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## MC MARKETING: MCDONALD'S MARKETING STRATEGY

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**Abstract:** McDonald's continues its conquest of the world. The hamburger is not, contrary to what is often claimed, an American diet for adolescents. It represents the first food that undermines all culinary cultures and destroys traditional ways of eating. It plays on the crisis of social and family institutions. It is also a prototype of modernist business which, under the guise of psychologizing the work relationship, disqualifies men as much as customers or food. McDonalds represents the most famous brand in the world after Coca-Cola. McDonald's with 80,000 billion hamburgers sold worldwide and its presence in more than 80 countries still stands out. McDonald's is also my marketing strategy. Technical management represents all power. It is not only the sum of particular standards of manufacturing and marketing of products. It represents a conception of life in business and society.

McDonald's marketing is above all unforgettable names like Big Mac, Potatoes, Caramel Sunday, Happy Meal, Mac Flurry... These few words resonate with millions of people around the world and prove to what extent McDonald's marketing is well thought out. In this article, we will see how McDonald's marketing strategy works and how it has evolved. McDonald's has been a pioneer in fast food marketing, from its early days, when clowns like Ronald McDonald's were used to attract children to more sophisticated strategies like working with influencers, social media campaigns, or numerous product placements. Its main objective is to increase sales by targeting specific audiences, a classic in marketing, but we will see all of that in detail in this article.

**Keywords:** McDonald's, Marketing Strategy, fast food, customers, logo.

### 1. INTRODUCTION: THE MCDONALD'S STORY

The First McDonald's restaurant with the Speedee mascot of the McDonald's began in 1940, when brothers Richard and Maurice McDonald opened their first restaurant in San Bernardino, California. From there, the brothers set up the fast food system: a limited menu, low prices, and fast service facilitated by a standardized set-up in the kitchen. As you can see from the menu above initially, the first McDonald's restaurant offered dishes cooked on the Barbecue. Quickly, the brothers noticed that hamburgers, fries, and soft drinks were selling better than everything else. They therefore decided to focus on these products, which led them to create their famous "trademark" well suited to fast food. Their restaurant was a success and the brothers decided to franchise their system in the 1950s. That's when Ray Kroc arrived. Kroc was in charge of opening McDonald's franchises, so he helped them grow the business, and in 1955 they opened their first McDonald's outside of California. What are the key dates in the history of McDonald's restaurants? • 1940: Richard and Maurice McDonald opened their first McDonald's restaurant in San Bernardino, California. • 1955: The first McDonald's outside of California is opened by Ray Kroc east of the Mississippi. • 1956: the drive-in concept is put in place (which does not correspond to the drive as we know it today but to the principle of coming to eat in your car on site: drive-in). • 1961: Ray Kroc buys the McDonald brothers' shares and pays them \$2.6 million. • 1963: Ronald McDonald, inspired by Bozo the Clown, makes his debut to appeal to the youngest. • 1967: the first McDonald's restaurants opened internationally: the first countries were Canada and Puerto Rico. • 1968: the arches of McDonald's restaurants take the shape of an M and become their logo • 1971: The first McDonald's opens in Japan (there are now more than 2,900 in the country) • 1979: The McDonald's "Happy Meal" concept is launched. • 1993: The McCafé concept was launched in Australia • 2000: McDonald's has more than 11,000 restaurants outside the United States. • 2011: Wi-Fi is offered free of charge in McDonald's restaurants. • 2012: McDonald's began offering mobile ordering and payment through its app. • 2018: McDonald's announces that it will ensure that all its packaging is made from recyclable materials by 2025 (Ariès, P., 1997).

### 2. MCDONALD'S STANDARDIZATION OF PRICES, PROCESSES, AND TASTE

In terms of customer experience, Kroc quickly decided to standardize hamburgers and fries. It has strict protocols in place to ensure that customers get the same quality of food at every restaurant, regardless of its location. This involved standardizing prices, portion sizes, and flavors. Kroc, whose mission was to franchise the brand, did everything to do it in the best possible way. That all restaurants are identical, well-trained franchisees and employees work with the same gestures. Overall, McDonald's has adopted a market-driven strategy of focusing on customer satisfaction through product standardization and innovation, pricing and speed, convenience, branding, and marketing campaigns. The company's international expansion is an example of the successful implementation of

this strategy (Tesser, L., 2023). The brand has established itself as a leader in fast food in many countries and continues to expand with new products and new services.

### **3. THE 3 PILLARS OF MCDONALD'S**

The three important points on which Kroc decided to be uncompromising were: the quality of franchises, suppliers, and employees. Indeed McDonald's has always been known for its high standards in these areas and remains a leader in the sector. The company constantly innovates, adapts to customer preferences, and takes into account changing trends. This is how it remains one of the most successful fast-food companies in the world. For franchisees and employees, McDonald's has a comprehensive learning and development program in place for franchise owners. The training program covers topics, such as financial management, restaurant operations, customer service, marketing, and more. This training helps ensure that McDonald's restaurants maintain their high brand standards around the world. It also offers franchisees the opportunity to invest in themselves and develop professionally (Ariès, P., 1997).

McDonald's is also invested in its suppliers, working with them to ensure that the food it serves is of the highest quality. The company strives to ensure that its products are made from sustainably sourced ingredients and that animal welfare is taken into consideration. Finally, McDonald's invests in its employees through education and training programs (Patrick, A., 2021). These initiatives help equip employees with the skills they need to succeed and make the dining experience enjoyable for customers. As it continues to expand globally, McDonald's will continue to employ a market-driven strategy to maintain its leadership position.

The company is committed to providing high-quality products and services while striving to innovate, be sustainable, and satisfy its customers. By maintaining these standards, McDonald's will remain a leader in the fast food industry (Hill, M. E., 2012).

### **4. MCDONALD'S WINNING MARKETING STRATEGIES-A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS AROUND FRANCHISING**

In 2021, more than 56% of total revenue came from franchised restaurants. The company generated more than \$23 billion in revenue in 2021, including \$9.78 billion from company-owned restaurants and \$13 billion from franchised restaurants.

McDonald's adopted a franchise business model for its operations - a practice it introduced to the world of fast food and is now widely used across the industry. The company owns and operates only a few of its many locations, with the majority owned and operated by independent franchisees. In 2020, McDonald's represents more than 93% of all establishments that are franchised (Shastri, A., 2023).

### **5. MARKETING TO ATTRACT ALL AGES**

McDonald's has long been a destination for families and children, and the company employs various marketing strategies to capture this important demographic. The company uses colorful, child-friendly packaging and television advertisements featuring popular cartoon characters to attract the attention of young customers. Additionally, McDonald's offers toys and activities at many of its locations to keep children in mind when designing its menu and marketing materials. McDonald's also creates campaigns specifically designed to attract adult customers. For example, the company launched a series of "Real Choices" campaigns, which aim to provide healthy options to children and adults (Shastri, A., 2023).

The company also offers value-added meals aimed at adults and includes high-end products such as the famous Grands Angus or Mac Cafés. For children, McDonald's has made a bet on the future by using strong marketing through, among other things, the Happy Meal, this packaging with a smile on it which presents inside a burger, fries, a drink, and above all a toy. The margins on the Happy Meal are very low because the goal of McDonald's through the Happy Meal is to attract the attention of children, create emotion with this surprise inside and that children from a very young age keep in mind this emotion of surprise, pleasure gifts at McDonald's, and believe me, it works. As they grow up, these children will become loyal customers of McDonald's and will in turn bring their children.

The McDonald's Foundation is also very active in helping disadvantaged families, as it collaborates with various charities and foundations to increase its reach and visibility. They have participated in campaigns such as Ronald McDonald House Charities, which provides housing and other services to families of children in need. McDonald's is also invested in its suppliers, working with them to ensure that the food it serves is of the highest quality. The company strives to ensure that its products are made from sustainably sourced ingredients and that animal welfare is taken into consideration.

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## **6. LET'S TALK ABOUT THE MCDONALD'S MARKETING MIX**

If we analyze the 4Ps of the McDonald's marketing mix we can note that:

- **Product:** McDonald's offers typical American foods and drinks (burgers, fries, sodas), adapting them to the tastes of customers in different countries. The products are aimed at a wide audience by offering very suitable children's menus such as the Happy Meal and McCafé establishments for business customers mainly adults.
- **Price:** McDonald's is known for offering low prices and discounts that are available throughout the year. The prices are very affordable concerning the quality of the products and services.
- **Place:** McDonald's has locations around the world, allowing it to reach as many consumers as possible. Restaurants are strategically located in highly visible locations so that customers can easily spot them.
- **Promotion:** McDonald's uses traditional and digital marketing strategies such as television commercials, social media campaigns, and product placements. The company also regularly carries out promotional campaigns with discounts or special offers, trying to attract consumers by having limited-time and original offers.

McDonald's is a global giant in the food industry, and its success is mainly due to its marketing strategies tailored to its target audience. By listening to consumers' needs and adapting its products, prices, places, and promotions accordingly, McDonald's has successfully created an effective marketing strategy that drives sales and keeps consumers coming back (Kaufmann, H. R., & Panni, M. F. A. K., 2012).

## **7. "ARE WE A SWOT?"**

Quick reminder (just in case): A SWOT is a tool that helps you identify a company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This tool is useful when it comes to evaluating a company's overall strategy and performance. In class it just makes you want to take a break, but in everyday life, in the end, it's very useful.

- **Strengths:** McDonald's is a brand known and respected around the world. It has thousands of points of sale located in strategic locations around the world. It offers a range of affordable meals and snacks that are popular with a wide audience, from children to adults. The restaurant also enjoys strong relationships with its suppliers and customers.
- **Weaknesses:** McDonald's has been criticized for its unhealthy food offerings. Despite attempts to offer healthier alternatives, this is still a problem that needs to be addressed. The company also relies on franchisees for most of its operations and does not have complete control over them.
- **Opportunities:** McDonald's can expand into new markets by opening more outlets in different countries. It can invest more in digital marketing and product placement to attract a wider audience. The company can also focus on developing healthier options that are more appealing to health-conscious customers.
- **Threats:** McDonald's faces strong competition from other fast food chains, as well as competition from home delivery services that offer convenience and health - consumer-oriented options.

It also faces the risk of changing consumer tastes and preferences, which could make its traditional offerings less popular over time. Additionally, unfavorable government regulations or public opinion may have a negative effect on the company's results (Shastri, A., 2023).

Overall, McDonald's has a very strong marketing strategy that matches its customer base and product offering. The company must remain aware of market trends and adjust its strategies accordingly to take advantage of new opportunities while avoiding potential threats. By recognizing customer needs and adapting its products, prices, places, and promotions accordingly, McDonald's can continue to expand in certain countries where the brand still has little presence (yes it still exists) to build a strong customer base and maintain its success. McDonald's marketing strategy has proven to be effective in the past, and with careful implementation and monitoring, it can continue to drive growth in the future.

## **8. MCDONALD'S MARKETING STRATEGIES**

There are some takeaways from McDonald's great marketing so you can tailor it to your business. Listen to consumer feedback and adapt your products accordingly. Listening to your audience is the basis of good marketing. Respond to customer feedback and adapt your products accordingly to meet their needs. Your marketing must be adapted to your target.

Do you want to attract children? Offer them a memorable experience, do you want to attract business customers? Offer them quality coffee, a quality Wi-Fi connection... Offer limited-time offers; regularly consider adding new products and limited-time offers to maintain customer interest. Especially in catering, you need to know how to regularly refresh your offers. You need to retain your customers and know how to surprise them with original offers.

By offering limited-time offers, you can create a sense of urgency and encourage customers to return. They will know that if they don't take the time to think, they will not be disappointed. Make sure your establishments are strategically located. Restaurateurs know this, but it's just as important for other businesses. Make sure your locations are visible and easy to access, so customers can find you easily. Your customers must also be able to park and you should take advantage of pedestrian traffic by placing your business in strategic locations.

Keep prices affordable: Affordability can be a major issue for consumers. Make sure your prices are competitive while reflecting the quality of the products and services you provide. Be consistent about your value for money if you want to retain your customers, especially in times of crisis. Adapt your products according to the regions or countries you are targeting. Don't forget to adapt your products according to your location. Adapt your ingredients and menus according to the culture of the country or region you are targeting. This may be particularly important in countries or regions with many dietary restrictions. Make sure all your advertising efforts are consistent. From traditional marketing to digital and social media, ensure all your marketing efforts are consistent and reflect your company's values. All channels should be used to reinforce each other and create a stronger brand identity (Arun, R., 2023).

### **9. HOW DOES MCDONALD'S ATTRACT CUSTOMERS**

McDonald's attracts customers by listening to consumer feedback and adapting products, prices, places, and promotions accordingly. McDonald's also offers limited-time offers to create a sense of urgency and ensures its prices remain competitive while reflecting the quality of the products it offers. Finally, McDonald's ensures that all of its advertising efforts are consistent across different channels to strengthen its brand identity.

### **10. WHAT IS THE POSITIONING OF MCDONALD'S**

McDonald's positioning is based on offering customers quality and value in a friendly, family-friendly environment. McDonald's aims to provide its customers with quality, affordable, and convenient products by adapting its menus to local cultures and tastes. Additionally, McDonald's offers limited-time promotions to create a sense of urgency among consumers. Overall, McDonald's strives to create a pleasant experience for customers that keeps them coming back.

### **11. HOW DOES MCDONALD'S FACE THE COMPETITION?**

McDonald's faces competition by focusing on providing quality, affordable, and convenient products to customers. McDonald's also focuses on maintaining consistent advertising efforts across all channels and adapting its menus to local cultures and tastes. Additionally, McDonald's offers limited-time deals and promotions to create a sense of urgency among consumers. By listening to consumer feedback and tailoring its products to their needs, McDonald's can provide quality service that aims to give its customers exactly what they expect.

### **12. WHERE DOES THE MCDONALD'S?**

The McDonald's logo was designed in 1962 by Jim Schindler, who combined the golden arches of the original design with a stylized "M" to create the iconic image it is today. The logo has become an instantly recognizable symbol for McDonald's and is used in all advertising, promotional materials, and on all products sold worldwide. It is also very present in McDonald's restaurants and other places. The golden arches of the logo are meant to represent a place where people can gather. The logo is designed to evoke feelings of comfort, quality, and familiarity. Ultimately, the McDonald's logo is the symbol of the company's values and mission.

### **13. WHO IS MCDONALD'S?**

Speedee, originally known as Speedee the Hamburger Man, is a mascot created by McDonald's in 1948, to represent the speed and efficiency of its food products. The character was depicted as a chef wearing a white hat and coat, holding a hamburger in one hand, and a pair of scissors in the other. He originally appeared in McDonald's advertising campaigns, including print, radio, and television advertisements. Speedee eventually fell out of use in the 1960s, but its legacy lives on in the form of the McDonald's logo's signature "M", and other memorabilia. The character is still seen today as a symbol of McDonald's quality and convenience.

### **14. WHAT IS MCDONALD'S EDLP STRATEGY ?**

McDonald's pricing strategy is based on an Everyday Low Price Model (EDLP). This pricing strategy aims to maintain consistent pricing across all locations and channels while ensuring pricing remains industry-competitive. McDonald's also offers limited-time promotions to create a sense of urgency among consumers. This EDLP model helps McDonald's retain its customers by offering quality products at affordable prices.

### **15. WHAT WERE THE BEST MCDONALD'S**

Among McDonald's most memorable slogans are: "I'm lovin' it", "You deserve a break today" or even "You still have time to change your mind". These slogans have become iconic over the years, helping to create an emotional connection between the brand and its customers.

- I'm lovin' it: The slogan "I'm lovin' it" in particular has been particularly successful because it conveys McDonald's desire to provide quality food and service that customers appreciate.
- You deserve a break today: The slogan "You deserve a break today" also evokes the idea of taking the time to enjoy the experience of eating at McDonald's.
- There is still time to change your mind: Finally, I like the slogan "there is still time to change your mind" was indicated on advertising panels near McDonald's.

This last slogan makes its customers think that they remain in control of their choices and that McDonald's thinks above all about listening to them and respecting their choices.

### **16. WHY DOES THE MCDONALD'S M LOGO HAVE A GREEN BACKGROUND INSTEAD OF RED BEFORE?**

The iconic "M" in the McDonald's logo has changed over the years. The original logo was a stylized yellow "M" on a red background. However, in 2009 the company updated its appearance to give it a more modern, greener look concerning the environment and show its willingness to make efforts for the environment by offering more and more recyclable packaging for the products it presents. The new logo consists of an abstract yellow "M" on a green background, which is supposed to be more modern, classier, and more about colors reminiscent of its efforts for the environment (Shastri, A., 2023).

### **17. WHO IS RONALD MCDONALD'S**

The character of Ronald McDonald was a clown played by Willard Scott in 1963 TV commercials for McDonald's restaurants to promote the restaurant chain to younger audiences. The character of Ronald McDonald's was subsequently retained by the restaurant chain for several years during its communication campaigns to attract young people.

Why don't we see the Ronald McDonald's clown at McDonald's anymore? The Ronald McDonald clown was originally intended to be a symbol of entertainment and fun, but he eventually fell out of favor in the 2000s. McDonald's phased him out as they sought to create a more contemporary brand image that was better suited to the modern consumer. Today, Ronald McDonald is still present in some advertisements and promotions, but he is no longer as strongly associated with the company's image. In popular culture, since the 2000s the image of clowns has evolved a lot with, among other things, the appearance of evil clowns in certain films and even sometimes Halloween, which is why the restaurant chain has adapted by slowly removing his image (Fabra, P. 1999).

### **18. MCDONALD'S IS A TEXTBOOK A CASE IN TERMS OF MARKETING AND SUCCESS**

If you want to launch your restaurant or if you want to franchise your restaurant concept, you will need a solid marketing plan. That's why it's important to understand the success of McDonald's marketing strategies, so you can use similar tactics for your own business. By emphasizing emotional connections with its customers and innovative marketing techniques, McDonald's has become one of the most powerful restaurant brands in the world.

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