



Measuring promotional campaign impact

The Background

Upon first thought the connection between a bunch of painted cows and one of the largest chicken QSR chains is not immediately obvious. But then, if you think about it from the cows point of view...well, they are going to want you to eat more chicken, aren't they?

That same logic is behind Chick-fil-A's long-running Eat Mor Chikin® advertising campaign. From the first billboard in 1995 to the present day, the Eat Mor Chikin® cows have gone to great lengths to entice customers through the doors of a Chick-fil-A restaurant.



Given this cow association, when CowParade came to Atlanta, GA in 2003 it was a natural alliance, and Chick-fil-A agreed to be the presenting sponsor.

CowParade is both a public art event and a charity. In Atlanta a herd of 163 artistically painted cows invaded the city between June 26th and Sept. 26th, 2003. Auctioned off at the end, they raised over \$250,000 for local artists and charities.

As sponsor of the CowParade Atlanta, Chick-fil-A made both a financial commitment and tailored a portion of their advertising spending for the period to promote the event. In total a commitment of over \$1m. In addition, 750,000 Chick-fil-A branded color maps showing the locations of all cows were distributed throughout their stores.

The Issue

\$1m is a lot to spend without knowing what you are getting for it. Chick-fil-A's rationale for throwing their full weight behind CowParade Atlanta was to raise their own brand awareness. This is an area notoriously difficult to measure, and so they turned to the professionals of Alexander Babbage.

As David Salyers, VP of Marketing at Chick-fil-A, explains:

"CowParade was a wonderful event to be involved with. A lot of fun. But we are a business and we need to know what the business gets out of it."



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Case Study: Chick-fil-A

The Solution

Chick-fil-A's main questions concerned what impact their sponsorship of CowParade Atlanta had upon their brand awareness. Alexander Babbage decided that the best way to set about answering that question was to take two different approaches.

The first approach was to gather information from a sample of the population both before and after CowParade Atlanta. The science in this is ensuring that the sample is truly representative. The art lies in the formulation of the questions to ensure that the right data is collected. Using proven methodologies, Alexander Babbage carried out telephone research both before and after the event. They asked consumers about both Chick-fil-A, and as a control element, another well-known QSR chain.

The second approach was to analyse Chick-fil-A's own sales statistics. As a chain with over 1300 restaurants, the amount of data available is immense. So, this required some heavy number crunching. Out of this Alexander Babbage was able to generate same store sales figures for the three months of CowParade Atlanta 2003 and the corresponding period in 2002. These were then cross-referenced by geographic location.

The analysis was then done and the report presented to Chick-fil-A less than six weeks after it had been commissioned.

"It is a real win-win all round. Charity benefits. Chick-fil-A benefits. And, the people of Atlanta benefit. A win-win-win, in fact."

David Salyers, Vice President of Marketing at Chick-fil-A

The Result

The general answer was that CowParade Atlanta had been a good event for Chick-fil-A. Of course, people had already felt that, but it could now be quantified by the key brand metrics.

When asked if they were more likely to purchase from Chick-fil-A or to recommend it to a friend, those responding positively rose by 6% to an exceptional 82.3% after the CowParade. The same questions asked of the competition showed a decrease of up to 14%, effectively giving Chick-fil-A an increased competitive advantage of 20%.

The analysis of same store sales figures was initially intended as a cross-check on the direct consumer research. In that aspect, the sales figures confirmed the data collected through the telephone research. As a direct result of the "CowParade factor," year-on-year same store figures showed an increase of 2.4% in customer visits to stores near the cows. Interestingly, stores not within the immediate vicinity had done even better with a 4.9% CowParade uplift. The explanation for this seemed to be that Chick-fil-A became somewhere people went to collect a map and information when planning their trip to the cows. And, of course, they bought something while there.

Additionally, doing the math on the "CowParade factor" showed an additional revenue of about \$1m for the three month period. So, not only had the sponsorship fulfilled the primary objective of raising awareness, it had also significantly increased revenue. And, that trend was set to continue.