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Milking milk marketing - by Stanley Hurwitz

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June is National Dairy Month but you can drink milk all year long. From 1993 to 2014, in a genius marketing campaign, 300 celebrities posed in ads with 'milk mustaches.' Remember the nude Kate Moss wearing only that mustache, a very pregnant Elle MacPherson, Victoria's Secret angel Tyra Banks, bikini-clad Rebecca Romijn, singer Elton John, Number 12 Tom Brady, and Ron Howard, among others?

Humans have consumed dairy products from cows, sheep and goats for at least 10,000 years. Surprisingly, milk wasn't marketed in the U. S. during the first half of the 20th century because everyone just 'knew' you had to drink three glasses a day. The only competition was orange juice or water. The dairy industry became complacent, ignoring changing consumer tastes and eating habits. They weren't prepared for competition from sodas, vending machines, sports and juice drinks, bottled water. People preferred alternative drinks when they ate out more or dined while watching television.

Before 1993, the milk industry used the slogan 'Good for you' featuring cows in commercials. Milk consumption dropped in the 1980s and 90s. Even milk lovers moooved on. The California Milk Processor Board wanted a dramatic marketing campaign. Many ad agencies competed for the \$25 million account. Researchers watched how people drank milk and used it with foods. A recurring concept was deprivation: What were you eating or doing when you thirsted for milk? They tested the phrase 'Got milk?' They found people don't think about milk until they need it and don't have it -- when only milk will do, like with cereal, snacks, dessert, P B & J sandwiches, coffee. Under what circumstances would nothing else substitute, when running out of milk might cause anger, chaos, anxiety?

It's ironic that the first time the milk industry didn't lecture about the goodness of milk, sales skyrocketed. Today, the 'Got Milk' slogan is recognized by 90% of Americans. However, milk consumption, pre- and post-marketing campaign, has not increased.

Milk is loaded with nutrients – protein, vitamins, minerals, calcium, potassium -- and may reduce risk for diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Heated milk is a prebiotic to feed healthy gut bacteria and reduce risk for chronic diseases. Studies continue regarding the connection between milk and healthy bones, prostate cancer, and fat levels that may play a role in heart or blood pressure issues.

There are 9.3 million dairy cows in the U.S. There are 56 million in India. How many U. S. dairy farms? Twenty years ago there were 70,000 farms. Today there are 34,000.

No matter your business size or type, you need to budget for attention-getting PR / Marketing. For great ideas and interesting content, let's talk: stanhurwitz@gmail.com. I can help you milk every idea to promote your business or product. Contact me for my favorite cow joke.

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