

How Pizza Hut Gets It Hot And Fresh

OBJECTIVE

To rollover the double-digit sales increases that followed the 1999 launch of The Big New Yorker pizza.

MEDIA STRATEGY

A combination of national spot TV and spot Radio that featured a copromotion with CDNow.

RADIO PLAN

Use Radio to target the hard-to-reach "echo boomers," using paid advertising and on-air promotions to drive people to the CDNow promotion.

RESULTS

Gave away 800,000 free CDs. Maintained the tremendous momentum of The Big New Yorker pizza launch.

When Pizza Hut decided to create a national promotion earlier this year using popular music as the hook, the decision that followed was a no-brainer. Use Radio.

To fully understand that, we have to go back to February 1999, when Pizza Hut first launched The Big New Yorker pizza. Very few new product introductions result in company-wide, double-digit sales increases. But that's exactly what happened with The Big New Yorker pizza — aided in large-part, by a national promotion that awarded a lucky winner a free space shuttle ride.

So, when it came time to follow up the Big New Yorker launch this year, there was a lot of pressure to rollover that impressive sales growth. "We needed something that got consumers excited and drove them into Pizza Hut and gave them a fresh reason to have The Big New Yorker pizza again," said Kathy Alexander, director of media services for Pizza Hut Inc. in Dallas. "And we did that by partnering with CDNow."

When consumers purchased The Big New Yorker pizza for \$9.99 they were given a CD jewel case, with an access code that allowed them to go to CDNow and build their very own CD from a library of available songs.

So where did Radio fit in to this? "Radio became an integral part of this promotion because of its ability to reach the core music consumer," Alexander said. In this case, that audience was "echo boomers," the 18 to 24-year-old children of Baby Boomers. "We're zeroing-in on that particular target as a subset of our overall target. And Radio, as a personal medium, speaks directly to them," Alexander said. "This audience has always been pretty difficult to reach anyway, because they don't watch a lot of TV, and what they do watch tends to be appointment TV."

Not only was paid Radio time used by Pizza Hut to advertise the CDNow promotion, but it also became a part of the programming on local stations through customized giveaways and contests. "Each station could go in and say, okay now, how do we want to give this away? We allowed them to customize it based on their listener interest." Alexander said, "They know their listeners and what gets them excited. We know pizza. So we both won."

It is that very flexibility that makes Radio such an attractive medium to Alexander. Flexibility, in both the way each local station can tailor a promotion to suit its programming format and style, and flexible in the way a target audience can be hand-picked from the myriad of stations in each market. "We zero in on our target with Radio, because Radio is specific to the individual and to the market," Alexander explained.

"Radio is the most flexible medium and the one most open to 'stretch,' because they're always looking for fresh ways to bring something different to their listeners."

Though the CDNow/The Big New Yorker promotion was planned to run for four weeks, Alexander said they front-loaded the buy because, "if indeed we ran out of jewel cases, we didn't want people driving in for something that wasn't available anymore." As it turned out, 800,000 people ended up participating in the promotion. "We fell just short of getting a platinum record, but we did earn a gold record," she said, with a laugh.

Pizza Hut also succeeded in rolling over the double-digit sales increases they incurred during The Big New Yorker pizza launch a year earlier, a feat Alexander characterized as "putting a smile on the faces of the executive team."

What's next for Pizza Hut? Alexander wouldn't say. But we can be certain that a major slice of the media pie will be devoted to Radio. ●



Radio Advertising Bureau

125 West 55th Street, 21st Floor, New York, NY 10019

Tel. 212.681.7200 / Website: www.rab.com