2-3-2012

McRib McDomination

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls

Recommended Citation

https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls/727

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Marketing and Communications at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in News Releases by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlangel1@udayton.edu.
McRib McDomination

02.03.2012 | Research, Business  The celebrated comings and goings of the McRib sandwich has been a powerful tool for McDonald's to fend off competition for three decades, according to recently published research by University of Dayton marketing experts.

"We see a noticeable trend that leads us to believe that McDonald's uses the McRib to exert its dominance in the market when one of its competitors starts offering a pork-based sandwich," wrote Serdar Durmusoglu, assistant marketing professor, and Matthew Larrick, a University of Dayton MBA graduate, in the Jan. 5 Marketing News Exclusives.

The researchers studied the history of the McRib and its releases between 1982 and 2011 in comparison to new product launch dates of McDonald's major competitors, including Au Bon Pain, KFC, White Castle, Burger King and Quiznos.

McRib promotions appeared within months of the introduction of a pork-based product by a McDonald's competitor, they found.

Durmusoglu and Larrick said the sandwich was not an immediate hit with consumers when McDonald's first test-marketed it in 1981. The McRib, a processed pork patty crafted to look like a slab of ribs with a tangy barbecue sauce, was distributed nationwide in 1982 and then pulled off the market the same year.

"Most at this point, would consider the McRib another failed new product: A product was launched and demand was mediocre, so the product was discontinued," Durmusoglu said.

They found that a modified McRib sandwich was re-introduced seven years later in a few markets, only to be pulled off the market again after a few weeks.

"This trend has continued over the years since then, with mostly regional rollouts and some nationwide, but the end has always been the same: The product gets pulled after a short period of time, generally four to eight weeks," they said.

McDonalds has used its limited availability and "history" to create a nostalgic storyline for the product, they wrote. Three "McRib Farewell Tour" promotions were launched in 2005, 2006 and 2007. In 2010 and 2011, promotions were themed around the "history" of the product: "Legend of the McRib" and Facebook-based "The Quest for the Golden McRib."

"McDonald's seems to have a plan in recent revivals and muscled out the competition with some captivating promotions," they wrote.

Durmusoglu and Larrick said they contacted McDonald's representatives, who denied the product's launches were aimed at suppressing the competition.

For more information, contact Cilla Shindell, director of media relations, at 937-229-3257 or shindell@udayton.edu (url: mailto:shindell@udayton.edu).