

Popchips Partners with Pop Star Perry

Singer's social media activity about the snack leads to a formal relationship

By Dawn Klingensmith | October 24, 2013

San Francisco — **Popchips'** partnership with pop singer Katy Perry may seem like a smart and deliberate pairing, but a company executive says it was more of a happy accident that shows how social media monitoring can yield insights and opportunities.

According to Michael Parisi, senior vice president of marketing, it all started when Perry, hungry after a rehearsal and offered an array of snacks, asked her followers on Twitter which one she should choose: "Resisting the urge 2 stuff my face w/pizza. What's my healthier option here?!" Her tweet included a photo of the basket of snacks on hand and the hashtag #midnitesnack.

After a fan suggested Popchips, Perry "INHALED them," according to their exchange on Twitter, and Popchips took notice. A shipment of product to Perry and her public acknowledgment on Twitter evolved into a formal partnership, now in its second year. (Perry is also now an investor.) "We didn't rely on consumer panels or anything like that," Parisi says. "It was very organic, the way this developed and continues to develop."

Highlights of the Popchips/pop star collaboration so far:

- Perry and Popchips introduced a new flavor, "katy's kettle korn," and supported the launch with a robust campaign that included a sweepstakes with retail partner Target. The sweet-and-salty snack in its pink-and-purple packaging reflects Perry's personality and is a result of her involvement in research and development as well as creative.
- Popchips produced a video, "katy and the popcats," starring Perry and three bewigged cats on a mission to save snackers from making unhealthy choices.
- The video gave rise to a "Popchips to the rescue" campaign, which peaked in June.

Like the partnership itself, this latest campaign is a result of "snowballing" as opposed to strategizing, Parisi says. Just as Perry's Twitter followers helped her ride out a snack attack with no regrets, Perry and the popcats, in turn, set out in the video to defeat the villain Fat Cat – a pusher of fried, greasy snacks – and provide people with healthier options. "Katy Perry loves wigs, cats & Popchips. This is what happens when they all make a video together," the Popchips blog states, making the project sound like a bit of a whim, albeit slickly executed.

Indeed, afterward "we were literally sitting around brainstorming about what to do with this video," says Parisi, adding that the team hoped to extend its reach and lifespan. Because Perry is a superhero aided by cats, the connection was made to animal rescue efforts and a partnership with the ASPCA (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) was born. The video has since been viewed more than 1 million times. Initially, though, "the rescue concept was about saving people from making a bad snack choice that would leave them feeling lethargic," Parisi says.

After the video's release, Popchips declared June 13 #Popchipstotherescue day, using the hashtag to encourage social media buzz and interaction with consumers. Sampling events were held in 40 locations across 15 cities, including "rescue stations" at Walgreens stores featuring Fat Cat

"Wanted" posters. In addition, roving rescue squads responded to tweeted requests for Popchips deliveries.

Popchips also announced that during the month of June (Adopt-a-Shelter-Cat Month) snackers could download a coupon and for every coupon redeemed before July 31, Popchips would donate 50 cents to the ASPCA. Redemption totals were yet not available, Parisi says, but Popchips has pledged a minimum of \$15,000.

An on-pack offer for a free song download and a chance to see Perry in concert rounded out the summer campaign, which saw more than 4.5 million media impressions. Popchips used the social media promotion platform **Wildfire**, a Google entity based in Mountain View, Calif., to create the microsite that housed the video, coupon and rescue events, and **CommonKindness**, Sausalito, Calif., for the printable coupons.

According to Parisi, the social and digital elements of the campaign effectively drove traffic to stores, bolstering an already strong partnership with Walgreens. Given the concerted campaign push in June, it may seem surprising that developments leading up to it were a result of "snowballing," or going with the flow. "We opened up a whole new consumer segment [pet lovers] because we listened and made connections," Parisi says.

Source: Path to Purchase Institute/Shopper Marketing

The collage features several key promotional elements:

- WIN Poster:** A pink heart with the word "WIN" is next to the text "trip for two to LA for an exclusive katy perry concert". It features a photo of Katy Perry holding a bag of Popchips.
- Popchips Bag:** A bag of "all natural popchips katy's kettle corn" with a "WIN exclusive katy perry concert" sticker.
- Video Player:** A video titled "katy perry - katy and the popcats" showing a car with a pink and blue stripe.
- Social Media Post:** A tweet from Katy Perry (@katperry) dated 22 May: "Just finished rehearsals. Resisting the urge 2 stuff my face w/pizza. what's my healthier option here?! #midnitesnack pic.twitter.com/1A1293vU".
- ASPCA Graphic:** A graphic stating "you helped raise \$15,000 for the ASPCA WE ARE THEIR VOICE" and "snack life need rescuing?" with a map and "#popchips to the rescue".
- Coupon:** A "popchips to the rescue" coupon offering "SAVE \$0.50" on "popchips any 3 oz or 3.5 oz bag of popchips". It also states "you save 50¢ and popchips will donate 50¢ to the ASPCA" and "plus select ASPCA as your favorite non-profit and CommonKindness will donate an additional \$¢".