

Denny's Takes Aim at Fast Food Restaurants in Its Launch of Scrappy Real Breakfast Leadership Strategy

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You might think the familiar glow of the Denny's sign, the brand's famous Grand Slam breakfasts and relaxed environment make Denny's too nice to play tough in the competitive 'breakfast sandbox.' You should reconsider.

Denny's Corporation (NASDAQ:DENN), America's beloved brand that's been serving up breakfast for more than 50 years, is drawing a line in the sand, and even kicking up a little dirt. Denny's is reinforcing its 'real' breakfast dominance by boldly challenging fast food (quick service) restaurants for the first time. Denny's is out to bust so-called 'fake' breakfast.

'Denny's is putting a stake in the ground when it comes to real breakfast,' said Nelson Marchioli, chief executive officer and president of Denny's. 'With consumers accounting for an estimated 1.7 billion breakfast occasions on-premise at fast food restaurants(a), we're eager and confident in taking a challenger position and asserting ourselves as king of the breakfast table.'

'Real' Muscle of National Integrated Campaign

Denny's tapped the creative muscle of its agency of record Publicis Mid America in Dallas to get the job done. The two well-known brands collaboratively immersed themselves in the development of an aggressive integrated communications campaign entitled 'Don't Fall for Fake.' From national broadcast, diverse digital, PR, in-store merchandise, and guerrilla marketing efforts, the scrappy campaign targets men and women 25-40 and reinforces the overwhelming appeal of real, as consumers are faced with real versus fake.

Components include two new TV spots starring tough guy Tony Sirico, formerly of the hit show 'The Sopranos,' and he's out to bust fake breakfast as he sports a 'don't mess with me' attitude. In 'Phony Money' (:30 & :15) Tony tosses down fake money at a fast food joint to pay for breakfast -- his rationale: fake money for a fake breakfast. The spot showcases real breakfast at Denny's with the Complete Breakfast Trio starting at \$5.99. In 'Line Up' (:30) Tony and an upset man are featured behind a two-way mirror, along with a police officer, and they're viewing a lineup of fast food workers in various crazy themed costumes. The man picks out the offender that sold him a fake breakfast. The spot promotes real breakfast at Denny's with the Complete Breakfast Trio starting at \$5.99.

The Denny's national broadcast buy with Optimedia, Publicis' sister agency, catches consumers during their favorite shows such as 'American Idol' and 'Grey's Anatomy' and spans primetime/premium syndication, early morning, late night/overnight, general syndication, African American syndication, late night cable and general cable.

Denny's is also introducing a new Spanish-language TV campaign titled De verdad verdad (Really Real). The :30 and :15 television spots effectively position Denny's as the real thing when it comes to breakfast and creatively embrace the authenticity and enjoyment of social customs, human interaction and food. The commercials, created by Denny's Hispanic agency of record of Cruz/Kravetz:IDEAS, will air nationally on Hispanic Network TV.

Real versus fake runs rampant in Denny's playful digital strategy developed by Optimedia. The engaging campaign ranges from humorous banner ads, mobile alerts, offer-based online games, video ads, to paid searches and music polling/custom playlists such as your top fave breakfast songs.

'Consumers tell us that real breakfast goes beyond the food, it's about the total experience. More important, they believe Denny's delivers a real breakfast experience,' explains Elizabeth Geer, senior director, advertising and merchandising for Denny's, who oversees campaign development. 'Real breakfast is a call to action not to settle for wrappers and Styrofoam. Denny's is the place to get your eggs made to order just the way you like brought to you on real dishes with real silverware, served with a smile. Fake breakfast can't imitate real breakfast,' Geer said.

The new tagline of 'Real breakfast 24/7' reinforces Denny's breakfast leadership. The tag is emphasized as a stamp mark on new creative elements, including in-store merchandise at the more than 1,500 Denny's locations.

The Denny's 'Don't Fall for Fake' campaign breaks nationally on January 28 in the United States.

Shon Rathbone, executive creative director, Publicis Mid America, said, 'Nobody does real breakfast like Denny's, and we're defending the brand's turf with creative that pokes fun at the competition. Sirico helps deliver that message with attitude and humor. The gloves are off.'

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