



ADVERTISING & INTEGRATED MESSAGING

REINVIGORATING A VENERABLE BRAND

THE COUSINS SUBS CASE STUDY





A POPULAR BRAND GETS OLD AND UNAPPEALING.

Consistent and compelling messaging can engage a target audience, refresh, revitalize and rejuvenate an aging brand personality. Cousins Subs, a well-loved, regional brand, has been serving up premium, deli-fresh submarine sandwiches on freshly baked bread since 1972. As they have grown over the years, they have expanded, but never changed their delicious, freshly baked bread or their commitment to quality and their community.

Responding to competition, the Cousins Subs' advertising campaigns prior to STIR's involvement had been unfocused and relied mostly on special, limited-time-offer sandwiches and reduced prices/coupons to generate trial. Permanent price promotions had eroded brand equity and profit.

STIR was hired in the fall of 2011, as advertising agency of record. STIR developed a comprehensive, overarching brand campaign, with integrated messaging to promote the brand both to hungry customers and to entrepreneurs interested in owning a Cousins Subs franchise.



TIME FOR A BRAND MAKEOVER

STIR identified the following needs for Cousins Subs:

- » UNIQUE VOICE AND IMAGERY
- » DEVELOPMENT OF BRAND CULTURE
- » CONTINUITY AND INTEGRATION OF MESSAGING
- » A NEED TO ATTRACT A YOUNGER AUDIENCE
- » FOCUS ON THE ROBUST PRODUCT

Cousins Subs fit into the QSR/fast food category, but they wanted to evolve into a more casual dining format. Our strategy was to shift the positioning from price focused to a more premium product price point. At the time, Cousins Subs was expanding their cheese steak line and increasing the quantity of meat on each sandwich by 50%, which reinforced this new strategy. They also wanted a redesign of their store interiors to reflect the casual dining theme. STIR played a key role in updating the interior aesthetic of their stores.



stirstuff.com

BUILD ON THE BRAND EQUITY



The challenge was to move the brand forward without losing the equity they had established for over 40 years. Cousins Subs had always been known for their great tasting bread. For years, Cousins' tagline was "Better Bread. Better Subs." We needed to keep the brand equity of the "better bread" and evolve it. We came up with "Better Bread. Better Subs. Better Day." Better bread makes a better sub, which makes for a better day. This creative direction opened the doors for many integrated executions where a fresh and tasty Cousins Subs helped make someone's day better. For example, food tray liners INCORPORATED the headline, "A better day is just a bite away."



TV COMMERCIALS



CLICK TO PLAY

The campaign was launched with a TV commercial called “Country Song”. It’s based on the joke about what happens when you play a country song backwards. Your lost dog comes back, your wife comes back, your pickup truck gets fixed and you get your job back. In this spot, it all happens because the country singer took a bite out of a Cousins Sub with better bread, which made his life better.



stirstuff.com

TV COMMERCIALS



CLICK TO PLAY



CLICK TO PLAY



CLICK TO PLAY



CLICK TO PLAY



stirstuff.com

TV COMMERCIALS



CLICK TO PLAY



CLICK TO PLAY

After three years it was time to evolve again. We wanted to own the word “better” and position Cousins Subs as a better alternative to the Subways of the world. The theme line “You Deserve Better” was then adopted. New television commercials were created to reinforce the “Better” message.



stirstuff.com

RADIO

“Disco” Radio spot



CLICK TO PLAY

“Doctor” Radio spot



CLICK TO PLAY

Radio was developed to focus on the “Better” message along with live-read tags to promote special offers, therefore allowing Cousins Subs the opportunity to shift gears on their promotions quickly and as needed.



stirstuff.com

POINT OF SALE



A brand new menu board was designed to support the brand, highlight product customization, and focus on the sandwiches with the highest profit margins. In-store signage was designed to help tell the brand story and promote limited-time-offers on subs.



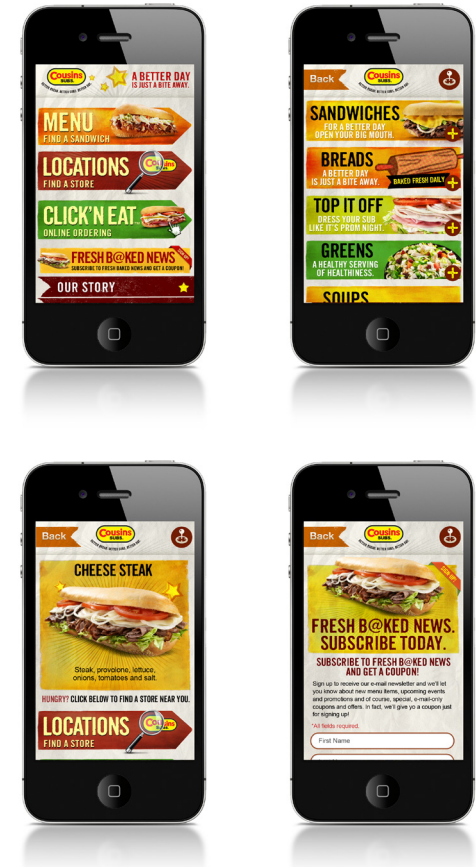
stirstuff.com

TABLE TENT, WINDOW CLINGS, REGISTER TOPPERS, CREW T-SHIRT



A series of permanent table tents were developed to educate customers on customization options, special products, the company history, and assorted methods to interact with the company through social media. Window clings were designed to catch the eye of visitors before they ever came into the store. The inside of the clings, along with register toppers included messages to encourage purchase once they had entered. T-shirts for the crew to wear supported the messaging, to help tie everything together.

WEBSITE

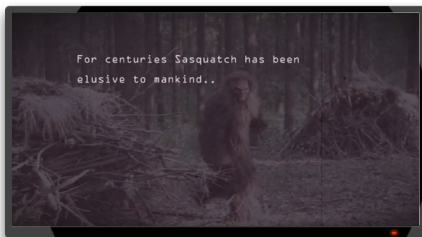


STIR developed a new, engaging website (Sitefinity) that reinforced the repositioning, as well as a mobile site that facilitates online ordering.

SOCIAL MEDIA / PROMOTION



CLICK TO PLAY



CLICK TO PLAY



CLICK TO PLAY



CLICK TO PLAY



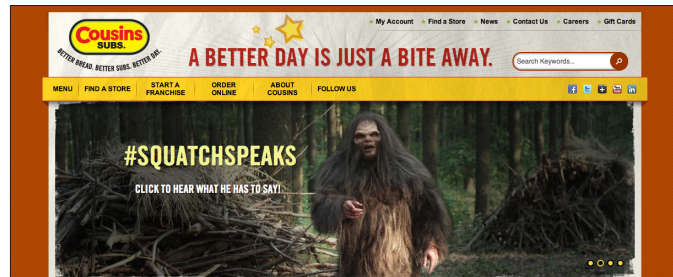
CLICK TO PLAY

To launch the new Cousins Twisted Subs, we created a TV spot featuring a Sasquatch hunter being called out by Bigfoot for being twisted after seeing him steal a Twisted Sub from a fellow hunter. The spot was tagged with #SquatchSpeaks. When viewers went to #squatchspeaks on Twitter they could interact with Squatch and view a series of videos of him setting the story straight on all the misconceptions about his species. He also talked about his new found love for Twisted Subs.



stirstuff.com

SOCIAL MEDIA / PROMOTION



KEEP THE BRAND TOP OF MIND

The goal of our media buys were to increase awareness and sales in each market, and to support the franchisees sales overall. We investigated all possible media and determined the best possible mix for each of our key markets: Green Bay/Appleton, WI; Madison, WI; Milwaukee, WI, and Phoenix, AZ. To determine the right media mix, we reviewed the correlation between age and likelihood of submarine sandwich purchase versus total quick service restaurant purchase. The results made it clear that we needed to change the media target to a younger audience – capturing them when they are more likely to purchase, and securing them as a loyal following for years to come.

For broad awareness, we utilized local and cable television buys. We also included geo-targeted online marketing using paid search ads and digital display using banner and video ads, so that we could increase awareness online – especially during times of relevant interest.

To deliver special offers/coupons and build a database, we utilized print in a combination of direct mail, free-standing inserts in local papers, and a Workplace Media campaign. These print pieces were designed to work in conjunction with email and online marketing to help build loyalty and preference through the following channels:

- » TELEVISION AND CABLE
- » RADIO
- » PRINT, COLLATERAL AND DIRECT MAIL
- » ONLINE/DISPLAY ADVERTISING
- » PROMOTIONS



BY FOCUSING ON THE WORD “BETTER” COUSINS SUBS GETS BETTER RESULTS:

- » FROM 2011 THROUGH 2015, COLLECTIVE SALES INCREASED FROM \$50.8 MILLION TO \$59 MILLION
- » WITHIN TWO MONTHS OF THE CAMPAIGN'S FULL LAUNCH, OVERALL STORE SALES WERE UP BY 10.2%
- » SALES OF 7.5" SUBS WERE UP 11% WITHIN THIS TIME FRAME
- » PREMIUM CHEESE STEAKS SALES WENT UP BY 31.5%
- » SALAD UNITS SOLD INCREASED 23.2% AND SALES INCREASED BY 45.6%



stirstuff.com

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE WHOLE STORY.
FOR MORE DETAILS, OR TO SEE MORE CASE STUDIES, CONTACT BRIAN BENNETT, PRESIDENT.
BRIANB@STIRSTUFF.COM OR 414.278.0040

STIR ADVERTISING & INTEGRATED MESSAGING
stirstuff.com 414.278.0040 330 E. Kilbourn Ave, Suite 222 Milwaukee, WI 53202

