

Social previews whet appetite for Taco Bell's latest creation



Client

Taco Bell (Louisville, KY)

Agency

Taylor (New York and Los Angeles)

Campaign

Cool Ranch Doritos Locos Tacos Launch

Duration

February-March

Budget

\$100,000-\$150,000

CEO Greg Creed wanted to reinvent the taco in preparation for Taco Bell's 50th anniversary celebration in 2012.

The company collaborated with Doritos, owned by former Taco Bell parent PepsiCo, and launched the Nacho Cheese Doritos Locos Tacos last year. Rob Poetsch, director of public affairs and engagement at Taco Bell, says it was the biggest launch in the company's history, with more than 100 million tacos sold in just 10 weeks.

"There was an immense amount of social conversation around the first launch. One customer even drove from New York to the Ohio test market to try the new taco," Poetsch adds. "We wanted to make the new Cool Ranch launch more than a sequel and bigger than the first one."

PR AOR Taylor partnered on the effort.

STRATEGY

Poetsch says the idea was to extend and leverage consumer excitement about being the first to try Cool Ranch Doritos Locos Tacos, which launched in restaurants March 7.

The launch was teased on Taco Bell's Facebook page, which has more than 10 million fans, and officially announced in a Vine video.



Taco Bell partnered with Doritos once again to create a new product, the Cool Ranch taco

Taco Bell's digital AOR Digitas came up with a speak-easy concept that further drove intrigue by spreading code words that allowed fans to try the tacos in February at unusual pop-up locations in New York City, Dallas, and Venice, CA.

Social media fans were given the opportunity to order the tacos in restaurants during a Fan Day on March 6.

TACTICS

A January 2 Facebook post stating "Anything could happen in 2013," accompanied by a photo of Cool Ranch Doritos packaging and a taco shell from the restaurant, teased the reveal.

The March 7 launch date was first released on February 13 in a Vine video posted to Taco Bell's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

A national press release detailing the launch followed.

The first pop-up location – a floral shop in New York City – gave away tacos to people who asked for "a blue bouquet." A Dallas barbershop gave away samples to people who said, "Make me look cool." Finally, people who asked for "the blue one" at a valet stand in Venice, CA, got free tacos.

"Code words were sent to one consumer on Twitter and about 12 members of the media and bloggers in each market on the day of each event," says PJ Brovak, SVP at Taylor.

Videos of people's reactions at the events were shared with media and posted on Taco Bell online properties. Facebook, Twitter, and Vine posts informed fans they could order the tacos in restaurants on March 6.

RESULTS

Sales of the Cool Ranch taco reached 2.7 million on March

7 – double the Nacho Cheese launch-day sales. On March 6, 600,000 were sold.

"Buzz, social conversations, and PR were driving people into our restaurants," Poetsch explains. "There were no ads at this point."

About 3,000 tacos were given away at the pop-up locations and the videos got 2.5 million views across all channels. The January 2 Facebook post generated a record 133,087 likes.

The effort garnered 2.1 billion media impressions and ran in outlets such as *USA Today*, *ABC Nightline*, *The Huffington Post*, *AP*, and *Reuters*.

Sales of both flavors hit 560 million as of early July. Poetsch says Taco Bell has added 15,000 new jobs since the 2012 Doritos Locos Tacos launch to accommodate demand.

FUTURE

The team is preparing to launch the Flamas taco later this year.

Tanya Lewis



Taco Bell fans were able to sample the new product weeks before the official launch after receiving information on social platforms

PRWeek's View

What's your view on this topic? Tell us at prweekus.com/campaigns

This was an outstanding campaign. The integration between Taco Bell and its agencies is impressive. The teams did a fantastic job playing up audience excitement and results prove the power of meaningful social engagement. Taco Bell's Rob Poetsch said there was social currency in letting social media fans order the tacos one day before launch. That's certainly true, and the campaign generated a massive amount of social currency for the brand – with record likes alone a testament. The tactic is also a great example of tying social activity to revenue.