



## Kit Kat Takes a Chance on Social Media

The 81-year-old brand saw an opportunity to better engage its young audience using influencers and social media

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### Goal

There is a particular octogenarian teens love, and we're not talking about William Shatner. It's the Kit Kat.

The Hershey Company recently learned that much younger generations—Generation Z and young millennials, in particular—really love the 81-year-old product.

“When we looked at who was consuming our products, we were pretty

surprised by the percentage of people who were younger,” says Ian Norton, director of Kit Kat and PayDay at The Hershey Company. “As we look at the other brands in the category, we definitely skew much younger than those brands do.”

According to Norton, Hershey saw the data and considered it an opportunity to take Kit Kat's iconic positioning around breaks—as referenced in its “Gimme a Break” jingle—and update it for a younger

audience. It wasn't just the jingle that could use an update, though: the concept of breaks has changed as well.

“It used to be this extended break that you take, and now it's the expanse and number of different ways in which people engage in media,” Norton says. “It was an opportunity for us to not only modernize our campaign but modernize how we communicated with our consumer.”

Norton says the value of the break remains, whether it lasts three seconds or 30 minutes. With modern technology, breaks usually occur when people consume social media.

“It's what you do to refocus, to recharge and get back to what you were doing,” Norton says. “We talk about it as internet content—something that's fun, easily digestible and easy to understand.”

### Action

Hershey began its latest Kit Kat campaign in June of 2016, focusing on developing

content that people would look for when taking their frequent breaks throughout the day. Dan Tirol, senior marketing manager for Kit Kat and PayDay in the U.S., explained the company's goals were twofold: The first was to increase the amount of social commentary on the brand among the target audience and engage with them. The second was to make Kit Kat the preferred brand of Gen Z and young millennials.

"We obviously have our TV media, but in addition to that we established all of our social platforms that we didn't have much of a presence on before," Norton says. "We were establishing a strong presence on Facebook, on Instagram, on Twitter. We were also doing a project to engage with local influencers to see if there was a way for them to become brand advocates for us."

One such influencer came to the brand by accident. A freshman student at Kansas State University tweeted a note he found in his car from an anonymous thief who stole nothing else but a Kit Kat from the student's cup holder. The viral tweet made its rounds, and the Kit Kat team at Hershey took note. They responded by sending him 6,500 Kit Kats to fill his car. The story made quite a few rounds on the internet and spawned the #KitKatThief hashtag.

The biggest brand advocate for Kit Kat, however, turned out to be mix-tape artist Chance the Rapper, who reworked the "Gimme a Break" jingle for the brand.

"He fit really nicely with the break concept because we identified him as someone who was on the cusp of breaking out in his career," Norton says. "We also wanted to align with someone who passionately loved candy, has sung about candy, has candy references a lot in his songs. We felt he was very relevant and of the generation we wanted to speak to."

Dressed in a bear suit, the "Sunday Candy" rapper was featured in a commercial shopping for Halloween candy, where his likeness, "Chance the Wrapper," sings the reworked jingle from a Kit Kat wrapper. A full-length, 30-second spot features Chance without a costume and is the first to include the entire song in

a commercial in nearly 20 years. The jingle itself turned 30 years old in 2016.

When Chance tweeted the commercial out to his 3.47 million Twitter followers, his fans were greeted with personalized responses from Kit Kat's Twitter account. The brand inserted users' names on a photo of the candy wrapper. For example, "Terry the Wrapper."

The fact that Chance hasn't signed with any major label and creates and distributes his own music sparked the idea for Hershey's next phase of the campaign. The company partnered with musical.ly, a social media platform designed for creating, sharing and discovering short music videos. The partnership led to a four-day musical #KitKatChallenge that began on Thanksgiving Day 2016 and featured influencers Alli Fitz (@Allicatt) and Bart Baker (@bartbaker), who have 2.28 million and 4.29 million followers, respectively, on the platform.

The two personalities launched the challenge by creating humorous call-to-action videos that encouraged musical.ly users to take a break and create their own version of Chance's Kit Kat

jingle. A scroll through some of the videos tagged #KitKatChallenge includes mother-and-son duos, a grandmother in oversized sunglasses and heartfelt crooners.

"For the past few years we've been trying to talk to our consumers on more established channels," Tirol says. "With this campaign, it was the perfect way for us to test other avenues that were new and different, where we knew our consumers were breaking in. The fact that we have a jingle and the fact that musical.ly is all about music was kind of perfect."

The decision to rework the jingle, though, didn't come easily. Norton says there was some debate within the company, but they ultimately decided it was an opportunity to allow the customer to own the music.

"The power of the jingle, for us, is that we know it's a really strong tool to use in our strategy and communications going forward because the words themselves are very recognizable and there's a lot of different ways you can treat it to keep it contemporary and fresh," Norton says.

## Result

Each component of the campaign has been successful. The #KitKatChallenge, which gained more than 96 million campaign views, was nominated for a Shorty Award. From a social impressions standpoint, which Norton says was a major part of modernizing the brand and building social commentary, the campaign did extremely well. The campaign received 60,000 total challenge submissions on musical.ly, which exceeded the campaign's goal by 20,000 videos. Sponsored videos garnered 1.6 million views and challenge submissions received 21.7 million views.

"The results of the campaign have been terrific for the business," Norton says. "We grew the Kit Kat business' top-line sales almost 6% last year, which is about 10 times what the category grew."

Tirol adds that Kit Kat became a trending topic on both Twitter and Facebook, both for the ad featuring Chance the Rapper and for the #KitKatThief. He calls it a testament to the Kit Kat team's understanding of what its customers like and what would engage them. **m**



### COMPANY

The Hershey Company

### CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

Initial phases ran from June to November, 2016.

### RESULTS

#KitKatChallenge was nominated for a Shorty Award for Multi-Platform Campaign, Emerging Platform and Branded Content; gained more than 96 million campaign views and received more than 60,000 total challenge submissions on musical.ly. Kit Kat grew top-line sales almost 6%.