

To Reach Core Audience, Wendy's Busts Out Online

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When Ian Rowden became chief marketing officer of Wendy's in 2005, the restaurant chain spent just 4 percent of its overall marketing budget online. That percentage has climbed steadily since-to 6 percent last year and about 8 percent this year-and will likely exceed 10 percent in 2008, according to Wendy's.

Along the way, the No. 3 fast feeder, which last year spent about \$375 million in major measured media, has invested in online vehicles such as microsites to get closer to its core 18- to 34-year-old consumers, offering them, for example, a chance to win Nintendo Wii games and consoles via the purchase of Frosty Floats.

Now, Wendy's is about to give away 100 million free songs through a partnership with online music site Rhapsody. Between Nov. 21 and Dec. 30, consumers who buy a combo meal featuring the new Jalapeno Double Melt sandwich will get an access code to download a song. The codes will be printed on cups.

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