



Launching “The Finger”

Situation Analysis

Butterfinger is launching a new comedy network through *Yahoo!*

Since 1988, an American animated sitcom called *The Simpsons* was featured in about 150 Butterfinger commercials. Butterfinger was established as Bart Simpson’s candy bar under the slogan, “Nobody better lay a finger on my Butterfinger.” *The Simpsons* is the longest-running American sitcom and animated program known purely for comedy. The Butterfinger success linked to *The Simpsons* tie-in campaign increased Nestlé’s market share by almost 10% and made Butterfinger the 9th most popular candy bar in 1992.

Butterfinger ended its association with *The Simpsons* in 2001. Since then, all comedy associated with the brand has been missing.

Post branding with *The Simpsons* has established Butterfinger as being “youthful, fun and mischievous.” However, because of the obesity epidemic in the U.S. advertising candy to a younger population has been limited.

The Butterfinger Comedy Network features the best-of-the-best in online comedy, spoofs, pranks, skits, standup, and other hilarious, wild things. Users are able to watch, comment and share videos in a purely funny forum. The Butterfinger Comedy Network intends to be the “gold-standard” of what is comical online.

Butterfinger’s main website (www.butterfinger.com) leads a person directly to the comedy network with a catchy slogan titled “Get your bite-sized comedy, served up daily on the

Butterfinger Comedy Network on Yahoo!” The website also features a tie-in with Facebook where you could win a Wii or iPhone 3G just by becoming a fan. “Nobody’s gonna lay a finger on my Butterfinger” video contests are also displayed through this website where the winner of the funniest video receives \$25,000 and a chance to have their video aired on national television. Video categories include: epic fail, sweetest Kung Fu moves, workplace shenanigans, and best use of a gadget.

The Curtiss Candy Company first introduced Butterfinger in 1928. In 1990, Nestlé bought Butterfinger. Butterfinger has an orange, flaky center with a peanut butter taste covered in milk chocolate. The unique consistency of the candy bar separates it from that of competitors like Mars and the Hershey’s Company which are best known for candies like M&M’s, Snickers, Milky Way, Twix and Reese’s.

Nestlé was formed in 1905 by a merger called the Nestlé and Anglo-Swiss Milk Company. Today, Nestlé has been named one of “America’s Most Admired Food Companies” in Fortune magazine. In 2007, consolidated sales from the Nestlé group have amounted to \$107.6 billion.

Other popular Nestlé candies include: Kit Kat, Bit-O-Honey, Fun Dip, Goobers, Nestlé Crunch, Nips, 100 Grand, Pixy Stix, Runts, Spree, Wonka Bar, Baby Ruth, Bottle Caps, Gobstoppers, Laffy Taffy, Nerds, Nestlé Snow Caps, Raisinits, Shockers, and Sweetarts.

Research

- Research shows Butterfinger did best in the consumer market when branding with *The Simpsons* established Butterfinger as “youthful, fun and mischievous.”
- Butterfinger is a popular candy bar, but is not a top market share leader.

- Adults buy chocolate based on impulse and cravings; it's an emotional purchase.
- Guys who eat Butterfinger buy food spontaneously with no matter as to what is healthy for them; therefore, the obesity epidemic does not limit advertising to this public.
- The idea would need to appeal to the top of the pop culture world and generate significant buzz, word-of-mouth discussion and media coverage. To do this, it would have to convey a "wow" effect from the moment it crossed consumer radar.

April Fools Prank:

- Most successful pranks walk the line between being believable and unimaginable.
- The ideal campaign would involve an unexpected and engaging concept, strong media coverage and an online destination for consumers looking for additional news.
- The Butterfinger Company conducted a comprehensive 2 year study where they viewed consumer perceptions of the name "Butterfinger." The study proved the name to be associated with undesirable traits such as being clumsy or lacking in physical coordination.

YouTube:

- A popular forum to view funny videos; however, many other types of videos are posted through this website. The comedy network will be strictly funny.

Recommendations:

- A survey measuring if the amount of guys that eat Butterfinger frequently go on YouTube to find funny videos to see if their branding campaign through an online comedy forum would actually attract the attention of consumers.

- Conduct a focus group with target audience to see their views on how to brand Butterfinger as a humorous product again and increase sales.
- A survey on the most effective/best candy commercials to see whether or not they are targeted around humor.

Objectives

- To continue efforts to brand Butterfinger a youthful, fun and mischievous brand.
- To increase Butterfinger sales by 15% by the end of 2010.
- To increase buyer loyalty among target audience by 15% by the end of 2010.
- To increase name recognition through a humor-geared campaign by 15% by the end of 2010.
- To create nationwide buzz for Butterfinger by securing 5.5 million media impressions and increasing overall interest in the brand by the end of 2010.
- To gain close to 1 billion hits on the online comedy network forum by the end of 2010.

Publics

- Heavy or subtle Butterfinger eaters. (if you do not somewhat like Butterfinger, chances of you getting involved or visiting the comedy network is slim)
- Age: 18-27; college students (more likely to enjoy and participate in the humor of the comedy network)
- Sex: male (more likely to enjoy irrelevant humor)
- Spontaneous, wild, daring, live in the moment, work to play (most likely to enjoy to comedy in the online network and participate)
- Confident; not worried about appearance or how they are perceived (easy participation)

- Eat whatever appeals to them with little regard to health (no need to worry about obesity epidemic when advertising to this group)
- Love humor, music, radio, entertainment, comedy, sports, science fiction, reality and game shows, outdoor channels, magazines. (college students watch lots of T.V.; many outlets to advertise to)

Strategies

Prank

- Rename the Butterfinger to “The Finger.”
- 200,000 free “Finger” bars will be handed out during the release of the prank.
- User feedback will be recorded to post online and enable more media stir.
- Date of release: April 1.
- Will reach out to the target audience with humor.
- Will cause a stir and henceforth will cause lots of attention throughout consumers and media; national buzz.
- Message will spread by word-of-mouth and cause people to question the new name.
- Send out an announcement for online attention as well as TV attention.

Television Advertising

- There is a large audience who is receptive to the outdoors.
- The outdoors is a key reminder that Butterfingers can be used for “on the go” consumption.

- Not much competition in this category of advertisement so the market share is larger.
- Use Butterfinger commercials focusing on outdoor humor (i.e. camping trip gone wrong) on outdoor television networks like National Geographic.
- There is a large audience that loves music.
- Use Butterfinger commercials focusing on musical humor on musical programs like MTV or VH1.
- Shows like American Idol can be sponsored by Butterfinger.
- There is a large audience that loves sports.
- Use Butterfinger commercials focusing on sports humor on programs like ESPN.
- Butterfinger can sponsor half-time shows.
- There is a large audience that loves game shows.
- Put Butterfinger on the Price is Right or sponsor big grand prizes on other shows.
- Get networks to use Butterfinger when candy is involved in the show.
- More emphasis on late afternoon, late and early hours.

Radio Spot

- The target audience listens to the radio consistently throughout the day.
- Many Butterfinger users listen to Country stations.
- Classic rock stations play all day so there would be a large audience reached.
- Advertise humorous Butterfinger commercials during breaks.
- Sponsor radio contest or make Butterfinger associated with prizes.

College Campus event

- College students are the age group being targeted.
- An event will lead to word-of-mouth advertising.
- Free “give-aways” are a plus for positive feedback; advertise Butterfinger on free shirts, cups, etc. that get spread throughout the college campus. “Give-aways” could be handed out among membership with their Facebook group where they will receive feedback on other Butterfinger promotions and such.
- The event should be done when there is the most student traffic; beginning of fall and spring semesters is best.

Concert Event

- Many users love music.
- Have the musicians throw Butterfingers into the audience or offer free Butterfingers when entering the concert.
- You can also advertise on the back of crew shirts which would make you a sponsor of the event.

Evaluation Methods

Overall, the “The Finger” campaign was a success in that it received a huge media response. The prank delivered 52.8 million media impressions and surpassed the goal of 5.5 million.

The success of this campaign was shown through several types of social media. Throughout the week of the prank, there was a tremendous increase in the number of searches for the term “Butterfinger” on Yahoo!

“This was a great strategy to get people to buy “The Finger” as well as promote their new Comedy show,” Said CBS-TV (Phoenix).

Consumers loved the humor involved in the prank; it was a driving force in the recognition of the new comedy show.

The campaign was very successful and won a prestigious “Very Best Marketing Award” in the “Dare to Experiment” category. The success of the prank and the award were celebrated within Nestle USA. This prank was said to be the most successful campaign and public relations move in the last 10 years.

(http://www.prsa.org/SearchResults/view/6BW0903A07/0/Launching_The_Finger)