**McDonald’s achieves ‘exceptional’ branding score with eyebrow raising ad - By Michaela Jefferson - 16 Jan 2023**

*Having won over marketers with its subtle approach to branding, McDonald’s new campaign scores high on brand recognition and short-term sales potential, according to effectiveness firm System1.*

<https://youtu.be/arlXqMg4FO4>

McDonald’s latest campaign achieves an “exceptional” brand recognition score of 98, according to data from effectiveness firm System1, despite being the fast-food chain’s first ad not to showcase either its restaurants or food.

Created by Leo Burnett UK, ‘Fancy a McDonald’s?’ follows a group of office workers using a knowing, raised eyebrow signal to communicate an invitation to get McDonald’s food without saying a word.

While the brand’s name isn’t shown until the ad’s closing moments, its iconic assets are peppered subtly throughout, from the red and yellow outfit of the film’s opening character to a hand drawn McDonald’s logo on a yellow post-it note. The raised eyebrows themselves are also a nod to the brand’s Golden Arches logo, with viewers invited to join in by raising their own ‘arches’.

According to System1’s Test Your Ad platform, which tests ads with 150 consumers, 98% recognised the 60-second spot was a McDonald’s ad before the end. The average score within the category is 91%, indicating the ad’s “exceptional” strength in brand recognition.

Recognition spiked within the first 10 seconds of the ad, at the moment the Post-it note first appears. Remaining high for the remaining 50 seconds, it was boosted a second time when the Post-it note reappears towards the end.

The ad’s emotional intensity score also comes out above average at 1.73 out of 3, versus 1.26. It evokes particularly strong feelings of happiness, felt by 41% of consumers versus an average 38%.

Meanwhile, it achieves an “exceptional” spike rating of 1.48. A measure of short-term sales potential, the average spike rating for the category is 1.4.

However, the ad falls below the average on its potential to drive long-term growth, achieving a “good” score of 3.1 out of a possible 5.9. The category average score is 3.5.

The campaign launch was teased on social channels and TV end frames last week with an eyebrow adaptation of the McDonald’s logo. On top of the TV spot, a series of through the line ads and activations are running across social media, underpinned by a digital sales promotion to drive app downloads.

“In a challenging time, our Raise Your Arches invitation to McDonald’s provides the nation with a small but much-needed moment to let go and feel good,” says UK and Ireland CMO Michelle Graham-Clare.

“We hope the campaign raises arches and smiles across the country and I can’t wait to see everyone get involved.”

The ad has impressed many in the marketing industry, with marketers praising McDonald’s for leveraging the strength of its existing brand equity and for the salience-building potential of the eyebrow movement.

Co-founder of The Marketing Meetup Joe Glover wrote on LinkedIn: “Very few brands would get away without showing the thing they are advertising, but McDonald’s have built such recognition, they can do this.”

The campaign comes a week after McDonald’s announced plans to “elevate” its marketing through an investment in “creative excellence”, part of a wider revamp.

The business says it wants to create more “culturally relevant campaigns” such as ‘Famous Orders’ from 2020, which asked stars including Kim Kardashian and Millie Bobby Brown to describe their ‘go-to’ McDonald’s order. The company claims this campaign drove growth and elevated the “entire brand”.

The revamp will likely mean job cuts, with CEO Chris Kempczinski telling employees the company is suffering from an “outdated and self-limiting” structure. Staff levels are to be reviewed by April.

**Source**

Jefferson, M. (2023) McDonald's achieves 'exceptional' branding score with eyebrow raising AD, [online] Marketing Week. Available at: <https://www.marketingweek.com/mcdonalds-exceptional-branding-system1/> (Accessed: January 18, 2023).