

## Starbucks Seeks Jolt From Another Mass Tactic

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### Coupons Follow Close Behind Free Samples

Howard Schultz insists he's returning Starbucks to its roots, but he's doing it with mass-marketing tactics once anathema to the original brand.

The company is estimated to have nearly doubled its marketing spending to \$100 million, and last week it began an aggressive coupon program unlike anything in its history, raising questions about its turnaround strategy. "I think it's desperation," Robert Passikoff, president of Brand Keys. "There was a time that they didn't need to coupon."

The coffee chain distributed coupons good for free tall-size coffees every Wednesday through May 28 in USA Today, The Washington Post and several other markets Starbucks declined to reveal. Last week it also passed out coupons in New York City good for a free cup of coffee.

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