

Beef Blitz: A Grand Concept of Promotional Appeal



Shonda Anderson

Marketing and promotion always require a high level of creativity, but when it comes to marketing beef in grocery stores, imagination and resourcefulness reign supreme. Instead of just focusing marketing efforts on labels and general marketing schemes, Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) LLC staff has taken a different, more comprehensive approach that's designed to capture the imagination of our CHB® retail customers and their respective consumers.

There are several cuts of beef that are often underutilized, overlooked and, quite frankly, taken for granted. In order to help

increase CHB sales and consumer interest in cuts like the tri-tip and shoulder clod, the CHB LLC team has created a summer program called "Beef Blitz."

On paper Beef Blitz promotions are actually a simple concept with the goal of helping sell more Hereford beef: we devise unique marketing promotions tailored for individual retail chains. However, it's a little more difficult than just thinking of an idea and devising a plan; funding, details, dates, people and much more must be coordinated in order to make a promotion work. To tackle this, we start from the beginning: the idea.

The idea

Moving away from typical "ad item" concepts, we try to identify what's most important for our store groups and build from there.

For United Supermarkets in Oklahoma, community is very important. With the help of the Oklahoma Hereford Association, United Supermarkets, Oklahoma Beef Council, *Hereford World* staff and different community youth organizations, we put together a highly successful fund-raising event generating funds to support three scholarships for the top exhibitors in the annual Hereford heifer show at the Oklahoma Youth Expo and to assist the Ponca City FFA and the Lexington H.S. Band Booster Club. With the obvious success of these events, United Supermarkets has devoted its 91st anniversary celebration to hosting similar fund-raising events in nearly every store during May. The end result is that United Supermarkets is selling more CHB.

However, what worked for United Supermarkets might not work for all CHB customers. For example, some stores have installed televisions beside the meat counters, which play streaming CHB informational videos. Others dress up and do store-wide holiday tasting events every year, and a number have chosen to bring in the CHB Ambassadors to provide a deeper, more personal perspective on how CHB is produced for the consumer.

Regardless of the promotional idea, in order to make it work, three factors are critical — company buy-in, consumer interest and funding.

Summer promotions

Here are a few of the summer Beef Blitz promotions that are scheduled:

Coborn's and Cash Wise Stores, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota

To tie in with the annual Coborn's Taste of Summer, we are demonstrating the tri-tip steak in all 33 Coborn's and Cash Wise stores throughout the summer. During the demonstrations there will be a drawing for a 22-inch Weber Charcoal Kettle Grill.

Lowes Foods, southeastern U.S.

With more than 100 retail units in a broad range of demographics, Lowes Foods will give Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) LLC the opportunity to conduct multiple value cut introductions and demonstrations from the Appalachian Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean. In addition, CHB LLC will be in full force at the grand opening of four new stores slated to open in 2007. CHB LLC will also partner with the supermarket chain to promote healthy eating with beef at the 25th annual Southern Women's Show.

Hen House, Kansas City, Kan., and Kansas City, Mo.

By teaming up with Hen House, Good Natured Family Farms and the Kansas Beef Council, we will demonstrate several cuts of meat and healthy cooking recipes from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) *Healthy Beef Cookbook*. Combined with planned radio ads, newspaper ads and highway billboards, 20 demonstrations are scheduled from July to August.

United Supermarkets of Oklahoma

During May, United Supermarkets did a total of 16 fundraisers and demonstrations across Oklahoma. Both Harry, the inflatable CHB bull, and Harley, the inflatable steer, traveled many miles to help promote CHB hamburgers and steaks. **HW**

Buy-in

However different each event might be, the process of making it successful is similar across the board. To gain company buy-in, we plan events the company and its employees believe in, as is the case with United Supermarkets. As CHB LLC account managers, we are not in every store every day like the store meat managers; therefore, we rely on the managers' suggestions and insight when planning events.

In doing so we build strong relationships allowing us to gather other vital information regarding consumer interest and local buying trends. Our goal is to build the trust and personal relationships between consumers and their meat managers. To do that, we ensure the managers are on board with promotional events before we move forward.

Consumer needs

After we have company buy-in, we target what we think the consumer wants to garner from the event. By pairing the right combination of underutilized cuts with an event the consumer feels confident participating in, we create an outcome that usually proves synergistic. We grow new product acceptance and, more importantly, increase customer confidence and loyalty to their local CHB supermarket.

It is no secret that repeat customer sales are vital to supermarket sustainability. A 2006 study conducted by the American Meat Institute and the Food Marketing Institute, "The Power of Meat: An In-Depth Look at Meat Through the Shoppers' Eyes," found that "the vast majority (86%) of shoppers who do most of their grocery shopping at supermarkets stay loyal to their primary supermarkets when buying meat." Enhancing customer satisfaction within their retail stores and ensuring repeat sales ultimately means increased CHB sales.

Funding

Finally, we look for ways to fund the event. Today nothing is free. By getting everyone who might be involved with the event to provide some funds, we spread the responsibility while gaining a greater "bang for our CHB buck."

With available funding, along with backing from retail supermarket partners, plus outside sources such as state beef councils or state Hereford associations, we are able to make what would be a small event into something a little more newsworthy. By teaming up with such support, we are able to do twice as much and therefore, explode our marketing and promotional benefits for both the store group and CHB LLC.

For each Beef Blitz idea we've planned for this summer, we try to use every available resource we have to the very best benefit for our store group customers, and along the way, we hope to sell more CHB.

See "Summer promotions" for a few of the neat things going on in CHB stores. If there is a promotion near you, be sure to get the dates and times so you can come by and see us! We would love to "meat" with you. **HW**