

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD
INFORMATION PAPER

Food Hygiene Campaign: Evaluation of Christmas Campaign

Background and Method

1. The Food Standards Agency conducted a new advertising campaign for Christmas 2007 in England, Wales and Scotland, to raise public awareness of good food hygiene practices and how to reduce risk of food poisoning in the home and focussing on those most likely to cook Christmas Dinner i.e. women, aged 25 – 44, social groups B, C1, C2, D.
2. The advertising was carried out on commercial radio between the 19th and 25th December and consisted of two adverts along the theme of “recipes for disaster” and featured the celebrity chefs Gary Rhodes and Ainsley Harriot. The Gary Rhodes advert focussed on the message of not washing your turkey so as to avoid cross contamination and the Ainsley Harriot advert focussed on how to ensure the turkey was cooked properly.
3. The advertising campaign was accompanied by a press release/press activity which started on the 12th December. Both channels directed consumers to eatwell.gov.uk where there was extensive information about the safe preparation and cooking of poultry. For the first time the “turkeymail” was advertised on these pages which was an e mail address that consumers could use to ask, and get answers to specific questions.
4. Questions were placed on the RSGB Omnibus survey prior to the advertising campaign and shortly after it finished. The survey interviewed a representative (in terms of gender, age, and working status) sample of UK adults (aged 16+) of 2000.

Research summary

5. Following the campaign there was a significant decrease in the proportion of adults stating that the poultry was washed (from 79% (pre) to 60% (post)) and there was a resulting increase in the proportion saying that the poultry was not washed (from 13% (pre) to 25% (post)).
6. The most frequently mentioned way of knowing when your poultry is cooked was to see when the juices run clear. There was an increase at the post evaluation stage in the proportion of respondents stating this, from 53% (pre) to 62% (post).

7. The percentage of respondents who had heard or seen any advertising or publicity about the preparation and cooking of turkeys significantly increased at the post wave of research (from 14% (pre) to 30% (post)). This was true for both the total population and for the target audience.
8. Those who listened to commercial radio were more likely to have heard/seen any publicity than those who had not and the proportion increased with frequency of listening:
Daily 42%, Weekly 38%, Less often 31% and Never 24%
9. There was a significant difference in the proportion of the target sample who mentioned radio between the pre and post wave. At the pre wave none of the target sample mentioned radio but at the post wave, 19% mentioned the radio.
10. A total of 20% of respondents had heard either of the two radio adverts, of which 13% heard Gary Rhodes (not washing) and 14% heard Ainsley Harriot (cooking).
11. Unsurprisingly, recognition increased amongst those who listened to commercial radio. 40% of those who had listened daily/most days, and 35% of those who listened at least weekly had heard either of the adverts.
12. Respondents indicated that the Gary Rhodes advert (not washing) was more likely to give new information with 48% disagreeing with the statement that it didn't tell them anything new, compared to 30% for the Ainsley Harriot advert (cooking).
13. A majority agreed with the statement for both adverts that "it was useful to be reminded about preparing/cooking poultry" (83% Gary Rhodes advert, 84% Ainsley Harriot advert).
14. A majority disagreed with the statement that it put them off cooking turkey (81% Gary Rhodes advert, 84% Ainsley Harriot advert).

Media Statistics

15. The campaign created 134 separate items/articles in the national and regional press. This included:
 - One television interview with Judith Hilton on GMTV
 - 26 radio interviews (15 in England, six in Scotland and five in Wales)
 - Articles in six national newspapers (The Mail, The Mirror, The Sun, Daily Star, The Times (magazine) and The Express)
 - Articles in 46 regional newspapers, 18 web pieces (including articles on the BBC and Which online)
 - Two articles for newsletters (Age Concern and the Alderhey Children's hospital).

16. The campaign created 47 million WOTS (weighted opportunities to see), that were 100% positive.
17. The reach of the coverage was greater in social class C1 and the age group 25-44.

Web Statistics

18. The Christmas campaign resulted in the highest ever traffic to eatwell.gov.uk during December.
19. This reached a peak on Christmas Eve when 22,536 visitors accessed the site, up from 9,952 on December 23 and on Christmas Day 12,820 visitors accessed the site. Overall eatwell.gov.uk had 259,702 visits during December (source: Google Analytics).
20. There was a total of just over 150 queries in all as a result of Christmas activity. This compares with around 50 last year.

Conclusion

21. This evaluation suggests that the elements of the campaign combined to create extensive coverage within and beyond our target audience, with a high level of recollection of the adverts and coverage within the congested pre-Christmas marketplace, and had provided clear take-out advice. It was also done on a limited budget and short timeframe.

**Secretariat
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