

The Speed of Culture Podcast: How Frito-Lay Approaches Modern Marketing

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In a landscape where relevance, transparency and innovation are critical, corporate giants like PepsiCo and Frito-Lay are placing the consumer at the heart of their operations. To delve into how this consumer-focused philosophy takes shape, we sat down with Brett O'Brien, chief marketing officer at Frito-Lay North America.

In today's episode of The Speed of Culture podcast, we sat down with O'Brien to explore his focus on transparency in the food industry, the power of sports in driving brand awareness, and the importance of growth and consumer-centricity in marketing.

A driving force behind some of the world's most iconic brands, O'Brien blends art, science and culture to spark joy in consumers and reimagine the future of food. As the CMO of Frito-Lay North America, he shapes the resounding success of iconic snack brands like Lay's, Cheetos and Doritos, with an unwavering focus on purpose, expansion and innovation.

Previously, O'Brien led PepsiCo's Sports and Fitness division,

managing a diverse portfolio of global brands such as Gatorade, Muscle Milk, Propel and Evolve. Additionally, he led dedicated teams for Mountain Dew and Pepsi's flavored soft drinks and energy brands, further solidifying his expertise in the industry.

O'Brien's successful and creative track record has earned him honors including being named to Advertising Age's 40 Under 40 in 2013, Digital A-List in 2010, and Event Marketer's 2011 Brand X Award.

Check out the key takeaways of this episode below to learn about the role of modern marketing in the food and sports industry.

Highlights:

- 04:42 – 06:43: **Sports Marketing and Consumer Experience** – O'Brien highlights how Gatorade and Frito-Lay each approach marketing differently. At Gatorade, functionality and performance enhancement for athletes is the focus, while Frito-Lay emphasizes fandom and emotional connections that people have with the brand. He underscores the importance of understanding consumer experiences and balancing time between innovation, tracking performance and staying connected with consumer needs.
- 10:55 – 11:50 – **Unveiling the Real Food Journey** – O'Brien discusses his interest in the culinary and agricultural aspects of Frito-Lay's products. He explains the importance of educating consumers about how their food is made and where it comes from. This approach not only offers transparency but also creates a stronger connection with consumers.
- 12:14 – 14:24 – **Evolving Brand Storytelling** – Frito-Lay adapts its brand storytelling approach in response to changing media consumption habits. Rather than solely focusing on traditional TV ads, Frito-Lay now sees

events like the Super Bowl as part of a larger narrative journey. By utilizing diverse platforms and offering varied engagement opportunities, such as virtual worlds and interactive experiences, the brand ensures its audience is effectively engaged pre- and post-event.

- 17:31 – 20:22 – **Fueling Excitement in the World Cup** – Recognizing an opportunity to engage and educate U.S. fans about soccer, Frito-Lay leveraged the FIFA World Cup as a platform to generate excitement. They strategically placed their products at the center of this global event, focusing not only on the men's tournament in 2022 but also ensuring a significant presence at the Women's World Cup.

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