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Whole Foods' Full-Court Press **Analyzing the grocer's integrated marketing strategies**

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- By Linda Duke, CEO, Duke Marketing

As marketing experts and lovers of all things marketing, we at Duke Marketing take time to review many brands' marketing campaigns. When something catches our eye, we find it important to share with others those campaigns that go above and beyond.

Leading organic grocer Whole Foods Market created an integrated campaign for its Novato, Calif., grand opening that is well-deserving of praise. The chain wove a marketing campaign that not only integrated specific brand messaging, but it simultaneously integrated the entire community.



I believe that the Whole Foods campaign presents integrated marketing at its best. This campaign reaches even closer to home because the store is actually located within three miles of my home. It was impossible not to notice this great campaign in the mail, on the street, in the paper and in our email inboxes.

Great job, Whole Foods.

What did they do, and how did they do it? To celebrate its arrival in Novato, the company hosted a pre-opening celebration and a grand opening party along with integrated messaging through print, media advertising, social media and email.

Two Local Events

- Pre-grand opening party: Community Taste Fair four days before the main event. It included free food, vendor promotions through sampling and live music.
- Grand opening party: Opened on Earth Day, the store hosted a community "bread breaking" party with chamber and city council, music from local high school performers and free food for the community.

Email Blast

Whole Foods sent grand-opening invitations via email to Novato residents.

Print Advertising

- Whole Foods placed a full-page, color advertisement in the local paper two days prior to the pre-grand opening event. The advertisement included a coupon for \$10 off a purchase of \$50 or more and an artist's rendering of downtown Novato.
- Whole Foods promoted its Everyday Value coupons each week on the bottom banner in full color on the front page of the local Marin County newspaper, *Marin Independent Journal*, which coincided with direct-mail free coupon offers. These advertisements were strategically placed each Wednesday, when the food section is published.

Free-Standing Insert

Rather than a typical Free-Standing Insert, Whole Foods included its full-color company newsletter

in the local paper. This includes tips and tricks for using Whole Foods products, new product information, recipe ideas, educational information, value items and coupons sponsored by Whole Foods vendors.

Direct Mailer

- On the front of the direct mailer, Whole Foods gave the date of the grand opening, address, hours and phone number. It used an extra large format and the same graphic rendering of downtown Novato as seen in the advertisement.
- On the inside, it explained the promise and mission of the company, local partnerships and special prices on products.
- On the back, it offered six coupons good for something free for eight weeks after the grand opening party to drive sales and traffic to the new store.

Social Media

- Whole Foods used Facebook to cross promote the events prior to the grand opening celebrations and create a local following in the Novato community.
- Whole Foods currently uses Facebook to update Novato residents about ongoing community events, sample times, vendor partnership days, special weekly pricing and even ticket sales for local community events that are of interest to the Whole Foods demographic.

Outdoor Advertisement

Whole Foods used a local bus stop across the street from the new location to invite bus riders to come in and eat if the bus is running late. Also, along the main freeway a billboard was purchased to entice drivers traveling to wine country to stop by for provisions.

Arrow Spinners

Whole Foods hired professional arrow spinners to attract guests to the store and parking lots. It is impossible not to notice a kid with an arrow jumping and spinning around like a skateboarder!

Partnerships with Local Community

- Local vendor partners include dairy, baked-goods, produce and seafood companies. Whole Foods made these partnerships clear in the direct mailer and with in-store signage. It specifically worked to partner with companies based in Marin County to create community goodwill.
- Whole Foods also partnered with the local high school for free entertainment and community support during the grand opening.
- Whole Foods is currently partnering with local events, which it promotes through its website and Facebook page and in-store.

Whole Foods used an integrated strategy to get involved with the local community and throw a noteworthy grand opening celebration. Its integrated efforts received the attention of the community, defined the brand to the locals and allowed the company to reach out and create buzz beyond the efforts of the grand opening celebrations. How do your new-store openings compare, and what can you do to better get the attention of the community?

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