

GLOBAL ALLIANCE COMM PRIX AWARDS 2014

ENTRY SUMMARY

CATEGORY: INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS
CONSULTANCY: ATMOSPHERE COMMUNICATIONS, SOCIETY, HAMMER LIVE BRANDS, KING JAMES GROUP
CLIENT: BURGER KING SOUTH AFRICA
PROJECT: LAUNCH OF BURGER KING IN SOUTH AFRICA
CONTACT: MARISE LERM - MARISE@ATMOSPHERE.CO.ZA

“Against worldwide measures, the launch of Burger King in SA is seen as one of the best and on par with the most successful launch ever of our biggest competitor in Moscow a few years back. You made us look good. Thank you.” – Burger King SA CEO, Jaye Sinclair

OVERVIEW

In April 2013, Atmosphere Communications and the other companies within the King James Group were commissioned to launch Burger King (BK) into an over saturated and highly competitive South African market.

The brief was simple - create hype around the launch in Cape Town and drive demand for BK's iconic Whopper. But we faced a few daunting challenges. Our competitors were aware of the opening date and venue of the flagship store and planned to outspend us with large-scale, country-wide advertising and guerrilla marketing activities.

The consumer news agenda also seemed to be against us as all attention was focused on the two international superstars, Bon Jovi and Justin Bieber who were visiting SA and performing during the launch period. Our challenge was to prove that BK's arrival was by far the biggest story of the year.

Our approach was to capitalise on the media hype around the international superstars by creating and welcoming a third international superstar to our shores. We introduced our own international icon, “The Whopper”.

We leveraged our new superstar with our full armour of PR & social media tools - stunts involving yachts, models and visits to five star hotels with screaming teenagers in tow, in addition to a high intensity business and influencer PR campaign. We also convinced the Mayor of Cape Town to give Burger King the key to the City. This was amplified through a high intensity social media campaign.

The impact was overwhelming. Free editorial coverage valued at **R 7,24 -million** (AVE 1:1) within four weeks delivered 252 positive, on-message articles in local, national and international media, with

more than 120 million media impressions across Facebook and Twitter, while BK trended on Twitter three times. Bieber fans started changing their placards from "Bieber Fever" to "Burger Fever!" while customers flocked from all over South Africa with one man hitching all the way from Pretoria (1400 km away) just to get a Whopper.

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS & MARKET INSIGHTS

Our primary audience was socially active and media-savvy Capetonians, 25–49 years, who are optimistic and have a high affinity for local and international celebrities. Informal questions to 120 burger lovers - who enjoyed Burger King abroad - determined how devoted these burger lovers were and we tapped into this loyalty factor.

Social media research also highlighted that local fans created their own BK Facebook pages and we monitored conversations for key insights and at the right time, approached these fans to merge their page with ours.

Further market research indicated that SA consumers were ready for another quick service restaurant (QSR) and competitors feared losing market share to a global brand. We used information from this research for pitches to top business titles, while respected stock market analyst, Chris Gilmour, was utilised to provide insight into the state of the local QSR industry.

We also visited BK's EMEA marketing team and their PR agency in London to gain insight into the brand and global consumer behaviour. This directed our issue and crisis communications approach and prepared us for reputational issues.

Key research take-outs included the growing consumer trend in emerging countries of wanting to be first to experience an international brand and share experience with peers, called "massclusivity". This directed our campaign: status is derived from being first to share your BK experience – with friends in real-time and on social media. We also identified a core group of BK lovers who were passionate about the Whopper. This, coupled with South Africans' love for celebrities, directed our PR strategy.

GOALS

- Establish Burger King as the QSR food authority in the region
- Drive sales through sustained footfall to aid further store rollout and brand growth/profitability
- Use the launch to support the planned growth for fast pace expansion
- Manage brand's reputation to ensure positive business outcomes and limit negative fall-out.

OBJECTIVES

- Drive footfall: 1 500 people on opening day;

- Exceed sales target by at least 25% within first three weeks translating to sales of more than 22 000 Whoppers;
- Ensure that sales per person are more than target of R50 pp;
- Establish BK as *the* QSR food authority by dominating the media agenda, measured in share-of-voice.

EXECUTION OF STRATEGY

The roll-out plan focused on Thursday 9 May - the official opening day. We delivered an integrated solution – consumer and business PR, strong social media execution, PR stunts, event activation, a media partnership with a local radio station, KFM and weekly magazine, HEAT as well a limited radio and out-of-home advertising.

D-14: Traditional media relations

Key influencers, media and bloggers were invited to sneak previews and one-on-one interviews with local and international spokespeople. We issued photo calls and invited a broad range of media to cover the receiving of the key to the city from the Mayor.

D-14: Social media campaign

Facebook adverts and promoted posts focused on a countdown towards launch and creative posts were developed, teasing fans with information snippets.

D-14: Radio competition

KFM ran a radio competition, 'King for a Day,' to create excitement and awareness of BK's opening. We negotiated added-value editorial coverage, ground patrol activations, in-studio interviews and mentions, and a live-broadcast on opening day.

D-7: Whopper publicity stunts

We 'newsjacked' the local media obsession with Bieber and Bon Jovi and created our own international celebrity, The Whopper! Social media was used to leak the news of an important celebrity's arrival at the international airport and news media were alerted. Banners and posters, groupies and photographers - all staged - created hype when the Whopper arrived with an entourage of security men, PR reps and even a 'manager'. Real photographers and news crews were carried along in the hype.

The Whopper's arrival – and his subsequent visits to iconic Cape Town sites - were captured through videos and photography and seeded with bloggers, on social media channels while scoops were given to celebrity-type media.

A planned 'celebrity get-together' with Bieber, Bon Jovi and The Whooper was 'leaked' and social media channels were abuzz. This resulted in a rush of hundreds of teenage fans to a high profile Cape Town hotel. The 'sneak' photos were used to further fuel the social media hype.

D-day: A high-profile event with influencers

Celebrities - who were chosen for the size of their social media following - handed out free Whoppers to the first 1 000 people and were encouraged to post regular updates throughout the official store opening by the Cape Town mayor. Opening day was further supported with performances by local artists and more than 70 media and 100 VIPS's were hosted. Photos, videos and updates were uploaded to YouTube, Facebook and Vine throughout the event and in real time. Consumers could virtually attend and monitor the launch while social media channels kept fans updated on the number of free Whoppers available. A national TV programme, Expresso broadcasted from the event as well.

RESULTS

More than 4 500 people attended the opening day launch festivities – the goal was 1 500 – with some diehard fans sleeping outside the store the previous night. The store was only able to finally close its doors at 1:30am the next morning.

One of the biggest success indicators was the queue that continued to snake outside the flagship store for weeks post-launch – it became a story in itself and journalists, bloggers and the public reported on it for weeks.

BK dominated media agenda:

- Positive media coverage valued at **R 7,24 million** (1:1) over the four-week launch period, with 252 on-message media clippings in local, national and international media
- **100% of targeted media ran our media release as is**, with 85% key message penetration
- **100% media turnout** at three media events
- 124 million media impressions across Facebook and Twitter
- **20 590** new Facebook fans and 3 540 new Twitter fans in 2 weeks
- **7% CTR** on Facebook ads (SA benchmark is 1%)

This resulted in:

- **2 253** whoppers sold on launch day (target: 1 000)
- **4 500** people attended launch day – 166% over target (1 500)
- **39 046** whoppers sold in launch month of May 2013: (target: 22 000)
- **R2 234 413** total sales in May (target: R1 470 000)
- **R5 million** turnover in first seven weeks – more than double expectations
- **R100 average ticket price** per transaction, exceeding R50-spend per head (the local QSR standard)
- Highest bill was **R3 844** on 11 May for 160 whoppers by one person
- The queue remained hundreds deep for weeks, post launch 2013

- Following the launch, trade remained brisk and queue remained lengthy, serving 1 500 to 1 800 people a day and using **1 ton of Whopper patties per week.**