

Brands to change marketing to under-12s on websites

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM: A group of major food brands[1] have committed to changing how they communicate to children under 12 on their company websites. The EU pledge group (www.eu-pledge.eu) committed in 2007 to only advertise "better for you" products or to move out of children's airtime altogether on TV, print and third party Internet advertising.



The group has now announced plans to ensure that their brand websites are covered by the same commitment as of January 2012.

The announcement will be made at the European Commission's Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health[2]. The EU pledge group annually presents monitoring data to demonstrate compliance with, as well as the impact of, these commitments in terms of children's exposure to food marketing.

McDonald's will also publicly sign up to the pledge commitments, extending the coverage of the EU pledge group beyond 80% of European food marketing spend.

Independent data from Accenture Media Management show how the world's biggest food brands have significantly changed the products they advertise to children in the European Union since 2005. The results demonstrate how brands are either voluntarily pulling out of or only advertising "better for you" products during children's programming and that children are being exposed to significantly less advertising for all food products across all programming.

Signatory companies honour commitment

Comparing data from 2005 with 2011, European children are exposed to 79% less advertising for foods that don't meet company "better for you" criteria in children's programmes and 29% less for these products across all programmes. The results are based on the examination of 753 299 spots broadcast in France, Ireland, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia in 2011.

In addition, signatory companies honoured their commitment not to engage in any commercial communications related to food and beverage products in primary schools, except where specifically requested by or agreed with the school administration for educational purposes. BDRC Continental surveyed a representative sample of 400 schools in Germany, Ireland, Poland and Spain and the results showed that food advertisers were 98% compliant with their commitment.

Said Stephan Loerke, WFA managing director: "The website commitment is a world first. Given that we don't have audience data for company websites as we do for TV, we have had to devise from scratch a brand new methodology for measuring how companies are compliant with their commitment. We're doing this because we are committed to the objective of helping foster an environment, which supports- rather than undermines- healthy lifestyles."

The EU Pledge was facilitated and endorsed by the World Federation of Advertisers and is a joint industry commitment to the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health set up by the European Commission in 2005.

The full EU Pledge Monitoring Report can be downloaded at www.eu-pledge.eu.

The WFA

The World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) is the voice of advertisers worldwide representing 90% of global marketing communications expenditures, roughly US\$700 billion per annum, through a unique, global network: 58 national advertiser associations on five continents as well as over 60 of the world's top 100 advertisers. Through the network, WFA represents more than 10 000 businesses operating in a broad spectrum of sectors at national, regional and global levels.

WFA has a dual mission: to champion responsible commercial communications and to facilitate a media environment which stimulates maximum effectiveness of ad spend. More information at www.wfanet.org

[1] *Burger King, Coca-Cola, Danone, Ferrero, General Mills, Kraft Food Inc, Kellogg's, Mars, Nestlé, PepsiCo., Unilever, Estrella-Maarud, Intersnack, Lorenz Snack-World, Procter & Gamble, The Chips Group, Unichips, San Carlo and Zweifel Pomy-Chip*

[2] http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/index_en.htm

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