

## All Pumpkin Everything!

WARNING: The word **pumpkin** will be generously used throughout this post. Prepare yourself!

It's not officially Autumn until the pumpkin flavored and/or scented items come out to play. The orange squash of Halloween-inspired carvings is no longer limited to spooky displays and The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.

Surely you've noticed that every time this season has rolled around, at least within the past four years, some glorious pumpkin themed product makes its debut. This does not include the birth of the beloved fan favorite, Starbucks Pumpkin Spice Latte (which contains zero pumpkin spice), that appeared in 2003.

Thomas' Bagels released its pumpkin spice bagels in 2011. Unlike Starbucks' famed Fall latte, this form of sustenance has pumpkin spice.

Why stop at bagels and coffee? Pumpkin flavored creamer, beer, baking mixes, snack cakes, cream cheese, and ice cream are all available for the taking. Luckily, the rumors about pumpkin-scented tampons were just that – rumors.

Some things are better left pumpkin-less.

Even Trader Joe's has went pumpkin wild, releasing pumpkin toaster pastries, pumpkin cereal bars, pumpkin rolls, pumpkin tortilla chips, pumpkin ravioli and [drumroll please] pumpkin body butter.

According to Vox, Americans purchased \$290,000,000 worth of pumpkin flavored foodstuffs in 2012. Frozen goods and ciders with a marked pumpkin taste are on the rise.

At this rate, you either vote "nay" or "yay" for pumpkin.

## Beyoncé Increases Red Lobster's Sales

Word of mouth will always be the most effective form of advertising. We've heard it a trillion times in the marketing universe, but now Red Lobster knows!

After Beyoncé dropped her latest single, "Formation", Red Lobster experienced a thirty-three percent increase in sales. All due to Mrs. Carter, who shared her practice of rewarding a superb intimate experience with a trip to the chain eatery within the song.

Red Lobster also trended on Twitter, a first for the restaurant aiming "for the seafood lover in you". Within an hour, nearly forty-two thousand mentions of the restaurant were tweeted, which spurred its name in Twitter history.

Kim Lopdrup, CEO of Red Lobster, stated "It's clear that Beyoncé has helped create some Red Lobster fans, and we are very grateful to her for that".

Don't be surprised if talks of Beyoncé becoming a spokesperson for Red Lobster come to fruition.

Having one of the most legendary living music artists drop the name of your business without solicitation is major, and it's nice to know that the famed seafood restaurant is appreciative.

Beyoncé hearts Red Lobster, and Red Lobster hearts Beyoncé.

Let's all hope those "Cheddar Bey Biscuits" become more than merely an idea thrown around in the boardroom.

## Dunkin' Donuts Needs A New, Loveable Mascot

“Time to make the donuts.” You may be oblivious to this catchphrase, which also doubled as a slogan if you were born during or after the mid-90s. Those five words were gold, since they came from Dunkin' Donuts longtime beloved mascot, Fred the Baker. The late Michael Vale portrayed Fred the Baker. Vale retired in 1997, and passed away eight years later. Since his retirement, the global donut and coffee chain has yet to find another winner in the mascot department.

Fred the Baker was delightful, humorous, and the sort of guy you wouldn't mind splitting a box of Munchkins with. He was a portly mustachioed man whose dedication to making donuts was insatiable, and America enjoyed having such a fella on their television screens. Fred the Baker represented the idea of pride in one's work, along with career ingenuity. You may not have wanted to *be* Fred the Baker, but you admired the guy's gusto and perseverance to make the best donuts humankind could afford. The fact that he went in drag, blonde wig and all, to investigate supermarket donuts, is enough to convince anyone how serious he was about his job. That Fred, always willing to go the extra mile!

Dunkin' Donuts has introduced a few new faces, such as the Penguin Suit Guy, and New England Patriot's wide receiver and punt runner, Julian Edelman. These two personalities are fine, but they don't have the essence and charisma of Fred the Baker.

With brand identity, spokespeople and mascots are essential to brands that choose to advertise widely. We see this with insurance companies, like Flo with Progressive and Ronald McDonald of McDonald's. Dunkin' Donuts should consider taking a plan from its vintage playbook, and bring us a mascot that reminds us why, “America Runs On Dunkin'”.

## Lane Bryant to Victoria's Secret: #ImNoAngel

Five months after Victoria's Secret ad for their "Perfect Body" campaign was released, Lane Bryant came out with their own ad campaign in opposition, "I'm No Angel".

The home of the Perfect Shape bra got slammed for insinuating that their slim-bodied models were the ideal image of a "perfect" body. This isn't the first time the company has come under fire for promoting unsavory archetypes. In 2012, Victoria's Secret drew mass criticism for releasing an Asian-inspired lingerie line that missed the mark by playing on Asian stereotypes.

A slender body may be desirable to some, but not all. That's where Lane Bryant comes in, showing that women with curves are as alluring as their thinner counterparts.

Lane Bryant's "I'm No Angel" ad displays a group of diverse women, all from different ranges of the plus-size scale, wearing varying styles of tasteful lingerie. The ad is in black and white, giving it a sensuous and sophisticated appearance.

While we can continue to applaud the success of Victoria's Secret, who's been in the biz for nearly four decades, how long should society accept their skewed ideals of beauty? Will the company ever include plus-sized models in their print and online ads?

Perhaps it's unfair to expect an immense corporation, like that of Victoria's Secret, to target and include other demographics in their campaigns. Perhaps we shouldn't police everyone's notions of beauty.

Within the greater conversation of human aesthetics, we, the people, bear the weight of what's inclusive and exclusive where the topic of body image is concerned.

In the real world, all women aren't shaped like Kate Moss.

## Less E-Waste, Please

We're bombarded with tech chatter and ads of the latest smartphones by Apple, Samsung, HTC, and other major smartphone producers daily. They entice us to splurge, to have the best phone of the moment, but what happens to the stock phones of yesteryear? A lot of them become e-waste, according to a new study by the University of Surrey in England.

E-waste, as reported by Greenpeace International, will triple in developing countries due to the consumer trend of frequent digital device upgrades, particularly among smartphone buyers. Our constant need for the latest and greatest in the mobile phone world comes with a price that doesn't involve payment installments.

Many smartphones contain up to one thousand components, many of which contain toxic heavy metals. When discarded phones end up in landfills, living organisms and the environment suffers.

How can we end this harmful tech hazard?

By recycling.

There are no known chief phone carriers that provide recycling services for phones, though it would be a lot less harmful to Earthlings and the Earth itself. The valuable materials inside of mobile phones, like gold, could be mined and reused in the latest phone models. So why aren't the top phone carriers offering these recycling services?

Lots of commercial phone carriers allow trade-ins for new phones, but no incentives for recycling unwanted and/or unused mobile phones.

T-Mobile, Sprint, AT&T, Verizon, and the like, should be offering solutions to reduce e-waste, instead of focusing solely on how to upsell all of their latest smartphones and services.

Great influence births great responsibility, to our planet and mankind.

## The Ad Council's #LoveHasNoLabels Campaign

For the month of March, the Ad Council's video, "Diversity & Inclusion – Love Has No Labels", has ranked number one in the top five most viewed ad campaigns on YouTube. At present, the ad has over fifty-one million views.

The ad displays an assortment of couples and groups, ranging from friends, family members, and couples, from various backgrounds. A large on-stage x-ray is used to conceal the physical identity of each couple and group, giving the spectator a mere view of skeletons engaging in random actions. After some time behind the x-ray, each couple and group appear before a crowd of strangers. Most of the filmed crowd reactions relay faces of shock and joy. Macklemore's "Same Love" plays throughout the entire video.

The first couple of skeletons engage in an embrace, while kissing one another. Each appears before the crowd, revealing themselves as a same-sex couple.

Another pair of skeletons, small in stature, hugs and plays. Both unveil themselves to the awaiting crowd as a sister duo. One is disabled; the other is not.

You're able to see members of underrepresented groups, like that of interracial LGBTQ couples with children, and friends of different religious sects, showing the world why love is what matters. Not color, race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability. Love should not be based on implicit bias.

To further communicate the ad's message, the Ad Council has provided free literature, which includes a quiz, on what bias is. The quiz allows users to test their own awareness on bias, and offers information on how to decrease implicit bias.

Rethink bias. Think love.

## Natural Hair Product Sales Are Soaring

For ages, we've seen a majority of Black women appear in media with hairstyles heavily leaning towards the Eurocentric variety. Within the past two years, more Black women are appearing in digital, print, and television ads with their hair fashioned in its natural state.

This natural hair wave isn't the first, though it seems to be outdoing the natural hair trend that spurred during the 1960s Civil Rights Movement in the US.

Atlanta Blackstar reported that sales for relaxers have decreased between 2008 and 2013, while the sale of natural hair care products, which include styling moisturizers and curl creams, have increased.

Popular Black hair care companies that previously only catered to Black women desiring to permanently straighten their hair, have felt the pushback of their "regular" products during the current natural hair surge. Some have opted to go along with the trend, by creating products for those who desire to maintain their natural coifs. Queen Helene's Royal Curl®, Motions® Natural Textures, Luster's You Be-Natural®, and Dudley's iDiversify, are examples of mainstream Black hair companies attempting to keep up with the current.

Established and new organic eco-friendly hair companies that strictly cater to Black natural-haired women, have become prominent and sought after. Carol's Daughter®, SheaMoisture, and Ouidad, have been around for decades. Kinky-Curly™, Curl Junkie®, and Camille Rose Naturals, are the new kids on the natural hair care product block.

Is the ever-growing presence of natural hair amongst Black women truly a trend, or beauty evolution? Numbers don't lie, but time will tell.

## Say Hello to New MacDonald

The war on our food is in full effect, with GMO enthusiasts and organic advocates paving the way.

Only Organic, a member of team pro-organic food, vows to educate the public on the meaning of “going organic”, by addressing the environmental and health benefits an organic diet provides.

Last month, Only Organic published a video ad on their YouTube channel titled, “New MacDonald”. The ad portrays a twist using the aged kid-friendly tune, “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”. The video opens with school-age children decked out in flannel, denim, and cowboy hats, singing a remixed version of “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”, against a country-style farm backdrop. The song heavily references today’s non-organic farming practices.

A group of kids sporting white jackets and yellow hard hats run on stage, injecting paper mache cows with invisible hormones. Another group of children, wearing white biohazard suits, storm the stage and begin spraying crops with imitation pesticides. Toy chickens in tightly packed crates appear, along with a crop dusting plane overhead. All of the children scramble off stage, then reappear singing another altered form of “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”, which pertains to New MacDonald’s way of farming.

The New MacDonald method relies on the old-fashioned, eco-friendly and humane custom of using no pesticides, synthetic hormone-free animals that roam freely, and no GMOs.

Using kids in ad campaigns to deliver brand messages is no new marketing technique, but it is a tried and true concept. Just like organic farming.