

Chief Marketer Special Report

Holiday Lights

Which marketers twinkled the brightest at the end of last year? Which campaigns offered the best ideas to steal for your 2014 strategies? In this Chief Marketer Special Report, we look at which efforts captured consumers' attention—and drove measurable results for their brands. **BY PATRICIA ODELL**

GUERRILLA SAMPLING

Brand: Nestlé

Agency: Formula Street

Campaign: Camper Café—Celebrating the New Year with Nestlé Abuelita and Nescafé Clásico

There's nothing like a steaming cup of coffee to warm a chilly camper's hands, and, even better, endear that camper to the person—in this case brand ambassador—who delivers it.

For the Nestlé brand, Formula Street did just that by taking to the expanses of

Colorado Boulevard in Los Angeles on New Year's Eve to sample products to the masses of consumers camping out overnight to stake out great spots to watch The Rose Parade the following day.

The campers were greeted by guerilla sampling teams of 17 brand ambassadors dressed in black who walked along the parade route handing out 900 hot cups of the Nestlé Abuelita hot chocolate and NESCAFÉ Clásico instant coffee via backpack beverage dispensers. The teams honed in on parade route zones that typically have the largest attendance

of overnight campers.

More than 11,000 dry product samples and 5,500 coupons were also distributed. The team took time to talk up brand attributes and product information and took lots of photos that were posted on Facebook.

Nestlé successfully created a positive brand image among attendees who were pleasantly surprised to receive complimentary beverages to warm them up on a cold night.

"We targeted overnight campers on New Year's Eve, rather than New Year's Day during the actual parade which allowed the sampling team to fully engage with attendees whose attention could be focused more on the brands," said Janet Uribe, marketing manager at the International Brands Division of Nestlé USA. "We surprised attendees with a complimentary warm beverage on a cold night to positively connect with consumers and keep the brands top of mind at the start of the New Year."

IDEA TO STEAL: Secure hotel rooms or other spaces along a large sampling area to serve as home base for easy product preparation and storage/replenishment.





SWEEPSTAKES

Brand: Barclaycard

Agency: Marden Kane

Campaign: Holiday Wish List Sweepstakes

After a successful promotion to increase Facebook fans took off last summer, Barclaycard looked to engage those loyalists—and pull in a few more new ones—with a seasonal push to keep them active.

Enter the Barclaycard “Holiday Wish List Sweepstakes.” Players “liked” the Facebook page and then created a wish list of 10 holiday gifts by dragging and dropping items from a predetermined list of 25 holiday gifts with wide appeal. The items, mostly electronics, included a Samsung Smart TV, iPad Air, Bose Sound Touch System, Xbox One and a KitchenAid Artisan Stand Mixer. Once a player “submits” his or her list they receive one entry into a daily drawing for the day that entry was received. Players can return each day over the 10-day period to update their list and receive another entry. The Samsung TV was the huge favorite on the majority of days.

As the 10 days counted down, each day a different item was awarded. On Day 10, the 10th item displayed on the list was given away; on Day 9, the ninth

item was awarded and so on until the last day when the top item was awarded. The grand prize was every item won by each of the daily prize winners valued at about \$10,000.

The colors used for the graphics in the promotion strayed from the typical red and green holiday colors, playing instead on the Barclaycard logo colors, blue and white.

The numbers tell the success story: 84,722 entries, including 58,842 uniques. There was a 51% opt-in rate, with 30,034 email opt ins; 30% of all entrants were repeat visitors, 23% of all entries were received via mobile devices and the number of Facebook fans increased 19% up to about 65,000.

Barclaycard promoted the sweeps to its cardholder email list, banner ads on its brand page and daily posts on Facebook.

“We felt that it would work for us as a brand,” said Kim Snedaker, assistant vice president of social media, Barclaycard US. “We’re very focused on helping people achieve their ambitions and this was a way for them to dream and hope.”

IDEA TO STEAL: Distribute prizes over an extended period to prolong play, engagement and sharing.

RETAIL

Brand: Cricket

Agency: TPN

Campaign: Half is More Holiday 2013

Last summer, Cricket took aggressive aim at wireless giants Verizon and AT&T, calling them out for being way overpriced and for consumers to ask themselves why they are spending more for the same services they could get with Cricket for about half the price, thus the launch campaign name, “Half is More.”

It parlayed this successful program into a holiday promotion that continued the affordability message of paying half of what a customer would for the same services from AT&T and Verizon, leaving more money to spend on enjoyable activities during the holidays. The “Half is More” message evolved to “Switch to Cricket and to do more of what matters during the holidays, instead of continuing to give more to AT&T and Verizon.”

A multi-channel marketing blitz took off online and via video pre-roll, rich-media banners and social media to catch the contract switcher early in the path-to-purchase as they researched and planned for the holidays. Messaging on the Cricket website, radio and at retail continued the conversation of “doing more” to help close the sale.

It worked. The holiday campaign continued the momentum generated with launch campaign, improving brand recall, brand engagement culminating with record-breaking, double-digit Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales.

“The main reason we’re going after AT&T and Verizon nationwide is that they are the leaders with almost 200 million subscribers on those two networks alone,” Deborah Jourdan, senior direc-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

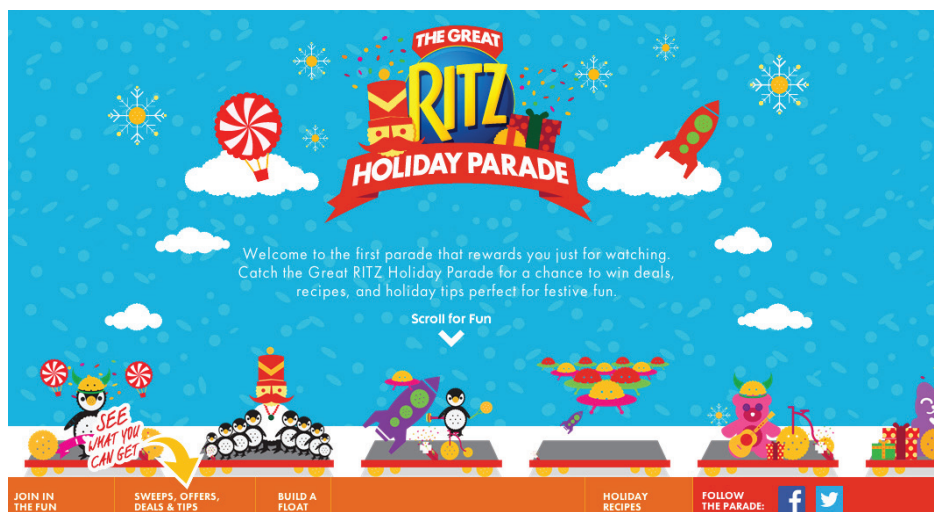


CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

tor of marketing at Cricket, said. “The whole idea it to help people realize they are being overcharged for their wireless by AT&T and Verizon.”

The success of the “Half is More” campaign was founded on research that a large and growing group of consumers were seeking out value deals that didn’t compromise their standard of living. It wasn’t about being cheap. It was about making a dollar go farther and, even more importantly, freeing up more money to enjoy other important things in life. Cricket, focused in on that key insight, wrapped it up with a big red bow and set it out under the retail shopping Christmas tree.

IDEA TO STEAL: Carry through the holidays a promotion that is performing well throughout the year.



DIGITAL

Brand: Ritz Crackers

Agency: Havas Worldwide

Campaign: The Great RITZ Holiday Parade

This digital campaign from Ritz rewarded people for watching a “parade” with holiday tips, chances to win deals, recipes, a sweepstakes and other content fun for the holidays.

“The parade,” a string of floats, each designed in some way with a Ritz cracker—a train or bike with crackers for wheels—marched across dozens of popular consumer websites via banner ads. The timing to display each of the banners came from research around must-do seasonal tasks such as decorating the house, preparing meals, wrapping gifts and making travel arrangements can be stressful for women. For example, during the first week of December, research showed a spike around the topic of holiday cards so the parade appeared on MSN offering an exclusive deal on Felix Doolittle stationary.

Other examples were the Koolaburra Boots offer during the week leading up to Christmas as people were searching for last minute gift ideas or the free spe-

cialty cards from Sincerely, discounts at the Walmart photo studio, \$10 off at Living Social, and The Food Network Thanksgiving Getaway Sweepstakes.

The parade website posted a calendar with links to all the partner sites offering daily deals. The sweepstakes offered a trip to the 2014 Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade (the inspiration for the promotion). Visitors could build their own floats (7,000 were built) and the parade could be followed on Facebook and Twitter.

A 30-second spot that kicked off the campaign during the coverage of The Thanksgiving Day Parade, followed by 15-second spots throughout the holidays.

“We’ve never done anything like this,” said Katrina Cohen, senior brand manager for Ritz. “Prior Ritz holiday campaigns had good branding, breakthrough and performed well. But with the heart of this campaign being tightly integrated with our media partners and that whole idea of bringing the value and utility and fun is very future looking in terms of digital and mobile and how we want to be operating.”

IDEA TO STEAL: Multiple partners add depth, interest and new channels to holiday promos.



MULTICHANNEL

Brand: Spalding

Agency: Winstanley Partners, Ventura Associates International

Campaign: "Only 1 Ball"

This multi-channel "Only 1 Ball" holiday campaign showed off the 30-year partnership between Spalding and the National Basketball Association. It was designed around educating consumers about the benefits and appropriate ages of Spalding products as

Christmas gifts.

Three components tied the campaign, themed by Winstanley Partners, into a neat bow: retail partners, TV spots and a 30-day sweepstakes.

The roster of partners that participated by offering special holiday deals included Dick's Sporting Goods, where a customer's purchase of a Spalding NBA basketball triggered a gift of one ball to St. Jude Boys & Girls Clubs. Academy Sports+Outdoors offered a three-tiered rebate program with money back based on the price of a Spalding Basketball system.

TV spots, featuring Brooklyn Net's forward Paul Pierce, aired Nov. 27 to Dec. 12 on "Designing Spaces" and in online videos to educate consumers about what Spaulding products worked best as gifts for a specific age group and to encourage social sharing.

"We know that video is a great so-

cial piece and gets passed along and we know this lead spot with Paul Pierce very powerful and got picked up a lot," said Wendy Unger Moore, senior director of marketing at Spalding.

The "30 days of Holiday Cheer" sweepstakes, administered by Ventura Associates International, ran on Facebook from Nov. 19 to Dec. 18 offering a random drawing each day for prizes like NBA video games, autographed game balls, autographed trophy softballs and Spalding/NBA Slam Jam units that were mailed out the following day. Players could enter once each day, which helped drive repeat plays. Of the 3,200 entries, 60% were repeat visits indicating that players were truly engaged with the brand.

IDEA TO STEAL: Catch customers wherever they are using a multi-channel campaign.

PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

Brand: GEICO

Agency: BDA

Campaign: "Hump Day" Holiday Ornament

GEICO'S "Hump Day" commercial drew a number of top rankings among 2013 ads and 19 million YouTube views, so it's no surprise that the insurance company played off that attention to create holiday gifts for its clients and partners.

If you're the rare person who hasn't seen the TV spot or video, it features a very large camel walking—and talking—through an office cube farm asking employees Mike and Julie and whoever else happened to be nearby "Guess What

Day it is?" "Guess What Day it Is?" over and over. You guessed it, it's Hump Day (Wednesday).

"The Hump Day campaign went viral very quickly, trending nearly every Wednesday for months after the first video went live. I think everyone can relate to the Wednesday slump," the GEICO marketing team said.

Enter BDA, the branded merchandise agency and a 2013 PROMO Top Shop. The agency presented GEICO with dozens of Christmas ornament ideas using a variety of materials before one featuring the popular camel was decided on and 5,000 were produced.

The 3.5-inch tall ornament is a camel standing next to an occupied office cube. The sound chip bellows the camel's catchphrase, "Guess what day it is?" The packaging includes a window to show-



CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

case the ornament.

“Promotional products are a great way to extend advertising campaigns that have already caught the consumer’s attention. With merchandise, you are able to put a tangible product in the hands of your audience and further the affinity for your brand,” GEICO said.

The ornament included a sound chip that bellows the camel’s “Guess what day it is?” catchphrase.

BDA created its first branded merchandise item around Hump Day—a t-shirt—in August that was so successful that more items were quickly created including a mug, sound button and note cube, and, of course, the ornament. The items are sold at GEICO’S online store, which is managed by BDA.

To promote the ornament GEICO created a gift guide for its policy holder digital magazine, GEICO Now, which featured store merchandise and a link to purchase the holiday merchandise on the “Hump Day” YouTube videos, which were then shared more than 33,000 times on Facebook.

IDEA TO STEAL: Make the brand extension meaningful. The Hump Day camel happened to be a great character to feature given the viral nature of the videos, while the ornament acted as an exclusive piece of merchandise that made partners feel as though they were receiving a part of the brand.



EVENTS

Brand: ION Television

Agency: Michael Alan Group

Campaign: “Get Wrapped Up in the Holidays”

Throughout the first week of December 2013, ION Television visited 13 media agencies in 12 locations across New York City to encourage nearly 1,000 agency reps to “Get Wrapped Up In The Holidays,” and, of course, buy some media placements.

Conference rooms were “wrapped” with festive decorations, including snowflakes, gifts and branded holiday clings to create a cheerful atmosphere. Tables were lined with sweet treats like peppermint bars, toffee crunch, chocolate covered pretzels, cherry licorice and non-salted cashews to be enjoyed during the party or boxed up in ION branded containers to take home.

ION’s latest holiday films were showcased as seasonal music and the scent of pine fragrancd the room. At the hot chocolate bar, classic and Mexican hot

chocolate were served in branded take-away mugs and there was the chance to win an iPad mini.

To keep the momentum going, attendees could participate in a photo-op posing with various holiday stick props. Private galleries of the photos were available—which made for easy social sharing—through an email follow up from ION that also announced the iPad mini winner.

The holiday event marked the first time ION went inside the media agencies, making the event much more personal. In the past a “glass” truck pulled up out front.

“Generally with agency events we like to alternate between inside and outside activations,” said Jill Rudnitzky, vice president of the Michael Alan Group. “For this program, we felt that the experience and atmosphere better lent itself to being indoors.”

IDEA TO STEAL: Make your event memorable with unusual elements—candy canes with a marshmallow at the end to stir hot chocolate here were a bit hit.