

Analysts Grill Wendy's Over Changing Ad Tack

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Despite Reporting Strong Quarterly Earnings, Talk Centers on Brand Identity

During an earnings conference call today with Wendy's International, analysts didn't stick to asking about profits -- they also prodded the fast-food chain about its changing ad direction.

Wendy's, which launched Saatchi & Saatchi's so-called red-wig campaign last year to critical raves but few tangible results, debuted a new \$435 million ad effort by MDC Partners' Kirshenbaum Bond & Partners at its franchisee convention in Orlando, Fla., last week. And today investors asked Wendy's officers why they believe the new campaign will drive sales when its predecessor failed to do so.

"The red-wig campaign did a lot of good things for Wendy's, it broke through the clutter," said CEO Kerri Anderson. However, "we can't be something we aren't." She also said the campaign from Saatchi & Saatchi, part of Publicis Groupe, was polarizing.

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