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Case Study - Lay's "Do Us A Flavor" Campaign

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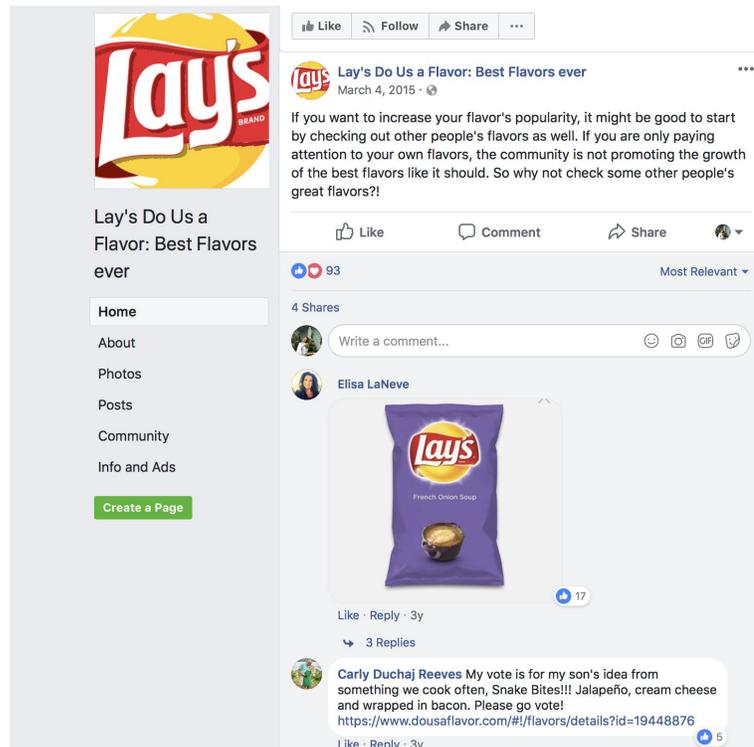
Campaign

In 2012 Lay's potato chip company launched their very first successful campaign titled "Do Us A Flavor" in celebration of their 75th anniversary. The contest emerged through PepsiCo, the parent company of Lay's in order to engage the public in getting involved through social media to fulfill their goals of creating a stronger relationship with millennials. The fundamental purpose for this campaign was due to the fact Lay's felt as if they needed to expand their target audience, so they decided to use social media as a way to "age down" their brand into a more expansive group. Although a similar campaign done by Lay's was very successful in Europe, the company decided they were going to need to reach out to the United States population of consumers in a different way.. "Do Us A Flavor" paired with Facebook over the course of 10 months to promote everyone to pitch their potato chip flavor ideas with pictures and videos to explain the thought process behind it. Just under a year after people began submitting their ideas via social media, winners were chosen. Karen Weber-Mendham was selected as the first place winner, receiving \$1 million and the honor of having her chip flavor of "Cheesy Garlic Bread" circulated to the public.



Strategy

Due to the growing importance of social media, the ultimate source of execution Lay's used throughout their campaign was Facebook. From the start, Lay's partnered with Facebook and created a Facebook page in addition to their website so that their participants could take part in their campaign.



“Do Us A Flavor” aimed to reach out to millennials and people of younger ages to allow them to “pitch” their ideas on various flavor suggestions along with a story or inspiration behind it. Since this contest was originally founded in the UK, Lay's knew they needed to change up their strategy and marketing brands in order for this particular campaign to be even more successful. Anindita Mukherjee, the chief marketing officer for Frito-Lay in North America, gathered her team to brainstorm some of the best ways to advertise her brand and campaign to

the largest audience attainable. After coming to the conclusion that social media is the main source of communication among millennials, the company made a specific Facebook page where, within the Facebook app, people were able to design a customized bag of their choice of chips. Within each participants design they were also asked to name it, choose a flavor with certain ingredients, state their personal inspiration or story that goes along with it and ultimately share their ideas with their Facebook network. This type of campaign was very different in comparison to the previous one in the UK in the sense that it was more digital. The method used in campaigning “Do Us A Flavor” overseas consisted of mail and text message submissions that included a drawing of the potato chip bag and their intended message. Although that was successful in its own way, the 2012 version proved to drive sales up even more. In addition to the customizable Facebook app edition, if participants were not able to construct their own flavor ideas, Lay’s constructed a unique element called the “Flavorizer.” The Flavorizer generated chip flavor ideas based on the participants demographic, likes/dislikes, and more. This effort made this particular campaign more unique and successful in the long run. Another strategy in which Lay’s used in order to publicize their campaign even more was the addition of celebrities and notable people. Lay’s recruited celebrities such as famous chef, Michael Symon and actress, Eva Longoria to speak on behalf of the brand in hopes of attracting more consumers. Including these two celebrities, a judging panel was created that consisted of various food-lovers and famous chefs responsible for narrowing down the participants into a semi-final round. From there the general public was in charge of essentially choosing the winner.



The fundamental goal of the entire campaign was geared towards attracting the Lay's brand to a larger population - more specifically, the millennial generation. "Do Us A Flavor" was created in order to initiate a more emotional connection/relationship with their consumers beneficial to making their brand more appealing. Since social media is such a prevalent means of communication and so relevant to the many lives of young people within the age range of 18-24, Lay's used Facebook as their medium to complete "Do Us A Flavor." They specifically used social media as their platform because they knew they could easily reach out in an interesting, fun way. Similarly, Lay's made the assumption that their participants would likely "share" their ideas and campaign information to their various followers online, thus attracting more consumers. The chief marketer, Mukherjee stated that "This wasn't about Lays. We created tools that allowed people to celebrate their passion for food. Lays became a communication device for people to share about their daily lives." The company is proud of their results and its ability to

contribute to the movement around the world, more specifically the US in relation to everyone's passion for food. The marketing strategy as a whole proved to be extremely successful in that "Give Us A Flavor" grossed the most successful campaign they ever had.

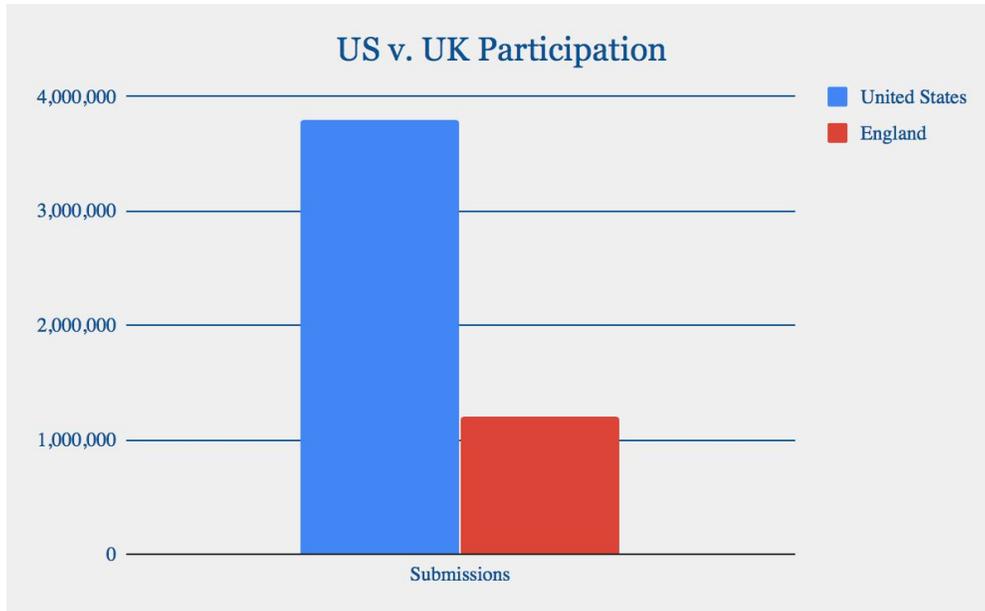


Results

“Do Us A Flavor” in 2012 earned itself the title of most successful Lay’s campaign yet. In comparison to the previous years they did this in various countries such as England, the US version completely surpassed England’s 1.2 million submissions. Over 3 million submissions were entered into winning the million dollar prize, yet only one person won: Karen Weber-Mendham. Karen was a librarian from Wisconsin where she discovered her prize-worthy idea. She told the story about how her and her kids went out to dinner at an Italian restaurant and of course, her kids immediately asked for garlic bread. With hesitation Karen finally agreed. In that moment Karen realized the love many kids, like her own, have for the comforting food of garlic bread with cheese. She knew this would be a flavor to shoot for in her participation of this campaign but little did she know she would be the winner.



Because of the 2012 Lay's campaign, the company helped make their brand the most engaging site in Facebook history. The three finalists were permitted the honor of valued chips after they gradually became some of the most popular chip flavors among consumers. Compared to the campaign that took place in England with a total of 1.2 million submissions, Lay's came through with about 3.8 million submissions. In addition the outrageous percentage of participation, the campaign also earned over 955 million story impressions on Facebook. Not only was the overall participation high but the results afterwards were also astounding. Lay's PTAT (also known as the general percentage of how many people are talking about them) increased to a whopping 4700% and a 12% sales increase. Their fandom on Facebook gained 1.2 followers once the campaign was over and the brand grossed over 1.3 billion Public Relations responses. The benefits of allowing their participants to be as involved and creative as they wanted ultimately benefited their brand as a whole more than how they were expecting. In return, Lay's also learned of new consumer insights such as the fact that out of the 3.8 million submissions, just under 100,000 of them included the color red in their flavor names. The color beige seemed to be extremely unpopular in that it was only included in 3 submissions.



Challenges brought forth throughout the journey of this campaign was extremely minimal compared to the margin of error available. Since the project was put completely in the hands of the consumers there could have been a lack of participation but fortunately a lot of people were enticed by the idea and became very involved. Although there was not a prominent challenge made known throughout the campaign, I think it could have been a little more successful if they allowed more than one winner. With the final three chip flavors being Cheesy Garlic Bread, Sriracha, and Chicken and Waffles, I feel as if Lay's could have advertised their brand one more level up. They could have had more participation and eagerness among their consumers to win if they established more than one flavor, in addition to the twenty-two they already had. A similar campaign was also done by General Motors to promote their Chevy Tahoe which allowed their contestants to create their own commercials for the vehicle. The point at which this contest was unsuccessful was where participants began making videos in a negative way, exposing things like bad gas mileage and other downsides to the car into the public. This campaign proved to be

way less successful than they were hoping. I think Lay's maintained enough control throughout the process and placed proper limitations on the project so that the participants had enough freedom to do what they wished, but limited their ability to promote negative comments towards the brand.

Conclusion

After successfully addressing their targeted audience issue, Lay's gained a greater population of consumers in a way that was very relatable to their participants. Their brand was either being sold or produced by contestants participating in the "flavor pitch" campaign. In total, the "Do Us A Flavor" campaign was more than beneficial in increasing Lay's overall audience and brand, and also learning of new consumer insights and various marketing methods that proved useful. As Anindita Mukherjee concluded: "the brand didn't change the core product, we changed the way people look at it."



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