

KFC Zinger Launch

Introduction to the Campaign

In April 2017, KFC launched its Zinger chicken sandwich (burger) into its home American market. This comes well after this product range was launched into in KFC's international markets, where it has been offered for over 30 years and is one of KFC's most popular products in over 120 countries.

Reasons for Introducing the New Product

One key reason why KFC introduced this new product range was to tap into the lucrative lunchtime market. Without a sandwich/burger product offering, KFC was perceived as less convenient than other fast-food offerings in the "time-limited" lunchtime break for consumers. As a result, KFC's market share in the lunchtime market was limited, as consumers were looking for "easy-to-eat" fast-food (whereas traditional chicken pieces were perceived considered "less easy" to eat for lunch).

And in recent years, overall consumption (not just lunchtime) of fast-food chicken had seen chicken sandwiches/burgers outsell "on-the-bone" chicken by more than two to one. This was due to both a change in consumer preferences and due to several of KFC's "indirect" hamburger competitors becoming direct competitors by introducing their own range of chicken sandwiches/burgers.

Product Development Challenges

There were several obstacles that KFC had to overcome in order to bring this product to the marketplace. For instance, one of the logistical challenges that they faced was that the kitchen facilities for many of their stores that were not adequately designed for the preparation of this new product range. This required KFC to invest \$80 million in kitchen upgrades across its 4,000+ USA stores.

They also needed to train its large workforce in the preparation and cooking of the new product range. And this turned out to be a six-month project in itself, due to the large numbers of staff involved.

Market Testing

Before KFC invested in its kitchen upgrades and staff training, they first market tested the new product in several "test" cities, using a selection of their stores. This test marketing was helpful in forecasting likely market demand, as well as for fine-tuning the final product design, product preparation steps, and other elements of their marketing mix.

Product Launch

For their product launch, KFC decided to also launch the new product into space (for real!). Actor Rob Lowe portrayed Colonel Sanders and in the launch video, he mimicked President Kennedy's 1960's speech of sending a rocket to the moon.



To achieve this feat, KFC partnered with World View Enterprises (a private American near-space exploration and technology company). And according to Kevin Hochman, KFC US president at the time, "We're excited to be the ones pushing spicy, crispy chicken sandwich space travel forward."

The KFC Zinger was launched into space in June 2017 and was broadcasted live on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. Overall, the space launch campaign generated 4 billion media impressions.

This "space" launch was also accompanied by traditional advertising and social media promotion, as well as free samples, and in-store displays and merchandise. The price point for the new price was set relatively low in order to stimulate trial (first-time) purchases.

Student Discussion Questions

1. What were the main reasons that KFC decided to introduce this new product?
2. Why did they need to test market the product, given that it was already successful in over 100 countries?
3. Did they need such an elaborate launch – which included launching of the chicken sandwich into space – given that it is a popular product internationally and would probably sell well anyway?
4. Based on the information provided only, can you outline the key components of their new product process?