A CASE STUDY IN AD EFFECTIVENESS

NATIONAL SOFT DRINK BRAND

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When it comes to brands they know and love, podcast listeners pay attention to new product offerings introduced by podcast hosts. It's more like word-of-mouth than a conventional ad, as listeners feel like they're getting let in on exciting news. And because of that, listeners remember what they learned and are more likely to buy.

That's what we discovered when we tested a campaign for a national soft drink brand with an ad effectiveness study we commissioned. A mid-roll ad from the campaign resulted in triple-digit lift in familiarity and purchase intent for featured new flavors.

METHOD

The study was conducted by Nielsen using an industry-standard method for measuring the effectiveness of branded media. 800 people respondents age 18-34 participated in an online panel survey in which they listened to a clip of a podcast episode. Half of the respondents (400n) were exposed to an advertisement in the mid-roll position of the clip, while the control group (400n) heard a clip without an ad. A post-survey was then used to measure lift across key measures. The exposed and control cells were balanced on age and gender.
LISTENERS DRINK IN NEW FLAVORS

Podcast Ad Generates Triple-Digit Lift

+140% Lift in Familiarity*  
+118% Lift in Purchase Intent*  
For the highlighted new flavor mentioned in the ad  
+156% Lift in Brand Association*  
For the new tag line that closed the ad  

*compared to control
For this campaign, the brand asked podcast hosts to try new drink flavors they had recently introduced, and then talk about their experience in the ad. And, to increase impact, the brand suggested the host talk about one favorite new flavor. That's what most hosts did, including the host for the show we tested. That host mentioned all the new variations, but led off with one in particular – doing the tasting “live” on-mic.

In addition to the new drink flavors, the brand also introduced a new tagline for their product, which hosts mentioned prominently in the closing call-to-action.

The study questionnaire asked listeners what brand they associated with the new tagline. Then they were also asked about their familiarity with the new flavors, and how likely they would be to buy them.
The new flavor highlighted by the host – who took a sip in the ad – saw the most substantial lift in familiarity. 140% more respondents exposed to the ad said they were familiar with the flavor than those in the control group, who did not hear an ad. That's a statistically significant lift at a 90% confidence level.

Another flavor, the last one mentioned in the ad, received nearly as much lift: 120%.

Both of these flavors saw significant lift in purchase intent, too. 118% more respondents who heard the ad said they were somewhat or much more likely to buy the highlighted flavor, compared to the control. There was slightly more lift for that flavor mentioned last in the ad: 120%.
The mid-roll ad read left listeners with a brand new tagline that resonated.

We asked respondents, "Which brand do you most associate with the tagline...?" Then they had five brands to choose from – including the advertised brand – along with "don't know" and "none of the above" as options.

Amongst all the messages in the ad, the tagline received the greatest lift.

156% MORE RESPONDENTS WHO HEARD THE AD SAID THEY ASSOCIATED TAGLINE WITH THE BRAND THAN THE CONTROL GROUP.
ASK HOSTS TO SPEAK FROM EXPERIENCE
Podcast hosts do their best work when they try your product and speak from their real experience – whether it’s to taste the beverage you’re selling or try out your meal kit.

LEVERAGE WORD-OF-MOUTH EFFECT
When a podcast host talks about using or consuming your product, it's more like a friend relating an experience than a run-of-the-mill ad. Especially when introducing new product, variation or flavor, listeners feel like they're getting in on something fresh.

USE STRATEGIC EMPHASIS TO STAY TOP-OF-MIND
While five flavors were mentioned in this campaign, two in particular saw significant lifts in familiarity. That's because they received special emphasis. The host name-checked and took a sip of one, and the other was the last one mentioned, likely sticking in listeners' minds a little longer.

As the final call-to-action, the new tagline also had a place of prominence, receiving the biggest lift of all.

PODCAST HOSTS ARE INFLUENCERS
Whether you have a venerated brand introducing a product, or you have an emerging brand, let podcast hosts be your influencers. Listeners trust hosts to tell them about what’s worth their time and money. The results of this study show that listeners remember what they hear about, and are more likely to try as a result.
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