



PACKAGED GOODS SILVER WINNER Honey Nut Cheerios - The Best of Both Worlds

The Best of Both Worlds

Client: General Mills, Inc.

Business Situation & Campaign Objectives

For years sweetened cereals dominated the Hispanic Ready-to-Eat (RTE) category; however, in 2006, category dynamics took a significant turn with this historical titan no longer serving to drive growth. Instead, a new champion emerged, Healthy Taste cereals - comprised predominantly of Sweet Wholesome (e.g., Special K flankers) and Honey-based (e.g., Honey Bunches of Oats) brands/products.

Despite Honey Nut Cheerios' ranking as the sixth largest cereal brand in the Hispanic market in 2007, there remained a significant share gap in comparison with the General Market. Recognizing the growth potential of this key demographic in the newly established Healthy Taste segment, the brand resolved to shift from a family-focused positioning to one that would resonate with Spanish Dominant Hispanic Adults, heart-health. Honey Nut Cheerios' health credentials were well poised to capitalize on the burgeoning awareness of heart disease (No. 1 killer of Hispanic women) and obesity. And while the brand had been touting its heart-health benefits – lowering cholesterol, in particular – in the General Market, these credentials were yet to be established among Hispanics who viewed Honey Nut Cheerios as primarily a kid cereal, due to its high-taste attributes.

Business Challenge

Close large dollar share gap between General Market and Hispanic Market

Campaign Objective

- Shift brand perceptions from a family-focused, predominantly kid cereal, to a heart healthy, adult choice
 - Success Goal: Move soft measures associated with heart health to over 100 index

Research Story

Preliminary Learnings

With a shift in positioning, research became imperative to the discovery of how best to approach heart health messaging with our target audience. Based on our expertise and synthesis of secondary resources, we first identified fundamental understandings regarding Hispanics, food and overall health:

1. Hispanics tend to be more reactive than preventative when it comes to health.
2. Hispanics are claiming to seek healthier measures when it comes to their diet. However, these concerns are often incongruent with consumers' actions.
3. When it comes to food, Hispanic palettes are accustomed to meals high in fat. We know that as a culture, Hispanics live to eat, rather than eat to live. As such, *Sabor* (taste) is at the forefront of meal preparation and the number one driver of product selection. For many, there is a general (mis)perception that "almost everything that is good for you, doesn't taste very good."

Based on our preliminary understandings of the Hispanic market, it became evident that a heart healthy, adult cereal was going to be a hard sell for the brand. Recognizing the challenges with this consumer group, the next phase of the research became critical in understanding the following:

How do we talk about heart health in a manner that will not only encourage Latinas to begin thinking about food in a preventative way, but motivate purchase of Honey Nut Cheerios, given the health food perception barrier?

Qualitative Focus Groups

Approach: Given the open-ended nature of our questions and the flexibility of group discussion, qualitative research was the better suited methodology for our primary efforts. Groups were conducted among Spanish-Dominant Hispanic Women, who were the primary purchasers of groceries in the household, and consisted of six (6) respondents per group.

Takeaways/Insights:

- Much like we discovered in the preliminary phase, Latinas are reactive consumers, who avoid going to the doctor all-together, unless the case is severe.
- Cholesterol and blood-pressure lowering benefits were identified as the benefits that have the strongest top-of-mind awareness and connection to heart-health.
- Furthermore, while Latinas claim they want to take healthier measures to ensure a healthy heart, qualitative data confirmed that when it comes to making food choices, there is an overall reluctance among Hispanics to sacrifice taste for health. **Taste and health, are perpetually at odds with one another, leaving many consumers in turmoil as they are not willing to make something unpleasurable a regular part of their diet.** Because they truly believe that eating healthy and eating tasty are ingredients that don't mix in the same bowl, having the two would be simply "unbelievable"... "too good to be true".

Strategic Direction

Honey Nut Cheerios dispels the notion of having to choose between something that is sabroso and something that is healthy.

With this dissonant consumer perception in mind, it became essential that our messaging strategy not only be true to our brand's core promise, but also be hinged on a risky and

mind-opening proposition. In effect, we had to instill in our Hispanic target the possibility of the unlikely: In a world where a simple and easy food such as cereal can deliver good health and great taste, surely anything else is possible.

This “unbelievable” insight guided the positioning of Honey Nut Cheerios as a tasty adult cereal touting whole grain oat goodness and the heart-health benefit of lowering cholesterol, showcasing to consumers that, unbelievably, they CAN have taste and health or...“the best of both worlds.”

Campaign Description

Target Audience:

Although we identified our core consumer as a 38-year-old mother of three, it was the attitudinal characteristics of our target audience that drove creative and media development:

For our Latina mama, maintaining her health is critical as she considers herself the anchor of the family. And while she knows what she should be eating, she finds it difficult to change her old habits, often succumbing to the flavors and dishes she grew up with.

Media Plan:

While we recognized that our Hispanic consumer lives in two worlds spending time with both English and Spanish media options, the general-market advertising was not resonating with our Hispanic target. By delivering the Honey Nut Cheerios’ messaging in a distinctly Hispanic way – the right insight, actors, execution, touchpoints – we were able to close the communication gap by having the English- and Spanish-language messages reinforce one another. To deliver Honey Nut Cheerios’ heart health messaging with maximum impact, National Hispanic Network TV was the vehicle of choice.

The national TV strategy on Univision, Telefutera, Telemundo and Azteca America, for reaching the Spanish-speaking female target, was to position the advertising message when the target was most receptive.

Lastly, a 360 promotional effort during key apertures provided a heavy focus on a sweepstakes with telenovela star Juan Soler, which included touchpoints from TV, magazine, online, festivals, in-store and on-pack.

Creative Executions

“Phone” (:30) TV Ad

This execution utilizes two women to tell the product story in a telephone conversation between friends. The magic of the spot is that it playfully dispels the notion of having to choose between taste and health – with a nod to the conventions of family dynamics in the Hispanic culture. Here, we see the skeptical friend doubting the duality of the cereal. This doubt is further emphasized metaphorically with having a sexy husband that folds laundry.

“Phone/Juan Soler Tag” (:30) TV Ad

To seamlessly connect the promotional power with the awareness success of “Phone”, a :10 tag was organically connected to run as a :30 National TV spot over a two month

period, building awareness around the sweepstakes and driving consumers in-store and online. By showing the everyday woman of the original commercial having breakfast with an unattainable, well-known telenovela star, we further touched on the “unbelievable” insight.

“House Phone” (:30) TV Ad

Due to the in market success seen from “Phone”, the team developed a campaign continuation spot with the same talent/cast to continue the friends’ story. In this sequence, the unbelievability that consumers could relate to in the original “Phone” ad was given a twist. Here, the husband has taken our hero on an all day shopping spree and to top things off, is now giving her a foot massage at home.

“Juan Soler” Print Ad

As part of the General Mills corporate platform “Que Rica Vida”, a promotional focused print ad was circulated in the “Que Rica Vida” publication to further educate consumers on the sweepstakes details and excite them to participate.

“Juan Soler” Festival Collateral

The product was sampled in September (during the promotion period). To increase branding we included life size cut-outs of Juan Soler, along with flyers driving consumers to their local grocery store and to the microsite to purchase product and submit UPC codes for a chance to win breakfast with the telenovela star.

“Desayunaconjuansoler.com” Promotional Micro-site

The microsite was the main form of entry into the sweepstakes to win a chance to have breakfast with Juan Soler and fly 5 friends to Los Angeles for the weekend. The site consisted of branding and language that played up the duality of taste and health for Honey Nut Cheerios, along with behind the scenes footage from the television shoot, photos of Juan Soler, and his biography.

Business Results

Business Challenge: Beginning with the campaign launch in September 2007, the brand experienced 13-consecutive weeks of baseline increases – resulting in the highest Hispanic base dollar share in Honey Nut Cheerios history. From beginning to the end of the campaign, Hispanic base dollar share increased by an unprecedented 20 percent.

Campaign Objective #1: Post wave results reported a positive shift in brand imagery and “health” as an equity driver versus the pre-wave. Our marketing efforts were successful in positioning Honey Nut Cheerios as a leading brand in heart health (110 index).

Additionally, our success went above and beyond the goals set at the beginning of our efforts:

- Honey Nut Cheerios has moved from the number six slot, to the fourth largest Hispanic cereal in the U.S.
- As of the fourth quarter of 2008, Hispanic dollar volume is up 36.5% vs. 22.2% for General Market and Hispanic dollar share of 4.41 has met the 3 year goal of 4.43 in only a year and a half.