

Nutter Butter's 5 Takeaways from Two Years of Being Weird on Social



Shortly after debuting its Nutter Butter peanut cookies in 1969, Nabisco began airing cartoon ads starring a mascot called the Nutter Butter man—a Willie Wonka simulacrum who pranced around the playground and offered cookies to children. Even by the trippy standards of the era, Nutter Butter Man proved too unsettling for the public, and Nabisco pulled him off the air.

Well, the audiences of 2025 have no such hangups, at least judging from the content that began filling Nutter Butter's social media platforms in 2023.

In Instagram posts that feel like LSD-fueled visions from the purgatorial snack realm, cookies turn into UFOs and abduct cats, a Jason Voorhees lookalike dances in a bowling lane, and Nutter Butter cookies sprout lips and teeth and look more likely to eat you than the other way around.

These goings on in the Nuttiverse, as it's known, amount to

possibly the most bizarre social-media marketing to ever exist. And in recent months, among the most effective. Those psychedelic peanut-butter nightmares that pop up daily on Instagram have increased household penetration of Nutter Butter by 17% and boosted viewers' moods by 20%, according to the brand.

But how? And why? Two years into the effort, Mondelez has learned some key lessons about the value of weird marketing. Speaking Monday at ADWEEK's Social Media Week, three executives connected with the effort revealed a few of them.

Weirdness is the look, but difference is the goal

It's easy to assume that these posts are bizarre for the sake of bizarre, and to some degree, that's true.

"If the content makes sense, it performs worse," admitted Dentsu senior social media manager Zach Poczekaj. But the payout for the strangeness lies in differentiation.

As marketers, "we all are following the same trends," said Tony Wood, vp and head of marketing strategy for Dentsu Creative, "and that's leading to a sea of sameness." So say what you will about Nutter Butter's disquieting content—but no other cookie brand is doing it.

That marketing playbook might be useless

Wood also observed that the norm of brands and agencies developing a meticulous, research-based marketing playbook over many months might be creating a lot of work, but they're not creating strategy.

"One of the biggest mistakes that we make as marketers is that we have a perfect playbook in theory," he said. "But when it comes to actually executing, we don't really use that. So you have to start to build your playbook as you go along, post-launch."

Let your consumers do the driving

While it might seem like Nutter Butter's Instagram posts are produced by marketing's mad scientists, the material actually takes its cues from the responses that visitors have posted. In other words, users are determining the content, not the brand.

"We have a strategy written down on paper, but the way our accounts are moving depends on the day-to-day conversation we have with our fans—and our fans are having with each other," said Poczekaj. "They're in the driver's seat."

Storytelling is great—just not always

"Storytelling has always been core to advertising," Wood said, "but the a-ha for me in this whole experience has been that there is not a typical story arc [in what we do.] The storytelling we have is not a distinct beginning, middle, or end. You can come in at any time, and it's consistent. And no two people are going to take away the same thing."

Fans of the brand—especially those who leave comments—will "see themselves" in the content, he said. And people can still draw their own entertainment from it even if they're just "passing by."

Move at the speed of your audience

"There's not a lot of planning that goes into this," admitted Kelly Amatangelo, Mondelēz's digital consumer experience lead. Many brand marketing teams, she said, "might plan three months in advance, but [we] try to be as real-time as possible."

After all, she explained, "the consumer has two seconds to decide if they're going to scroll past or engage, [so] why give brands more than two seconds to decide what content is worth it?"

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