**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE “TASTE OF THE WORLD” CAMPAIGN IN OREGON, USA**

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**INTRODUCTION**

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In the United States of America, McDonald’s main focus has been on improving its food quality, rather than the innovation of new menu items. However, recent studies show Americans’ increasing interest and receptiveness towards ethnic foods. To capitalize on these findings, McDonald’s sought a new sales approach by marketing to the country’s diverse cultures and ethnicities. To this end, McDonald’s decided to initiate a new “Taste of the World” campaign, using the state of Oregon as its first experimental ground.

The state of Oregon will serve as the campaign’s first milestone. Based on the sales at the Oregon franchises, the company will gauge whether to continue and expand this venture into a national campaign. Though studies show Americans’ increasing interest in ethnic foods, the company anticipates that each state will have differing taste preferences and thus, realizes the need to conduct a detailed analysis on the state of Oregon. Therefore, Corbett Upton, the Vice President of Operations, has asked the marketing department to conduct this analysis and provide three menu items that could be featured in the campaign in Oregon.

The purpose of this report is to suggest three menu items from McDonald’s international menus that best fit with Oregonians’ taste preferences. The report outlines the reasons for choosing a particular menu item, but it is difficult to project the possible impact these menu items will have in the campaign. Thus, the recommendations presented here are “best effort” estimations that seek to maximize Oregonians’ receptiveness towards this new promotion.

In preparing this report, the marketing department analyzed Oregon’s climate & geography, demographics, natural resources, and primary food industries. To determine the eating preferences of Oregonians, we distributed ten thousand questionnaires to the state’s local citizens—of which the tallies of the results and the original survey can be found in the appendix. Findings from this research were then used to filter for international menu choices that best with the campaign. The marketing department also assessed the possible use of local ingredients to specialize these international menu items for Oregonians.

**A Preview of the Recommendations**

Based on the research on Oregon and the results from the survey, the marketing department recommends the following three menu items from McDonald’s international menus to feature in the campaign:

* **Japan’s Korokke Burger** is a lunch or dinner option, which caters towards Oregonians’ preference for Japanese cuisine. It is made primarily of shrimp, potatoes, and cheese—all of which can be easily and freshly provided by Oregon’s producers and harvesters.
* **Mexico’s McMolletes** is a breakfast option, which caters towards the Hispanic or Latino population in Oregon and fits with Oregonians’s preference for Mexican cuisine. It is also similar to the McMuffin, though without an egg and instead with an ethnic twist of refried beans and pico de gallo.
* **Italy’s Spinach and Parmesan Cheese Nuggets** is a snack, which caters towards Oregonian’s preference for Italian cuisine. It also provides an opportunity for McDonald’s to work closely with Oregon’s famous creameries such as the Tillamook County Creamery Association to add a local taste to the dish.

**MOTIVATION FOR THE “TASTE OF THE WORLD” CAMPAIGN**

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McDonald’s Corporation owns the world’s largest chain of fast-food restaurants, with more than 34,000 restaurants worldwide (McDonald's). Among the reasons this chain is so successful is its adaptability in various countries, providing innovative menu items that fit the taste buds of the local community (Franchise Direct). A perfect example of this was in 2008 when McDonald’s Italy targeted native palates by working with Italian farmers to add the country’s famous Parmigiano Reggiano Cheese to its burgers (Ellis, “McDonald's wins with global palates”). That year, McDonald’s reported an increase of 15% revenue from its franchises in Italy. It is such willingness to innovate and adapt that McDonald’s has grown to include over 1.8 million employees with restaurants deployed in over 118 countries (McDonald's).

In the United States of America, McDonald’s primary focus has been on improving its food quality, rather than the innovation of new menu items. In 2012, McDonald’s highlighted its beverages such as the McCafé, while promoting limited-time offers, like the McRib, and remodeling its restaurants with more modern designs (“2012 Annual Report” 12). However, recent studies like Scott-Thomas’ article, “Americans’ taste preferences,” show Americans’ increasing interest and receptiveness towards ethnic foods. Cuisines such as Japanese or Thai have increased in popularity, while cuisines like Italian, Mexican, and Chinese have become generally accepted cuisines in the States. Further studies show that the reasons for this increase can be related to the consumer’s ethnic backgrounds, culturally diverse neighborhoods, and possibly cookbooks that include a variety of international recipes.

For the coming year, McDonald’s will continue to focus on “serving great-tasting, high-quality food in contemporary restaurants” (“2012 Annual Report” 13). Specifically, in the U.S., the company will continue its remodeling program and promote its Dollar Menu, while immersing itself in children’s well-being and community involvement. However, to capitalize on Americans’ increasing interest in ethnic foods, the company realizes a need to not only promote its current menu, but to also expand the menu to include new innovative products (14). To this end, McDonald’s decided to initiate a new “Taste of the World” campaign.

To minimize risk, McDonald’s first step was to select a state to test the success of this new campaign. Upon analysis, McDonald’s found the state of Oregon to be the most suitable. The state of Oregon is contains a duality in climates in its Eastern and Western portions, allowing McDonald’s to test the campaign in two diverse, but nearby areas. Besides being a producer of over 250 types of foods, the state is also located near the coast, which allows McDonald’s to readily test its seafood items in this campaign. In addition, the population is fairly diverse, with a reputable population of its citizens with ethnic origins. Lastly, Oregon is a state known to be receptive towards new ideas, which will allow McDonald’s to collect greater amounts of information from curious consumers.

**A STUDY OF OREGON**

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**Research on Oregon’s Demographics and Food Industries**

As of 2012, the United States Census Bureau reports 3,899,353 people living in the state of Oregon (“Oregon QuickFacts”). The state is evenly dispersed between male and female, with a median age of 38.4 years old. Around 12.2% of the population is either Hispanic or Latino. In detail, about 484,701 people in Oregon are of ethnic backgrounds.

The state of Oregon is located on the North-West coast of the United States. The Cascade Ranges vertically splits the state (see Figure 1), forming two diverse climates (“Oregon Climate”). Mild temperatures with heavy precipitation mark the West of the Cascades, forming lush, green lands. On the contrary, the East of the Cascades is dominated by deserts, with extreme temperatures and little precipitation.

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| **Figure 1**  Physical map of Oregon, highlighting geographical features and main cities  \* Green marks lower elevations, while brown marks higher elevations.  Source: *FreeWorldMaps.com* | C:\Users\Melody\Dropbox\WR321\WR321_Assign_FormalReport\Pictures\oregon-map.jpg |

Oregon’s climate and geography further splits the state into seven major growing regions, producing more than 250 different products and contributing to more than 8 billion dollars to the state’s economy (“Oregon Facts & Figures”). With more than 38,500 farms in Oregon, some of Oregon’s major agricultural products include milk, cattle, hay, berries, pears, potatoes, eggs, onions, peppermint, wine grapes, and sweet corn. United States Department of Agriculture reports that Oregon is the nation’s number one producer of foods such as blackberries, hazelnuts, peppermint, and Christmas trees (“Oregon Agriculture”). One of the state’s famous products is Rogue Creamery’s Oregon Blue cheese, which won the London World Cheese Award, also marking it as the first American cheese to ever win the award (“Oregon Food Industry”).

Besides agriculture products, the state also enjoys abundant harvests of seafood ranging from Dungeness crabs to sea urchins (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, “Oregon's Ocean Commercial Fisheries”). Some of Oregon’s largest commercial fisheries include Dungeness crab, pink shrimp, Albacore Tuna, and Salmon. In 2012, Oregon reported a harvest value of over 145 million dollars for all Oregon fisheries (“Oregon Department of Agriculture – Oregon’s Seafood”). The state also ranks as one of the top producers of Dungeness crab worldwide, making the Dungeness crab the number one crustacean of the state (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, “Oregon's Ocean Commercial Fisheries”). Coming in second to the Dungeness crab, the state caught 49.1 million pounds of pink shrimp in 2012, contributing 24 million dollars to the state’s economy (Tobias, “Oregon’s Once-tiny Shrimp”).

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| C:\Users\Melody\Dropbox\WR321\WR321_Assign_FormalReport\Pictures\100ob.jpg  **Figure 2**  Rogue Creamery’s world-famous Oregon Blue Cheese  Source: *RogueCreamery.com* | C:\Users\Melody\Dropbox\WR321\WR321_Assign_FormalReport\Pictures\feature_crab.jpg  **Figure 3**  Oregon’s Dungeness Crab, the number one shellfish of Oregon  Source: *Oregon.gov* | C:\Users\Melody\Dropbox\WR321\WR321_Assign_FormalReport\Pictures\shrimphandjpegcrop.jpg  **Figure 4**  Oregon’s pink shrimp, accounted for 24 million dollars to the state’s economy in 2012  Source: *OCZMA.org* |

**Eating Preferences of Oregonians**

In addition to statistical research, a questionnaire was given out to 200,000 Oregonians that asked about their eating preferences (see the Appendix). Results from this questionnaire are used to ultimately determine which an international menu item should be featured in the campaign in Oregon. Overall, there were few questions regarding demographics, and the survey mainly focused on a participant’s eating habits and their opinion of McDonald’s.

Though the survey was broadcasted to all Oregonians, most of the volunteers for the survey were male, between the ages of 19 to 30. Survey results show that participants do not have a preference for red or white meats, and a majority of them consume seafood. Further results show that 18% of the participants are vegetarians of some kind. In addition, the results report that around 24% of participants were either lactose intolerant or allergic to eggs, fish, or certain cheeses (see Table 1).

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Survey Results: Participants with Dietary Issues** | | | | Answer |  | % | | I have no dietary issues | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 75% | | Lactose intolerant | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 6% | | Wheat sensitivity or allergy (celiac disease) |  | 0% | | Phenylketonuria |  | 0% | | Yeast allergy |  | 0% | | Peanut (or other nut) allergy |  | 0% | | Egg allergy | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 6% | | Fish or shellfish allergy | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 6% | | Soy allergy |  | 0% | | Other | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 6% |   **Table 1**  Responses from 200,000 Oregonians regarding their dietary issues  \*Question Given: Please check all dietary issues you currently have |

The second half of the survey asks questions regarding McDonald’s, particularly gauging their receptiveness towards the possibility of international menu choices being added to their local McDonald’s. 38% of the 200,000 participants stated they were satisfied with the variety of menu choices at their local McDonald’s, while 44% responded with “I don’t know.” Most importantly, a majority of the participants, 69% of the 200,000, responded they would be willing to try the ethnic food choices if their local McDonald’s were to include them into their menus. Generally, there was not a particular preference for breakfast, lunch or dinner, snacks, or desert options. Finally, when asked about the types of international cuisines they would like added to their local McDonald’s menus, the top four answers include Chinese, Italian, Japanese, and Mexican (see Table 2).

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Survey Results: Most Appealing International Cuisines for Participants** | | | | Answer | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | % | | American | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 2% | | Chinese | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 19% | | French | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 5% | | Indian | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 9% | | Italian | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 16% | | Japanese | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 21% | | Mexican | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 14% | | Thai | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 5% | | Other | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 9% |   **Table 2**  Responses from 200,000 Oregonians regarding McDonald’s and international cuisines  \*Question Given: If your local McDonald’s were to add international food choices to its menu, what kinds of cuisines would you like to see? |

Lastly, the survey reports that 38% of the participants eat at McDonald’s less than once a month and 25% of the participants choose not to eat at McDonald’s at all. The participants explained their reason was primarily due to the lack of vegetarian options. However, some participants also responded that they do not eat at McDonald’s because they prefer to support local businesses.

**THE THREE MENU ITEMS TO FEATURE IN THE CAMPAIGN**

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Outside of research on Oregon, the marketing team also conducted a brief study on the general eating preferences of the nation and found that Italian, Mexican, and Chinese are considered “normal” cuisines (Scott-Thomas, “Americans’ taste preferences”). On the other hand, Americans show an increasing interest for lesser known ethnic cuisines such as Japanese and Thai.

The marketing team used these findings along with the findings on their research from Oregon to filter for menu items from McDonald’s international menus that best cater to Oregonians. While there were many factors to consider, the team weighed their decisions heavily based on the surveys. We reason that the questionnaire most accurately presents current opinions from Oregonians; it was tailored to provide information that directly relates to McDonald’s, unlike the general studies that were performed on Oregon and the United States.

In considering which three menu items to recommend, the marketing team decided to select three different meal options to give customers variety in their meal options: breakfast, snack or appetizer, and lunch or dinner. Based on our findings, we also decided to select menu items from the following cuisines: Italian, Mexican, and Japanese. Both the survey results and general studies indicate that these are popular and accepted cuisines. We also reason that this will give Oregonians more options: to either select familiar ethnic cuisines such as Italian or Mexican or a lesser known (and more exotic) cuisine such as Japanese.

Besides the following items we recommend, the team also proposes a focus on using ingredients provided by local producers or harvesters produce. This also localizes the food, making McDonald’s feel “closer to home.” The recommendations also include a suggested price, which reflects on prices of similar food items found on McDonald’s current menus.

**First Recommendation: McMolletes**

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| **Origin:** McDonald’s Mexico  **Meal Option Type**: Breakfast  **Main Ingredients:** Refried beans, cheese,  pico de gallo  **Suggested Price:** $2.29 | C:\Users\Melody\Dropbox\WR321\WR321_Assign_FormalReport\Pictures\mc-molletes.jpg  **Figure 5**  McDonald’s Mexico’s McMolletes  Source: *mcdonalds.com.mx* |

Similar to the McMuffin (but without an egg), the McMolletes is a breakfast option. An extremely popular menu item, the McMolletes accounts for 22% of the revenue at McDonald’s Mexico franchises. The marketing team is eager to recommend this item, which caters to the Hispanic or Latino population in Oregon and also fits with Oregonians’ preference of Mexican cuisine.

**Second Recommendation: Spinach and Parmesan Cheese Nuggets**

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| **Alternative Name(s):** Crocchette di Spinaci Parmigiano Reggiano  **Origin:** McDonald’s Italy  **Meal Option Type**: Snack or Appetizer  **Main Ingredients:** Spinach, Parmesan Cheese  **Suggested Price (9 pcs):** $4.95 | **Figure 6**  McDonald’s Italy’s Spinach and Parmesan Cheese Nuggets  Source: *www.mcdonalds.it* |

Another highly popular item in its home country, these Spinach and Parmesan Cheese Nuggets are a snack option, which caters towards Oregonian’s preference for Italian cuisine. The marketing team also sees an opportunity for McDonald’s to work closely with Oregon’s famous creameries such as Rogue Creamery or Tillamook County Creamery Association to add a local taste to this dish.

**Third Recommendation: Korokke Burger**

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| **Alternative Name(s):** Croquette Burger, Gurako Burger, Gracoro Burger  **Origin:** McDonald’s Japan  **Meal Option Type**: Lunch or Dinner  **Main Ingredients:** pink shrimp, potatoes, cheese, cabbage  **Suggested Price:** $2.75 | **Figure 7**  McDonald’s Japan’s Korokke Burger  Source: *www.mcdonalds.co.jp* |

The term “Gurako” is a Japanese term made of two words, gratin and korokke (croquette), which is used to describe this burger. It has a particularly melty consistency. Similar to the McRibs, this is also a seasonal item at the McDonald’s franchises in Japan. The marketing team chose this more exotic option to cater towards Oregonians’ preference for Japanese cuisine. All of the main ingredients can also be easily and freshly provided by Oregon’s producers and harvesters. Interestingly, we expect this item to be highly popular even outside of Oregon. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, pink shrimp ranks as the nation’s most popular seafood ever since 2003 (Tobias, “Oregon’s Once-tiny Shrimp”).

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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McDonald’s maintains its success due to innovation and a willingness to adapt to various challenges. The current marketing approach in America has been on improving its food quality, rather than the innovation of new menu items. However, Americans are showing increased interest in ethnic foods. To compete with our competitors and respond to consumers’ needs, McDonald’s realized the necessity to bring ethnic foods into its American menus. Therefore, McDonald’s initied the “Taste of the World” campaign is a new promotion. To minimize risk, McDonald’s decided to test the campaign’s success on a small area rather than the entire nation and selected the state of Oregon as its first experimental ground. With a variety of landforms, diverse climates, a community filled with different ethnicities, and over 250 locally produced products, the state of Oregon was a suitable place to start the campaign.

To find suitable items that will cater to Oregonians in this campaign, the marketing team researched various statistics and facts on Oregon. We also gave out a survey to 200,000 Oregonians to find out their taste preferences. In this analysis, we found Oregonians were generally receptive to the idea of the campaign and expressed they would like to see items of Italian, Mexican, or Japanese cuisine. In searching McDonald’s international menus, we found Japan’s Korokke Burger, Mexico’s McMollettes, and Italy’s Spinach and Parmesan Cheese Nuggets to be the most suitable items to feature in this campaign. These recommendations seek to maximize Oregonians’ receptiveness towards this the “Taste of the World” campaign in Oregon, USA. The marketing team also recommended working with Oregon’s local producers to localize these menu items for Oregonians.