creating olive and olive oil menu items and sampled exclusive dishes.

*Add Some Life Tasting Events:*

- Hosted exclusive tasting events for more than 100 media in Toronto and New York to inspire story ideas, share health news, and experience the flavor and versatility of olives and olive oil firsthand.

*Spokesperson:*

- James Beard Foundation Award winning chef, Michael Schwartz, served as campaign spokesperson, because he embodied the lifestyle and cooking philosophy that aligned with our target audience.
- Chef Michael created exclusive recipes and recipe tutorials used throughout the campaign, and he participated in media interviews.

[Add Some Life.org:](#)

- The campaign website served as an educational and inspirational resource for media and consumers, and was a hub for recipes highlighting the versatility of olives and olive oil.

*Social Media Channels:*

- Created Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest pages to attract fans and leverage campaign content while engaging fans in conversations throughout the campaign.

**Strategy 2: Leverage research.**

*Add Some Life Research Papers:*

- Engaged dietitian to help compile research for three separate research papers highlighting the nutritional benefits of olive oil and olives.
- Distributed papers at nutrition conferences in US and Canada, and promoted via media relations.

*Add Some Life E-Newsletter:*

- Built database of 1,000 health and nutrition influencers in North America who opted in to receive news.
- Leveraged research and recipes for three distributions of newsletter to influencers in North America.

*Conference and Expo Events:*

- Created an Add Some Life exhibit to participate and share health news at important conferences: Dietitians of Canada; and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Sports & Cardiovascular and Wellness Nutrition annual meeting, and its annual Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo.

**Strategy 3: Inspire diverse product use.**

### *Add Some Life Blogger Programs:*

Exponent sought to build an engaged online community to advocate for olives and olive oil. Two virtual recipe swaps—Salad Social and Dish On Dinner—empowered digitally savvy consumers to create olive- and olive oil-inspired recipes, share online and ultimately become personal champions for olives and olive oil.

- Created #saladsocial and #dishondinner Twitter hashtags to aggregate discussions into a single location for engagement.
- Developed a Facebook album and Pinterest boards on Add Some Life's social properties to share recipe submissions in real-time.
- Featured recipe posts on host blogger site and [AddSomeLife.org](http://AddSomeLife.org).

### *Add Some Life Media Relations:*

- Utilized a highly visual, electronic media kit to share ongoing news.
- Created an editorial calendar for media outreach timed to seasonal topics and culturally relevant news.
- Facilitated broadcast interviews with Chef Michael to share recipe tutorials and menu ideas.
- Packaged health news for US and Canadian media use.

## **EVALUATION**

Just as olive oil and olives add life to everyday living, the Add Some Life campaign brought new life to the North American olive and olive oil industry.

### ***Objective 1) Increase consumption.***

After years of lagging retail sales, the Add Some Life campaign has contributed to the household penetration of olive oil in North America growing to an all-time high of 51 percent, and is helping steadily increase retail sales of olives. This growth trend is projected to continue in 2013 based on the analytic data published by the IOC.

### ***Objective 2) Increase awareness.***

To date, the campaign has generated more than 342 million impressions and consumer-generated social media content through 8,000 stories in some of North America's most influential outlets, including *The New York Times*, *SHAPE*, *shape.com*, *Women's Day*, *Good Housekeeping*, *HealthNews*, *FitSugar*, *Canadian Living*, *Metro Canada* and *MSN*.

- More than 90 percent of stories reinforced visiting [addsomelife.org](http://addsomelife.org) for more information.
- Nearly 85 percent of coverage discussed the health benefits of olive products and 65 percent included Add Some Life recipes.

### ***Objective 3) Create advocates.***

Campaign activities ignited a new base of advocates:

- 20 percent of targeted news media becoming followers of Add Some Life social channels and began sharing campaign health news and recipes.
- 1,000 dietitians opted in to receive IOC health news and recipes they can share with their patients and followers.