

Which Holiday Food Should Your Advertising Strategy Mimic?

To some people, the holidays are a time for family, presents and laughter. And while I can appreciate spending time with my family (to some degree anyway), gift giving and good ol' fashioned holiday cheer, I'm really all about the food. To me the holidays are about stuffing my face with sinfully delicious goodies yet not feeling sinful about it. Is that so wrong?

As I was fantasizing about all of the sweet and savory treats I shall consume in the coming weeks, it occurred to me that some holiday foods have an awful lot in common with certain forms of advertising. Since one of the questions we're often asked by clients is, "What type of advertising is best for my product or service," I thought I'd outline some of the benefits of print, digital and mobile advertising with an homage to my favorite holiday foods.

Eggnog

An eggnog. This classic shares many similarities with print advertising; I bet you didn't know that. Like print, eggnog seems to have been around since forever; in fact culinary historians put eggnog's origins as far back as medieval Britain when people drank a hot, milky ale-like drink in those gigantic silver mugs (I'm speculating about the mugs).

And, also like print, though eggnog has enjoyed being popular for decades, many people now consider it a bit... passé.

The very idea of print advertising *or* eggnog ever being passé puts a crimp in my stocking. Neither will go out of style and here's why:

A Targeted Audience

Print advertising, more than any other, allows highly targeted ad placements that will get your offer in front of the right audience and **ONLY** the right audience. Newspapers in particular, with their special sections, inserts and ability to target specific geographic areas as well as defined groups of consumers, make reaching your target demographic easy and cost-effective.

If you're an eggnog lover like I am, the beverage also helps you get in touch with people who want to hear what you have to say, mainly other eggnog drinkers. Imagine being at a holiday party: in one corner is a group of hipsters, each holding a new fandangled cocktail, in the other corner, a handful of diehard

eggnog drinkers. Who are you going to reach out to? Who will you have more in common with? Who knows how to party in a classic, unpretentious way? The eggnog drinkers, of course.

A Trusted Source of Information

Despite the growth of online advertising channels in recent years, numerous studies repeatedly show that print media is still the most trusted source of information. Consumers still turn to newspapers and magazines to get accurate and timely information before making a buying decision. In this way you could say print media is the “go to” media for consumer research.

Eggnog is also a “go to” beverage for many holiday consumers. If it wasn’t, why would every single grocery store in America, yes, every single one, carry those little milk cartons of the stuff? Huh? I rest my case.

Affluent Consumers Prefer Print Advertising

According to a 2012 Ipsos MediaCT Mendelsohn Affluent Survey, 82% of those with an annual household income of \$100,000 or more are reading print publications. As an advertiser, you most likely want to get your offer in front of those with a large disposable income.

Know what else the affluent like besides newspapers and magazines? Eggnog. Or at least they did. Back in the 1700s, which was kind of a heyday for eggnog, milk, eggs, and sherry were foods only the affluent could afford.

Popcorn Tins

To this day I get way too excited at receiving a holiday popcorn tin shipped to me by a faraway aunt or uncle. What makes these holiday tins so fantastic is the variety of popcorn flavors packed inside. In this way, popcorn tins are a lot like digital advertising.

Digital advertising also offers a variety of flavors and channels to reach your audience like email marketing, banner ads, PPC and organic search. Digital advertising allows you to take full control of the search engines, individual websites and social networks and get your business instantly in front of prospects.

Campaign Results are Easily Measured

Measuring results is crucial in determining whether your campaign is a hit or a flop. Digital advertising allows you to easily collect data like how many hits your page has gotten, the number of times an ad was viewed, and whether the activity resulted in a sale or a subscription.

A popcorn tin also makes it very easy to determine which flavor is the biggest hit in your household: simply take off the lid and look at which wedge of popcorn is lower than the others. Collecting this data lets you surreptitiously mention to your aunt your family's love of cheddar and kettlecorn popcorn but not so much the classic butter so she may make a more informed buying decision next year.

Digital Ads are Engaging Ads

Although offline media has its merits, as I've mentioned, online advertising offers much more interactivity. Whether you incorporate videos, games or audio messages into your campaign, you have a much better chance of keeping your prospects engaged.

Popcorn is also engaging. You can shove a handful into your mouth at once, or let one single piece melt on your tongue. You can toss a piece up in the air and try and catch it in your mouth, or toss it across the room to see if your dog can catch it in his. Very engaging indeed.

Speed of Delivery

In digital advertising, there is very little time between when a campaign rolls out and when prospects interact with your message. Modifications to your ads can also happen quickly. This speed of delivery is one of the biggest benefits of digital advertising.

When the popcorn tin is opened on Christmas morning, it can instantly be consumed as the popcorn has already been popped for you.

Glazed Ham

In our house we keep things traditional by baking a glazed ham for our family dinner. Now stay with me here because I may blow your mind when I tell you how a glazed ham and mobile advertising are not dissimilar.

Portable Advertising

Mobile phone users are generally never without their mobile phone. In this way they can take your advertising campaigns and brand messaging with them wherever they go.

Although you can, technically, take a glazed ham with you wherever you go, it's easier to make a ham sandwich out of the leftovers and take the sandwich with you wherever you go. Sandwiches are the quintessential mobile food.

Cost-Effective Advertising

In recent years, the cost of launching mobile marketing campaigns has been dramatically reduced. SMS costs have dropped from \$0.15 per message just a couple of years ago to about \$0.07 today, with lower rates available for larger campaigns.

Ham is also very affordable. Compared to a rack of lamb or prime rib roast, a baked ham is clearly the more affordable choice.

Time-Sensitive Messaging

Because mobile customers usually have their phones turned on, they can receive time-sensitive messages from you about sales and special offers with no delays.

Okay, I'll admit, I don't have a ham equivalent to this benefit, except to say that time-sensitive messaging is delicious and so is ham.

This holiday, while you're spending time with your family, opening presents and spreading good cheer – and hopefully stuffing your face full of decadent goodies – think about the business goals you'd like to reach in the coming year and how print, digital and mobile marketing can help you reach them.