

**Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Case Study Paper: Part 2**

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### **Short Recap**

In September 2020, McDonald's began collaborating with various celebrities to promote their products through unique menu combinations. Celebrities such as Travis Scott, J Balvin, BTS, and Saweetie all partnered with the fast-food corporation and endorsed their own featured meals that were widely popular and generated a copious amount of attention online. Through this campaign, McDonald's implemented marketing, advertising, and public relations strategies and tactics in order to deliver their key messages and achieve their main objectives.

### **Key Messages**

In this campaign, McDonald's was very clear with the messages they utilized as they maintained their key value proposition in order to achieve their objectives. One of McDonald's main key value propositions is: "Our mission is to make delicious feel-good moments easy for everyone," (McDonalds, n.d.). Another key value proposition that McDonald's often promotes is: "We serve delicious food people feel good about eating, with convenient locations and hours and affordable prices, and by working hard to offer the speed, choice and personalization our customers expect," (McDonalds, n.d.). Throughout their campaign, the audience is able to see these values at the core of their communications.

Within these key value propositions, the benefits offered to their consumers are clear and distinct. McDonald's is a notable fast-food chain that is well-known for items such as their Big Mac, Chicken McNuggets, and their trademarked World Famous Fries. Furthermore, their high level of convenience partnered with their affordable prices make their restaurants an appealing choice for the average consumer (Periera, 2022). With about forty thousand locations worldwide

in one hundred and eighteen countries and territories, their sixty-nine million daily customers are proof of McDonald's extreme accessibility (McCain, 2022).

Throughout this campaign, McDonald's implemented communication strategies that effectively portrayed these key messages and stated their clear call-to-action of downloading and ordering through the McDonald's mobile app. For starters, by encouraging users to order ahead using their mobile app, McDonald's portrays their values of speed and convenience to create an even quicker and easier customer experience. Furthermore, by offering deals and discounts through their free app that is available on both the Apple Store and Google Play Store, they are making their already affordable food even more economically appealing. For example, at the end of the J Balvin commercial, he tells the audience to order his meal through the McDonald's app and even incentivizes them with a free McFlurry if they do so (aGOODoutfit News, 2020).

With the different communication strategies and tactics that McDonald's utilized, they also portrayed their message of "delicious feel-good moments" (McDonald's, n.d.). For example, in each of their commercials for the different celebrity meals, they implemented aspects associated with the celebrity's personal brand that were upbeat, yet still consistent with McDonald's identity. Their commercial for the BTS Meal, for instance, incorporates the boy band's song "Butter," along with similar elements of a pop music video, that establishes a fun and upbeat moment for their audience (Full Nelson, 2021).

Despite these celebrities crafting their own signature meals, McDonald's was still able to communicate their commitment to personalization, specifically with the Saweetie meal. In her commercial, Saweetie describes her meal item before offering ways for the customer to personalize it for themselves (Brand & Marketing Talks, 2021). From putting their World Famous Fries on a Big Mac to topping the fries with the Chicken McNuggets, these different

combinations provide personalization options so their customers can mix and match however they may like.

### **Strategies & Tactics**

Throughout this campaign, McDonald's utilized strategies and tactics as they worked to achieve their main objectives with these partnerships. Through the use of advertising, public relations, and marketing strategies, McDonald's utilized a combination of paid, earned, shared, and owned media to implement their tactics.

First and foremost, McDonald's utilized advertising strategies to promote their celebrity partnerships. Each celebrity meal had its own commercial that featured the celebrity itself and explained their new partnership with McDonald's. These television advertisements, as well as social media advertisements on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, were paid media tactics that allowed McDonald's to gain increased exposure about the new partnerships.

McDonald's also implemented public relations strategies in a couple of different ways to achieve the objectives of this campaign. McDonald's issued press releases for the various different collaborations that were shared on many different news outlets. This form of proactive earned media allowed McDonald's to explain the partnership and the details of the new menu item while incorporating notable aspects of the celebrities and establishing a sense of connection between the celebrity and the consumer. For example, in the press release for their collaboration with Saweetie, McDonald's referenced many of her most famous songs and included direct quotes about her true admiration for the fast-food company (McDonald's Corporation, 2021).

Another way that McDonald's utilized public relations strategies is through social media. This shared form of media allowed McDonald's to reach a large audience and get them

interested in the promotions that they were offering. Eye-catching graphics complimented with conversational posts successfully captivated consumers as they focused on engaging their audiences rather than merely promoting their products. This ultimately led to social media conversation amongst followers as they not only interacted with McDonald's posts but made memes and reviewed the meals for themselves.

Lastly, McDonald's implemented marketing strategies by offering exclusive deals and discounts on their McDonald's mobile app. When ordering these celebrities meals on the McDonald's app, many users were offered discounts, free items, or special deals for ordering through their specific platform. This use of owned media allowed McDonald's to control the offers and deals on their own platform and set the parameters of the promotions while still achieving the objectives of the campaign.

## **Evaluation**

When developing this campaign, McDonald's had three clear objectives they were hoping to achieve. The corporation wanted to increase the audience's awareness of the McDonald's app, increase downloads of the McDonald's app, and position McDonald's as a corporation that is both relevant and adaptable despite their long history in the fast-food industry. Considering these main goals, McDonald's achieved their objectives based on statistical data.

To evaluate the success of this campaign, it is important to look at the statistical data related to the McDonald's mobile app and the number of downloads it received. In the first week that each of these celebrity meal promotions was made available, McDonald's saw an increase in the number of mobile app downloads. For example, the J Balvin Meal garnered around four hundred eighty-one thousand mobile app downloads, while the BTS Meal garnered around four

hundred seventy-five thousand downloads (Lenahan, 2021). This specific spike in user activity clearly demonstrates that McDonald's achieved two of their objectives as audiences decided to download their mobile app and subsequently show their increased awareness of its existence.

Although measuring the success of increasing audience awareness and the number of downloads of the McDonald's app can be directly seen with statistical data, evaluating consumer beliefs towards McDonald's is a bit more difficult. Nonetheless, there are aspects of consumer behavior that can be attributed to how they perceive McDonald's and whether they position the fast-food company as a relevant and adaptable corporation in modern-day society. The most effective way to measure the success of this objective is through the engagement on their social media posts that promoted the different celebrity meals. On multiple social media posts, McDonald's received upwards of one and a half million likes with many users interacting within the comments to praise the corporation for their collaborations. Although this does not specifically speak to the perception of McDonald's, their ability to harness the potential of these platforms and engage audiences of all ages shows their success in connecting with their consumers and being viewed as both relevant and adaptable.

### **Recommendations**

There were many aspects of this integrated marketing campaign that were successful and led to McDonald's achieving their objectives. Partnering with very well-known and popular celebrities was an extremely smart strategy as they were able to connect with a younger generation while promoting their products and mobile app. Furthermore, their communication strategies allowed them to continue stay true to their key value proposition while introducing new strategies and tactics. For example, while they utilized commercials, their presence on social

media and interaction with fans, followers, and customers allowed McDonald's to stay relevant and reach a larger audience. Throughout their communication strategies, McDonald's maintained both their brand identity and the brand identity of the specific celebrity who they were collaborating with. This was an important aspect as these are the characteristics that make McDonald's and the different celebrities so popular and well-known amongst audiences.

Although there were many aspects of this campaign that I felt were successful, there were some aspects that were not as effective. While I do believe offering exclusive promotions on their app was effective, I do think that they could have offered better discounts or deals that would have led to more mobile app downloads. For example, McDonald's also ran a campaign known as the Free Daily Deals of December that offered a free menu item for each day of the promotion. This promotion led to about seven hundred thousand downloads of the McDonald's mobile app, which is more than they saw with any of the celebrity meals (Lenahan, 2021). The only celebrity meal that offered a free item was the J Balvin Meal, and it garnered more downloads than any of the other meals (Lenahan, 2021). These stats show that consumers are more driven by free items and would have likely responded better to free items specifically offered within the app.

Another aspect of this campaign that could have been improved upon is the timing between each celebrity meal promotion. Each of these promotions generated a ton of buzz in both traditional and social media while bringing more users to the McDonald's app. However, there was a seven-month span between the J Balvin Meal and the BTS Meal. Seeing the success of both the Travis Scott Meal and the J Balvin Meal in 2020, McDonald's should have recognized the popularity of these meals and quickly introduced more collaborations that could lead to the same success. Introducing more celebrity collaborations within that time would have

given McDonald's the opportunity to include a wider range of celebrities that may appeal to audiences of different demographics.

When analyzing this campaign, there are a few key lessons that McDonald's and all public relations teams can takeaway. These collaborations are a good representation of how important influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements are in today's society. Audiences and consumers want to feel a sense of connection to public figures and are likely to perform a specific action in order to do so. Additionally, this campaign effectively demonstrates how corporations can adapt and maintain relevancy with different audiences. Encouraging mobile app downloads shows consumers that corporations are willing to implement newer technologies while still staying true to their brand identity and the structure of their organization. Furthermore, partnering with celebrities that are popular with the current generation shows that a corporation is aware of the social climate and their consumer's wants and needs. Lastly, this campaign shows other corporations and public relations teams that they do not need to reinvent or rebrand their entire company in order to continue being successful. With these campaigns, McDonald's did not have to come up with new menu items or restructure their organization. Rather, they added a small change to their products using pre-existing menu items to make the consumer feel like they are getting a new and limited-edition item.

Overall, this was a successful integrated marketing campaign that allowed McDonald's to achieve their objectives. While there were good and bad aspects associated with their campaign, there is much to learn and takeaway from their pitfalls and successes with these celebrity meals.



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