

A photograph of a woman in athletic wear sitting on a bed, eating a donut while putting on a shoe. The scene is set in a room with a window and a painting on the wall. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

— IT —  
*Doesn't*  
**COUNT**  
— IF —

KFC UK & IRELAND

**SOCIAL MEDIA  
MARKETING**

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AUTHORS

ALEX STEER

SIMON LAW

JENNELLE TILLING

MEGHAN FARREN



## Summary

This is a case study about how KFC got an audience to listen when they were ignoring new product news. And then prompted reconsideration of a brand firmly pegged as 'Fried Chicken'.

KFC had been losing share among young women for several years and the brand was seen as a 'guilty pleasure'. KFC was 'Fried Chicken' and women were ignoring news from the brand – like the lighter menu range, high-quality Red Tractor-certified chicken and environmental programmes.

To get their attention, we built on guilty pleasures themselves. When it comes to food, guilty pleasures are called pleasures for a reason. And all women know there are times when calories just 'don't count'. Like...if it's your birthday. If it's Friday. If you're thinking about going to the gym (or just wearing gym gear).

We joined the online conversation with an unbranded video starring young British comedian Jenny Bede. The video's job was to grab attention and get an instant reaction from young women, driving them to Facebook to engage and discover more.

Once young women clicked through, we revealed the KFC brand and landed the message that KFC has a range of lighter choices for all the times it does count: linked to the web site, featuring the full range of reasons to reconsider the brand.

The campaign launched September 24, 2012, with YouTube video ads for the first two weeks.

The unbranded 'It Doesn't Count If...' video received over one million views in two weeks, becoming the most-shared online video from a UK brand. This translated into well over a million branded impressions for KFC.

Young women who saw the campaign were almost three times as likely to visit KFC as those who did not, giving KFC an ROI of 13:1 against every £1 of marketing spend.

## Background

For all the talk of obesity in the headlines – and perhaps because of it – we are a nation of weight-watchers. Britain's young women, in particular, are on a mission to eat healthier. Over the last decade, driven mainly by concerns around appearance and body image, they have become significantly more likely than young men to embrace calorie-controlled eating plans.<sup>1</sup>

You can see the impact of this clearly in the tracking results for QSR brands (Quick Service Restaurants). The whole sector is losing young adult females, with the exception of brands like Subway who are better known for their healthier options. These young women are less likely to visit any QSR brand, including KFC, and do so much less frequently.

But KFC had been serving healthier food for a year already and women weren't changing their habits – the challenge was to break through their deep-rooted view of KFC and get them to reconsider the brand.

This is a case study in how you get an audience to listen when they're trying to ignore you. And reconsider a brand they've got firmly pegged as 'Fried Chicken'.

## Objective

Our goal was to drive penetration uplift of 15% among those exposed to our campaign, by shifting perceptions of KFC and the range of food available. With over 2 million young women (aged 18-24) seeing our digital marketing on Facebook and kfc.co.uk every year, the potential size of the prize was an extra 3 million visits to KFC restaurants.

KFC has been aware of this for some time and have been making significant changes to the food and the menu to ensure the great-tasting chicken at KFC is also healthier. A grilled range has been introduced, with grilled chicken burgers, wraps and salads as menu options. Salt has been reduced by 20-50% across the range and there's no salt on the fries. The oil used to fry the original recipe chicken has been switched in order to reduce the saturated fats by 25%, and trans fats have been completely eliminated. The chicken on the bone is now sourced in the UK from the same farms that supply the supermarkets, and comes with the confidence of being 'Red Tractor' stamped. And the environmental impact has been hugely improved with changes to packaging, supply chain, and the restaurants themselves. In short, there are lots of reasons for young women to reconsider KFC as a destination for great food - not just fried chicken.

The only problem was, these young women weren't listening. It was in the name: 'Kentucky FRIED Chicken', and the brand's been around their entire life – they simply weren't wondering whether KFC had changed. They were ignoring KFC, except for when they wanted that fried treat...

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<sup>1</sup> S.A. Chambers et al. (2007) *Attitudes and Behaviour towards Healthy Eating*. University of Reading/Research Councils UK. Meta-analysis and qualitative study.

## Scale of the task



Visible Technologies, Social Monitoring: Links between 'Guilty Pleasures' and food/brands

Brand tracking and social listening showed young women's reasons for staying away from QSR brands, and KFC in particular, were perceptual more than financial. They saw KFC as a guilty pleasure. They still loved the food – taste and enjoyment perceptions remained strong – but they were lapsing and visiting more infrequently. Because young women increasingly saw KFC as a 'guilty pleasure', it was proving difficult to engage them with messages about products and initiatives that might change their minds and win them back to the brand.

### Emma Auckland Buckley

I love your food but have to be careful how much of it I eat

 Like ·  Comment · Yesterday at 11:23 via Facebook for BlackBerry® smartphones

Post on KFC UK Facebook Wall (Jan 2012)

We believed that the strongest proof of KFC's ambition to win back young women was its healthier grilled range of wraps, burgers and salads. 'Grilled' emerged from social listening and research as a strong indicator of 'healthier', and a big driver of permissibility for young women – and perceptually, nothing signalled the brand's intention stronger than the message, *grilled chicken from the fried chicken brand*.

But young women were ignoring messages from KFC because they were from KFC. The marketing communications brief was therefore not only to land these messages in a way that would engage our target audience, but to overcome young women's resistance to messaging from the KFC brand.

## Solution

Because young women were ignoring the brand, to get their attention we started by exploring the territory of guilty pleasures themselves. A programme of social listening revealed some insight into how young women talk about food and eating.

First of all, our research confirmed that there are two big drivers of 'guilt' for young women when it comes to food: unhealthiness is a big issue, but there's also that sense of food you shouldn't be eating, however delicious it may be. The midnight bowl of ice-cream, the peanut butter stolen from the jar, the frozen pizza when you've been working late. And the number one metric for food guilt – the one you try to ignore on the side of the box, tub or jar – is the calorie count.

We didn't want to go with a straightforward guilt reduction solution – it would be against the spirit of the brand to try to win on a 'fewer calories' platform for the grilled range. And wouldn't have been broad enough as an invitation to reinforce the wider changes and invite young women to reconsider KFC more generally. Health was the dominant barrier, but not the only one. Above all, we realised that treating 'guilty pleasures' as if they were guilty secrets – shameful, embarrassing, needing to be dealt with quietly – would have been to misunderstand the young women to whom we were speaking.

Because when it comes to food, we all have guilty pleasures – and guilty pleasures are called pleasures for a reason. We love them, we rationalise them – and we're not afraid to talk about them. In fact, talking about our guilty pleasures is a way of acknowledging that they're occasional, once-in-a-while, amusing lapses, and that most of the time we're on the straight-and-narrow and trying to be healthy.

That was the real conversation we were seeing around guilty pleasures – writ large in the online social channels where young women spend their time. A specific social truth emerged from these conversations: We all tell ourselves, and each other, 'there are times when calories "don't count"':













The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook post and its comments. The post is by Rebecca Campbell, dated 10 February near London. The post text is "Alright ladies, when do calories not count?". Below the post are several comments from various users, each with a profile picture, name, and text. The comments are as follows:

- Ali Mutch** (10 February at 10:23): It doesn't count if it's Friday evening and i'm going to boxing in the morning!!! Ha ha xx I find any excuse!!
- Christian Taylor** (10 February at 10:26): Food consumed while you're moving doesn't count! Nor does food eaten while flying!
- Ali Mutch** (10 February at 10:27): If you're drinking the calories then you must be rehydrating, no??? Aren't liquid dinners really good for you? Maybe not bourbon ones! x
- Valentina Zarew** (10 February at 10:28): It never counts if you're enjoying it immensely x
- Fleck Clark** (10 February at 10:30): Free samples! They are free is cost and of calories. Winning
- Emma Pedersen** (10 February at 10:33): if you are abroad or ill in any capacity I say! X
- Samantha Morris** (10 February at 11:06): If it's part of your 5-a-day i.e a Bounty Bar!
- Yvonne Gee** (10 February at 18:05): apparently it doesn't count if you eat it away from home . . . or if someone has slaved over it for you . . . ;D
- Dana May** (10 February at 18:21): For me it is when I have green tea. If I have green tea after I have just eaten something I feel like it doesn't count!
- Laura Hurst** (10 February at 18:50): If you think about exercising while you eat it doesn't count.
- Kirsty Angus** (10 February at 20:24): If it costs over \$40 a dish, it doesn't count.
- Kate Ritchie** (10 February at 20:35): Long car trips! Junk food consumed on car trips def doesn't count!!
- Sophie Meere** (11 February at 02:45): If its an extremely busy day at work smashing chocolate in the afternoon doesn't count! Also sunday nights don't normally count.

Source: Facebook responses Feb 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012

We quickly found that was a widespread and productive social idea. It turns out we all have our 'it doesn't count if...' excuses. This became our credible, positive way for KFC to join a conversation about food and pleasure that was taking place in the social channels young women use.

Our 'conversation starter' was 'It Doesn't Count If...' – an unbranded online video starring young British comedian Jenny Bede, celebrating all the times when calories don't count. The video's job was to land the idea and get that instant reaction from young women, then invite them to participate by sharing the video in their social networks; sharing their own 'It Doesn't Count If' excuses on a Facebook app; or joining the conversation on Twitter. We continued the conversation with extra social content in these channels.

 <p>'It doesn't count if...' intro song</p>	 <p>It doesn't count if it's part of your five a day</p>	 <p>or if it's organic</p>
 <p>If you're going to the gym</p>	 <p>... been to the gym</p>	 <p>... or just wearing gym gear</p>
 <p>It doesn't count if it's Christmas</p>	 <p>...Easter</p>	 <p>... Your birthday</p>
 <p>It doesn't count if it's free</p>	 <p>It definitely doesn't count if it's off someone else's plate</p>	 <p>Click the link... There it is</p>

Full video is online at: <http://bit.ly/kfcidci>

Only once young women chose to click through from the video to the Facebook 'It Doesn't Count If...' page was the KFC brand revealed.

The screenshot shows a Facebook page for KFC United Kingdom & UK. The page title is "Doesn't count if...". The main content is a video player with the text "IT Doesn't COUNT IF" overlaid. Below the video player, there are social media sharing options for Twitter and Facebook, and a call to action "TELL YOUR FRIENDS".

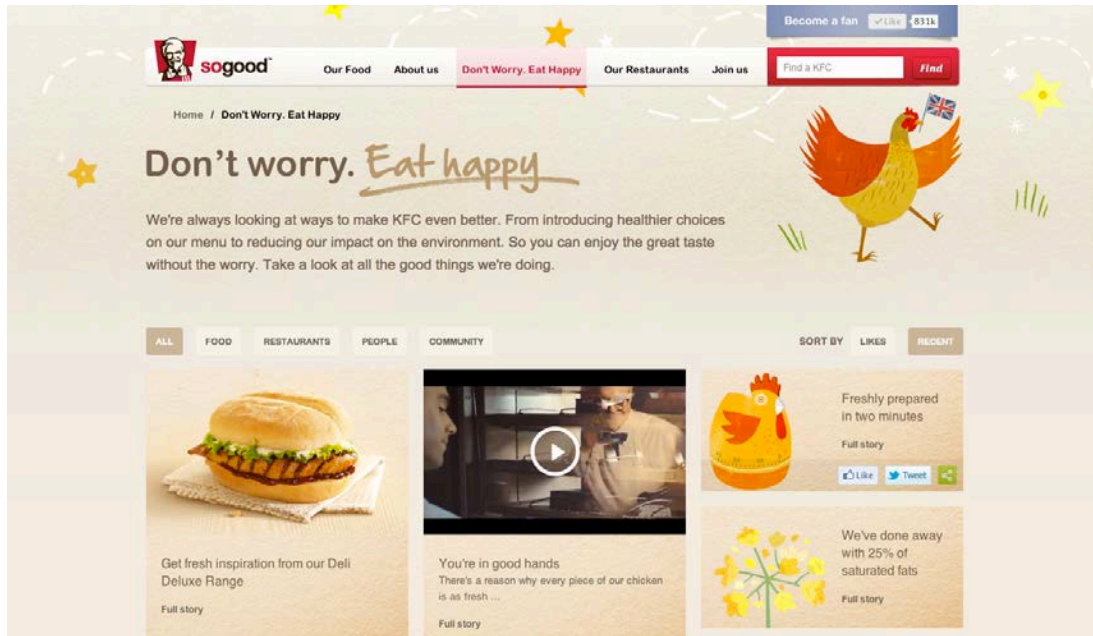
Below the video player, there are several user-generated content (UGC) posts:

- Cyria Alcock:** "It doesn't count if it's off someone else's plate - especially your boyfriends! :)"
- Kate Williams:** "It doesn't count if you're exercising at the same time"
- Gemma Mathleson:** "It doesn't count if it's the weekend."
- Libby Kola:** "It doesn't count if you're wearing gym gear, or thinking about going to the gym #itdoesntcountif"
- Commander Cobb:** "It doesn't count if you're at the movies!"
- @Reggie:** "It doesn't count if it's almost friday"
- Valerie Courreges:** "It doesn't count if it's been a loooooooong day"
- Commander Cobb:** "It doesn't count if it's part of your 5 a day"
- Jodie Anderson:** "It doesn't count if you have your eyes shut"
- Hannah Reid:** "It doesn't count if I only have a bite!"
- Adelaide Lee:** "If it's got salad with it, it definitely doesn't count #itdoesntcountif"

At the bottom of the page, there are two promotional banners:

- For the times it does count:** "The KFC Grilled BBQ Rancher Range." (Accompanied by an image of a sandwich and a salad bowl)
- Take a look at all the good things we're doing.** "Don't worry. Eat happy."

Once we'd grabbed their attention – and made them smile – with all the times 'it doesn't count', we had the opportunity to land the message that KFC has a range of lighter choices for all the times it DOES count, and to direct them through to our website where they could explore the full range of reasons to reconsider KFC – including reassurances about food quality, the restaurants and the brand's environmental and community impact.



kfc.co.uk: Section on all the changes happening at KFC (driving perception change)

Participation was turned into social objects that people could post on Facebook and share with their friends – featuring the 'It doesn't count if' moments they'd confessed.



This insight into the conversation around calories and guilty pleasures led to an inherently social strategy that let us get attention from an audience that would normally ignore KFC, then introduce the brand and change perceptions using the truth about what had changed at KFC.



## Key Results

The campaign launched September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012 with YouTube video ads featuring the 'It doesn't count if...' video for the first two weeks. No other activity targeted to young women ran during this period – and all results were tracked to people recalling 'digital activity' specifically.

### 1. Branded impressions – 1 million video views drove over 6 million KFC impressions



The unbranded 'It Doesn't Count If...' video received over one million views in two weeks. The video trended on YouTube among young women. It was the fourth most-shared piece of branded content among UK Internet users – and the most-shared online video from a UK brand.

In total, our unbranded video drove almost one million branded impressions for KFC and the grilled range, as well as unpaid editorial coverage in The Times, Cosmopolitan and the Daily Mail reaching an estimated 5 million impressions.

(Sources: Facebook Insights, Google analytics, YouTube, The Drum Viral Video Chart, PR Analysis)

### 2. Perception – Women saw KFC as having more new choices and more healthy food

Brand perception tracking showed that, in the period of the campaign, there was an increase in young women agreeing that KFC 'have healthier menu choices' (increased from 20% to 26%), 'always have something new and interesting to try' (up from 45% to 56%). Both scores are the highest results seen on the measure for young women in the past two years.

(Source: KFC BIT Tracking/Conquest Research)

### 3. Awareness – Massive uplift in views of Food & CSR messages on KFC

We saw a 37% uplift in website views of KFC's grilled range in two weeks, and a 230% uplift in views of the perception-changing CSR stories about health, quality, the restaurants, and KFC's community and environmental impact.

(Source: KFC.co.uk analytics)

### 4. Behaviour – Three times as likely to visit

Most importantly, in the three months after 'It Doesn't Count If...', KFC penetration increased by 29% among young women who saw the campaign, vs. no change for those who did not. This meant young women who saw the campaign were almost three times as likely to visit KFC as those who did not.

(Source: KFC BIT Tracking/Conquest Research)

### 5. Return on Investment – ROI of 13:1

Cost of paid media was half the expected amount, running at 6p vs a projected cost of 12p. The uplift in penetration among young women who saw the campaign gives an ROI of almost 13:1 against every £1 of marketing spend.

(Sources: KFC BIT Tracking/Conquest Research, KFC Sales Data)

## Credits

### **Yum! Restaurants (KFC UK & Ireland)**

*VP Marketing:* Jennelle Tilling  
*Marketing Director:* Meghan Farren  
*Senior Brand Manager:* Nathan James

### **Fabric Worldwide (Agency)**

*Creative Director:* Rebecca Campbell  
*Head of Design:* Lauren Edwards  
*Copywriter:* Jess Lilley  
*Senior Strategist:* Alex Steer  
*Senior Account Director:* Nathaniel Fine  
*TV Producer:* Judy Ross  
*Java Developer:* Robb Scully  
*Head of Technology:* Matt Bennett-Blacklock  
*Chief Strategy Officer:* Simon Law  
*CEOs:* Neil Miller & Chris Perry

### **Bare films (Production company)**

*Director:* Adam Gunser  
*Producer:* Kelly Doyle