

Virtual vegetables... a funfair in your mouth

Ebara creates an interactive PC game that uses facial recognition software to enable kids to chomp through virtual vegetables. (Video)



Insight

Ebara is Japan's leading vegetable marinade manufacturer. Unfortunately, it is slipping in popularity and sales. Ebara feels young kids now tend not to eat vegetables compared to the old days. So, the brand wanted to engage a new generation of families, drawing attention to the fact that Ebara's sauce can make vegetables more delicious as, it removes bitterness from the vegetables.

Strategy

Beacon/Leo Burnett's strategy was to talk and interact with them directly and try to solve a universal problem that children don't like vegetables; creating a magical way of using digital and physical attractions where eating vegetables became natural and fun.

Execution

Firstly, the agency developed an interactive PC game that is controlled by your mouth. You travel through the various scenarios, like jet plane rides or roller coasters, you chomp through virtual vegetables. This was achieved through facial recognition software that recognises mouth movements.

To further promote vegetable consumption the kids are asked to show actual vegetables, which they had to eat in front of the PC to be able to play the next level.

Secondly, the agency built new attractions inside theme parks across Japan. Collaborating with a professor of technology, it invented a Virtual Reality device that turned regular vegetables into action packed excitement with a new way of utilising bone conduction technology, which turns vibrations on the bone into sound. Through the connected vibration conductor, when kids bite vegetables, they can hear firework blasts, or race cars zooming around. The brain perceives the conduction, transferred via the teeth and tongue, as a sound signal.



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Results

The unique technology and surprising experience captured the hearts of adults as well as kids and had an explosive PR effect, equivalent to 75 million yen (\$695,000) in advertising costs.

Here's what happened in the first month of campaign period:

- Archived 117,117 PV
- Earned over 1,000 Facebook Likes
- 32% increase in Ebara's Facebook fans
- Earned over 600 Comments in Facebook and Twitter
- Over 90,000 total reach inside theme parks
- 2,600 children's participations
- Archived 12,700 vegetable marinade sampling

And, importantly, Ebara sales increased during the campaign period by 30%. Connecting new behaviour with unique and memorable experiences, Ebara believes its Funfair in Your Mouth changed kids' mind about their veggies.

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