



Brand Audit

May 18, 2015
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Brand Audit

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West Virginia University
Final Project, May 18, 2015
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Executive Summary

The task of determining or evaluating a brand's positioning often benefits from a brand audit. The Chick-fil-A (CFA) Brand Audit is a consumer-focused exercise to assess the health of the brand, uncover its sources of brand equity, and suggest ways to improve and leverage its equity. (Keller, 2013, p. 293). Within this brand audit, a complete inventory and exploratory of CFA has been conducted, as well as recommendations for future equity and growth.

A brand inventory provides a current and comprehensive profile of a brand's products and services currently offered to consumers, and how they are being marketed and branded, from the company's perspective. The Brand Inventory included in this audit reveals CFA is doing an amazing job consistently conveying its brand across marketing channels. CFA places high value on brand awareness, intentional brand implementation, and purposefully living out its brand. Marketing approaches reiterate CFA's core values, manage consumer expectations, and interrelate with consumer's expected outcomes. CFA demonstrates that an industry challenger that remains loyal to its purpose, customers, and brand, can reap tremendous bilateral rewards.

A brand exploratory examines consumer's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions about a brand, products, and experiences; and uses this information to better understand the sources of brand equity, as well as any possible barriers, (Keller, 2013, p. 295). The feedback gathered during the Brand Exploratory included in this audit demonstrates that CFA customers love the brand. As a private, family-owned QSR challenger, CFA is a force to be reckoned with. More importantly, CFA customers are eagerly, (and consistently), advocating, cheering and promoting CFA's brand, products, services, and values to anyone and everyone who will listen.

Overall, CFA is doing an amazing job at managing and strengthening its brand. Although CFA will continue to be a challenger brand to McDonald's, and compete closely with KFC, CFA will experience growth and success where these brands consistently fall short: quality/taste, service, cleanliness, atmosphere, and overall value.

Recommendations to achieve and maintain success include: staying true to the core values, building the fan base, opening more locations, continuing community engagements, testing new ideas, and leveraging existing campaign efforts. Ultimately, these recommendations challenge CFA to keep raising the bar; not only for QSRs, but for industries that are willing to produce quality products, provide superior service, at a reasonable price; while purposefully and faithfully living out its brand values. ■

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Chick-fil-A's Market Position

Chick-fil-A (CFA) is a privately held, family-owned, quick service restaurant (QSR) chain, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. With 1,850 locations in 41 states, and more than \$5 billion in annual sales, (CFA, 2015), CFA is renown as a faith-based company with strong family values, committed community involvement, and superior customer service. In 2012, CFA earned the title of *America's Favorite Chicken Chain* for food quality/ taste, customer service, cleanliness, atmosphere and overall value, (PR Web, 2012). CFA prides itself in using trans-fat free peanut oil, (QSR, 2008; CFA, 2015), and 100% pure breast, antibiotic-free chicken, with no fillers, additives, hormones or steroids, (CFA, 2015). These healthier options differentiate it from McDonald's, the QSR industry leader, and Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), CFA's closest competitor.

CFA operates under founder, Truett Cathy's philosophical tenants: 1) the company will grow not by selling franchises, but by forming joint ventures with independent operators; 2) financing will come not through debt, but primarily from the company's own profits; 3) business will be conducted six days a week, and closed on Sunday; and 4) people will be the primary focus of Chick-fil-A, (Funding Universe, 2015).

In 2014, *QSR Magazine* reported CFA overtook KFC as the United States' most successful chicken restaurant based on sales, (Bixler, 2014). The report went on to say that CFA is also well on its way to capturing large market share from limited-service leader McDonald's.

RANK	COMPANY/CHAIN NAME	2013 U.S. SYSTEMWIDE SALES (MILLIONS)	2013 U.S. AVERAGE SALES PER UNIT (THOUSANDS)	NUMBER OF FRANCHISED UNITS IN 2013	NUMBER OF COMPANY UNITS IN 2013	TOTAL UNITS IN 2013	TOTAL CHANGE IN UNITS FROM 2012
1	McDonald's	\$35,856.3	\$2,500.0	12,739	1,539	14,278	121
2	Subway *	\$12,735.0	\$490.0	26,427	0	26,427	878
3	Starbucks *	\$11,723.0	\$1,310.0	4,408	7,049	11,457	329
4	Wendy's *	\$8,787.0	\$1,510.0	4,745	1,046	5,791	-26
5	Burger King *	\$8,502.5	\$1,200.0	7,103	52	7,155	-28
6	Taco Bell	\$7,800.0	\$1,406.0	4,878	891	5,769	74
7	Dunkin' Donuts	\$6,700.0	\$872.7	7,648	29	7,677	371
8	Pizza Hut	\$5,700.0	\$861.0	7,355	491	7,846	90
9	Chick-fil-A	\$5,052.6	\$2,846.5	1,713	62	1,775	92
10	KFC	\$4,300.0	\$942.0	4,285	206	4,491	-127

Source: QSR Magazine

Other recent Chick-fil-A industry acknowledgments, (CFA, 2015) include:

2011 Consumer Reports "Nation's Top Chicken Chain"

The QSR Survey of 36,000 readers rates seven other chicken chains across the country. CFA posted outstanding scores for politeness of staff, and high marks for food, value and speed of service.

2011 Zagat's Fast Food Survey's "Top Large Chain"

The National Fast Food Survey of 6,000 customers ranked CFA first in service and the chargrilled sandwich category. CFA ranked second in food, child-friendly, drive-thru service and facilities.

2012 Consumer Picks "Top Limited-Service Restaurants" (Chicken)

The second annual Nation's Restaurant News Consumer Picks survey reveals how diners feel and canvassed more than 6,800 customers to evaluate 152 restaurants in the limited-service, casual-, fine- and family dining restaurant segments.

2013 Temkin Experience Ratings

CFA ranked third in The Temkin Group's report on brands with the best customer service experience. Out of 246 companies across 19 industries, 10,000 consumers rated their recent experiences in three areas; functional, accessible and emotional. CFA was among the top 12 companies for all three ratings and the top fast-food brand.

2013 Nation's Restaurant News' Golden Chain Award

The 2013 Golden Chain award winners represent the best the restaurant industry has to offer. Dan Cathy, who previously won a Golden Chain award in 2005, is one of five executives whose company exceeds the expectations of consumers.

2013 Forbes "Inspiring Company"

CFA ranked fourth on a list of America's 25 most inspiring companies. The other four companies in the top five include: Microsoft, Disney, Walmart and Target.

2014 Technomic Consumers' Choice Awards (Social Consciousness)

CFA wins Technomic Social Consciousness Award. Technomic asks consumers to rate over 120 leading restaurant chains on more than 60 different attributes that capture the consumer experience from every angle, from the quality of the food to the overall brand reputation.

2014 Customer Service Hall of Fame

CFA is the only restaurant named to 24/7 Wall Street's 2014 Customer Service Hall of Fame after a survey of 2,500 adults were asked about the quality of customer service at 150 of America's best-known companies across 15 industries. CFA ranked fourth amongst other brands, including highly rated companies such as Amazon, Hilton, Marriott and Apple.

2014 Consumer Reports Tastiest Chicken Sandwich

CFA's signature Chick-fil-A Sandwich again was named the tastiest chicken sandwich in Consumer Reports 2014 survey of 32,405 readers, repeating the results of the magazine's last fast food report in 2011. Respondents, who were asked about their experiences at 65 fast food chains, not only said CFA's chicken sandwich was the best tasting but also rated CFA as number one overall out of 65 chains in customer service and cleanliness.

2014 Temkin Experience Ratings

For the second consecutive year, CFA led the fast food industry in the research firm's 2014 Customer Experience Survey of 10,000 consumers who rated 288 national companies across 19 industries, including 20 fast food chains. CFA ranked third overall, topping its sixth place overall ranking in last year's survey. Customers rated their success is getting what they wanted, ease in working with the restaurant and emotional connections to the chains.

2015 Consumer's Choice Award

CFA captured the top spot for "pleasant, friendly service" in Technomic's 2015 survey which asked 85,000 consumers to rate 120 leading restaurant chains on more than 60 attributes.

2015 Temkin Experience Ratings

For the fourth consecutive year, CFA led the fast food industry in the research firm's 2015 Customer Experience Survey of 10,000 consumers who rated 293 national companies across 20 industries, including 22 fast food chains. CFA ranked fourth overall. Customers rated their success on getting what they wanted, ease in working with the restaurant and emotional connections to the chains.

The QSR Industry

QSRs thrive due to their ability to focus on high volume, low cost and high-speed food that is generally preheated or precooked and served to-go or for on-site consumption. QSRs grow through a franchise model, with brands offering entrepreneurs opportunities to buy into locations; adopt and implement branded product, marketing and practices; and share profits. Today, American QSRs are franchised in more than 100 countries, with more than 232,000 QSR locations in the U.S. alone, (Statista, 2015). For the last five decades, QSR revenue has grown 8.6% annualized to \$195 billion in 2014, (Statista, 2015).

One in four Americans eats at a QSR establishment each day, nearly 79 million consumers. According to Gallup's *2013 Consumption Habits* poll, 76% of American respondents find fast food to be "not too good" or "not good at all for you." That percentage hasn't budged since 2003, according to Gallup data, (Omazic, 2014). Although some QSRs are focusing all of their attention, (and menu) to healthy food to remedy this, most are making efforts to offer healthier alternatives or different ways to make items healthier by leaving things out or substituting healthier ingredients.

Although McDonald's is the QSR industry leader in size, store locations, and sales, CFA is the QSR industry leader in food quality/taste, customer service, cleanliness, atmosphere and overall value, (PR Web, 2012). Because of CFA's chicken-centric menu, it's vies with KFC for poultry-eating loyalists, but CFA has clearly demonstrated that it takes more than good food to win the hearts (and appetites) of savvy consumers.

McDonald's, QSR Leader



McDonald's is the QSR industry leader, and the most well known. It's the world's largest chain of hamburger QSRs, with more than 35,000 locations, in more than 100 countries, serving more than 70 million customers daily, (Interbrand, 2014).

The brand is #9 on Interbrand's *Best Global Brands of 2014*, with a brand value of \$42.2 billion, (Interbrand, 2014). According to a 2012 BBC report, McDonald's is the world's second largest private employer, (behind Walmart), with 1.9 million employees, 1.5 million of whom work for franchises, (Alexander, 2012).

Interestingly, a 2013 QSR study listed McDonald's with \$35.8 billion in sales, or \$2.5 million per store. In the same study, CFA was listed with \$2.8 million in per store sales, making CFA the only QSR with more per store sales than McDonald's, (QSR, 2014).

McDonald's primarily sells hamburgers, cheeseburgers, chicken, french fries, breakfast items, soft drinks, milkshakes, and desserts. In response to changing consumer tastes, the company has expanded its menu to include salads, fish, wraps, smoothies, and fruit. In April 2014, European publication, *Spiegel* reported that McDonald's will begin serving chicken meat produced by using genetically modified animal feed, saving McDonald's less than a penny per sandwich, according to Greenpeace, (Spiegel, 2014).

KFC, Word's Largest Chicken Chain



Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) belongs to Yum! Brands, a former entity of PepsiCo, and one of the largest restaurant companies in the world. It's the world's second largest restaurant chain in global sales, and the world's leading chicken restaurant chain with more than 18,000 locations in 115 countries, (KFC, 2015). KFC is #68 in Interbrand's *Best Global Brands of 2014*, with a brand value of \$6 billion, (Interbrand, 2014).

KFC reported \$23 billion in global sales in 2013, (Yum!, 2014), and QSR reported U.S. sales were \$4.3 billion in 2013, or \$942 million per store, (QSR, 2014). KFC was described in 2012 by *Bloomberg Businessweek* as a "muscular player" in developing regions, specifically Africa, China and India, while noting its falling market share in the U.S. to rivals such as CFA, (Brady, 2013).

In 2008, Yum! CEO, David Novak cited low U.S. sales attributed to a lack of new ideas and menu items, (Davis, 2008). In 2009 KFC launched Kentucky Grilled Chicken, and in 2010, KFC announced a turnaround plan that included providing healthier menu options. In that same year, *Advertising Age* noted that KFC was losing market share to its smaller chicken restaurant rival, CFA, (York, 2010). And, in 2012, *Forbes* commented that many of the KFC outlets were "aged and uninviting," and that the chain "hasn't introduced an exciting new food item in ages." (Tice, 2012).

In December 2012, KFC was criticized in China as KFC suppliers were using growth hormones and an excessive amount of antibiotics on its poultry in ways that violated Chinese law. Novak admitted In February 2013 that it had been, “longer lasting and more impactful than we ever imagined.” (Hsu, 2013).

Other CFA competitors include: Popeyes, Churches, Raising Canes, Subway, Wendy’s, and Burger King.

Points-of-Parity and Points-of-Difference

According to Keller, positioning requires a frame of reference, by identifying the target market and the nature of competition, and the optimal points-of-parity and points-of-difference brand associations, (Keller, 2013, p. 79).

Points-of-Parity

Points-of-Parity (POP) between CFA and McDonald’s include:

- Both provide fast food via walk-in or a drive-thru window
- Both are reasonably priced
- Both offer chicken, fries, soft drinks, milkshakes, desserts, and breakfast items
- Both offer kids menu items
- Both are franchise chains
- Both provide kids play areas

Points-of-Difference

Points-of-Difference (POD) between CFA and McDonald’s include:

- CFA is privately held
- CFA chicken is 100% pure breast meat with no fillers, additives, hormones or steroids, (CFA, 2015)
- CFA is trans-fat free, (QSR, 2008)
- CFA serves antibiotic-free chicken, (CFA, 2015)
- CFA offers waffle fries
- CFA promotes strong family values
- CFA is a faith-based organization
- CFA is heavily committed to local community involvement
- CFA consistently provides superior customer service
- CFA consistently provides a clean and inviting environment

Chick-fil-A Brand Allocation

As consumer taste and preferences change, the stability of a strong brand and reputation is imperative. Although it's important for consumers to know about CFA and the products/services CFA offers, it's even more important for consumers to prefer CFA, and recommend CFA to others. For this to occur, product, price, promotion and placement must consistently exceed industry standards, appeal to consumer preferences, and attract, (and retain), loyal advocates.

A Brand Audit is a comprehensive examination of CFA's brand to discover its sources of brand equity, (Keller, 2013, p. 293). It's a blend of qualitative and quantitative research that provides valuable information for strategic marketing planning, development and implementation. The Brand Audit relates CFA to the QSR industry, CFA leadership, and consumers; and seeks to understand the sources of brand equity from the perspectives of the organization and the consumer. As an externally, consumer-focused exercise, it assesses the health of CFA's brand, uncovers its sources of brand equity, and suggests ways to improve and leverage its equity.

As CFA grows closer to 2,000 locations, the ability for associates to consistently "live" the CFA brand, while consumers consistently "experience" the CFA brand will directly contribute to CFA's long-term growth and success. To that end, CFA's brand assets must be assessed, respected, and protected as brand value alone continues to climb through positive, relatable and transferable CFA sales, mentions and experiences.

A key benefit to strategic brand assessment, adjustment, and activities is an increase in market share. As a result of strategies developed and implemented from the recommendations in this audit, CFA should experience a market share increase of 20%.

Another benefit to strong brand equity, as witnessed in 2012, is the ability to rebound after negative publicity. In the age of social media, it's nearly impossible for a national brand to evade bad publicity. Whether it's for standing behind a founding principal; cutting corners in quality, process, or integrity; or just poor judgment, negative publicity can destroy an already unstable brand. A brand with a strong portfolio of brand assets is most likely given second (or third) chances to concede and recoup its reputation.

Chick-fil-A, Industry Challenger?

U.S. Limited-Service Chicken Segment–Market Share, 1999-2013

Year	Chick-fil-A	KFC	Popeyes	Zaxby's	Bojangles' Famous	Others
2013	26.3%	21.9%	11.4%	5.6%	4.8%	30.0%
2012	25.1%	24.4%	10.9%	5.3%	4.7%	29.6%
2011	23.5%	26.6%	10.2%	4.9%	NA	34.8%
2010	22.0%	28.9%	10.1%	4.8%	NA	34.2%
2009	20.0%	30.4%	9.9%	4.5%	NA	35.2%
2008	18.2%	31.3%	9.8%	4.1%	NA	36.6%
2007	16.7%	32.4%	10.0%	3.6%	NA	37.3%
2006	15.0%	34.4%	10.1%	3.1%	NA	37.4%
2005	13.6%	36.2%	10.0%	2.7%	NA	37.5%
2004	13.0%	36.8%	10.2%	1.8%	NA	38.2%
2003	11.9%	38.3%	10.2%	NA	NA	39.6%
2002	10.9%	38.7%	9.9%	NA	NA	40.5%
2001	10.2%	38.8%	9.6%	NA	NA	41.4%
2000	9.6%	38.8%	9.7%	NA	NA	41.9%
1999	8.7%	39.7%	8.8%	NA	NA	42.8%

NA Not available.

Source: Technomic and Janney Capital Markets

For decades McDonald's has enjoyed substantial market share due to its enormous size and scale, but more and more of that market share is going to CFA, and for far more important reasons than product sales and number of locations. CFA is diligently focused on what matters to the consumer, therefore, McDonald's and KFC are under increasing criticism and scrutiny. And, as CFA is revitalizing and redefining QSR expectations, consumers are using those expectations to measure industry leaders. No longer are surveys asking, "What brands are most popular?" Surveys are now asking, "What brands are most preferred, and why?"

McDonald's and KFC satisfied the needs for convenience, quantity, and cost in an era that took quality, cleanliness, and service for granted. But, consumer expectations and preferences have dramatically shifted since that era. Quality food, great service, and clean environments are no longer the norm for QSRs, so consumers now place high value on these qualities...as well as affordable options, quality food processing techniques, employee retention, and community involvement.

So, it's important to remember that "industry leader" is only relative to what's being measured, and what questions are being asked. And, it's equally important to take advantage of the benefits of being the "industry challenger" when assessing industry-leading priorities and practices. Fortunately, CFA's priorities and commitments to the product and consumer have remained consistent since it was founded in 1946. And CFA has been reaping the benefits of that brand consistency ever since. ■



Keller's purpose for a brand inventory is, "to provide a current, comprehensive profile of how all the products and services sold by a company are marketed and branded." He suggests, "cataloging the brand's names, logos, symbols, characters, packaging, slogans, or other trademarks used; the inherent product attributes or characteristics of the brand; the pricing, communications, and distribution policies; and any other relevant marketing activity related to the brand." (Keller, 2013, p. 294). The following is Chick-fil-A's (CFA) Brand Inventory:

Brand Elements

According to Keller, "the key to creating a brand is to be able to choose a name, logo, symbol, package design, or other characteristic that identifies a product and distinguishes it from others. These different components of a brand that identify and differentiate it are called the brand elements," (Keller, 2013, p. 30). CFA's brand elements consist of its name, logo, slogan, characters, and packaging.

Chick-fil-A Name

The Chick-fil-A name represents the entire brand. It sets the tone and clearly communicates exactly what this QSR serves – premium, boneless chicken breast; with the capital A in the name implying "top quality," (Cathy, 2010). Because the name is incorporated into the CFA logo, the name appears on all stores, packaging, marketing, and promotional items.

Chick-fil-A Logo



CFA's logo is its name, with the head of a chicken graphically incorporated into the C. It's a simple, one-color (red) logo, in script writing, and clearly communicates what CFA offers.

Chick-fil-A Slogan

CFA's slogan, "We Didn't Invent the Chicken, Just the Chicken Sandwich," credits Founder Truett Cathy with inventing CFA's flagship boneless breast of chicken sandwich, and was trademarked in 1995, (USPTO, 2015). CFA has also trademarked the phrase, "Eat Mor Chikin", from its famous 1995 campaign by the same name. It also has the trademarked slogan, "The Original Chicken Sandwich" under its logo, on the front of its stores.

Chick-fil-A Characters



In 1995, CFA ad agency, The Richards Group created the “Eat Mor Chikin” campaign, featuring cows wearing signs with this message. The campaign began that same year with cows painting the message on billboards. In 1997, the CFA cows appeared in television spots, and the following year the

cows were featured in the first CFA calendar, (CFA, Cows, 2015).

Today, the cow is CFA’s mascot. CFA Cows have more than 725,000 Facebook fans, (Facebook, 2015), and 29,000 Twitter fans, (Twitter, 2015), and Cow Appreciation Day is celebrated annually at CFA with free food to customers who come dressed like cows, (CFA, Cow Appreciation Day, 2015).



Chick-fil-A Packaging



CFA’s packaging is simple, descriptive, and appealing, and strategically incorporates other CFA brand elements.

In keeping with CFA’s Environmental Stewardship practices, CFA claims it’s also continually reviewing its overall packaging strategy and works with suppliers to find the best recycling methods to reduce the amount of waste sent to

landfills, (CFA, Environment, 2015). For example, all napkins, tray liners and Kid’s Meal bags are made from 100% recycled content; and CFA foam cups are made from polystyrene, which, unlike traditional cold paper cups, can be recycled where facilities exist, (CFA, Environment, 2015).

Brand Element Assessment

Keller's brand equity model suggests that brand elements should enhance brand awareness; facilitate the formation of strong, favorable, and unique brand associations; or elicit positive brand judgments and feelings, (Keller, 2013, p. 142). To assess CFA's name, logo, slogan, characters, and packaging, Keller's six criteria for measuring successful brand elements will be used, (Keller, 2013, p. 142):

Memorable

The CFA name, logo, characters and slogan are all thoughtfully memorable and effectively build CFA brand awareness. The name clearly communicates exactly what CFA serves, in a unique and clever way. The logo also visually communicates what CFA offers; simply the name in a scripted font, with a graphically stylized chicken incorporated into the C, and a capital A at the end, implying top quality. CFA has a few slogans, and although it uses "The Original Chicken Sandwich" and "We Didn't Invent the Chicken, Just the Chicken Sandwich," these haven't been promoted as much as the "Eat Mor Chikin" slogan. Therefore, "Eat Mor Chikin" has become more memorable because of its incorporation into the campaign with other memorable brand elements. The CFA cows are not only its mascot, but have become national celebrities...an excellent implementation of a memorable, (and appreciated, thanks to CFA's National Cow Appreciation Day) brand element. Although CFA's packaging alone isn't memorable, it reiterates the CFA brand by intentionally including the name, logo, slogan, and occasionally the cows.

Meaningful

CFA's brand elements are meaningful because they provide specific information about particular attributes and benefits of the brand, (Keller, 2013, p. 143). The name and logo infers a specialization of chicken in the QSR industry, and implies premium, boneless chicken breast (product), and top quality (service). The slogans, "The Original Chicken Sandwich" and "We Didn't Invent the Chicken, Just the Chicken Sandwich," set the expectation that CFA created and mastered the chicken sandwich. The CFA cows bring a enduringly playful aspect to the brand that customers/kids enjoy, interact, and relate with. Although the CFA packaging isn't directly meaningful, CFA's environmentally conscientious packaging standards certainly underscore CFA's impeccable reputation and differentiate it from QSR competitors.

Likeable



The CFA brand elements work collaboratively to elicit a consistently positive and reciprocally enjoyable experience. The clean, descriptive, and straightforward presentation adds to its appeal. The CFA cows also contribute to the likability of the brand experience as well as consumer brand interaction, with more than 725,000 Facebook fans, and 29,000 Twitter fans.

Transferable

CFA brand elements are easily transferable within its segmented QSR category – chicken. The brand elements are not easily transferable, and would not be effective beyond providing quality chicken in the QSR industry.

Adaptable

Although the CFA logo is adaptable, it's simple and effective enough to last for a very long time. CFA's slogans are also sustainable. Because there is very little customization to the CFA cows, there is very little adaptation that needs to occur. Although, the situations, stories and scenarios that the cows experience can certainly adapt to changes in consumer values and opinions.

Protectable

The CFA name, logo, and slogan are unique enough to trademark and protect. The CFA packaging and cows are generic, and would be difficult to legally protect. CFA has a number of protectable registrations and trademarks, (Wysk, 2015). In 2011, CFA was accused of “corporate bullying” when it sent a cease and desist letter to a Vermont artist who screen prints T-shirts reading: “Eat More Kale”, (Bidgood, 2011). Although the letter highlighted 30 other businesses whose “Eat more” phrases had been successfully legally discouraged, CFA lost the case, which was seen as a victory for small businesses and the “local food movement”, (Georgieff, 2014).

Brand Associations



Founder, Truett Cathy was a devout Southern Baptist, and was open about his religious beliefs having a major impact on the company, (Forbes, 2010). Today, CFA's official statement of corporate purpose says that the business exists "To glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us. To have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick-fil-A." (CFA, Dan Cathy, 2015). These Christian views led to CEO Dan Cathy opposing same-sex couples to participate in WinShape marriage retreats, as well as giving \$5 million to anti-gay groups that oppose same-sex marriage. This culminated in Cathy openly speaking out against the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community in 2012. "We are very much supportive of the family – the biblical definition of the family unit." (Huffington Post, 2012). Although the controversy spurred protests, criticism, and boycotts, as well as a social media frenzy, CFA saw record sales, (Jeltson, 2012).

During the controversy, CFA's overall consumer brand health with fast food eaters dropped to its lowest levels since at least mid-August 2010. It was also the first time CFA had sunk below the fast food consumer perception average of the top QSR restaurant chains. It took two years for CFA to recover, but the public relations scar will take years, (Marzilli, 2012). Interestingly, the CFA website states, "The Chick-fil-A culture and service tradition in our Restaurants is to treat every person with honor, dignity and respect—regardless of their belief, race, creed, sexual orientation or gender," (CFA, Culture, 2012).

Marketing Support Programs

For a private, family-owned company, CFA has an impressive variety of marketing support programs. Without exception, all CFA locations, pricing, products and promotions consistently emulate the clean unmatched quality that customers have come to expect from the CFA brand.

Place



CFA pioneered the QSR experience in shopping malls, and still considers mall-based restaurants an integral part of its business with nearly 300 major shopping mall restaurants in operation today. In response to customer demand for convenience and accessibility, CFA began operating stand-alone restaurants in 1986. The chain now has more than 1500 stand-alone locations and 35 drive-thru-only restaurants in 41 states, (CFA Facts, 2015).

Surprisingly, all of these locations have a reputation for consistently being clean...including the restrooms. A Cintas Corporation study revealed that 95% of people avoid businesses where they have had a negative restroom experience, (Hartman, n.d.). Tables are always clean and ready to use, and the kitchen area is kept clean and free of clutter or food spills, as well. More importantly, employees are always well-groomed. These details add to CFA's family-friendly brand image and atmosphere.

Chick-fil-A's Menu

CLASSICS										
	CFA Chicken Sandwich	CFA Chicken Deluxe	CFA Spicy Chicken Sandwich	CFA Chicken Deluxe	Grilled Chicken Sandwich					
										
	Grilled Chicken Club	CFA Chicken Salad Sandwich	CFA Nuggets	CFA Grilled Nuggets	CFA Chick-n-Strips					
WRAP & SALADS										
	Grilled Chicken Cool Wrap		CFA Asian Salad	CFA Cobb Salad	CFA Grilled Market Salad					
SIDES										
	CFA Waffle Potato Fries	Chicken Salad Cup	Cole Slaw	Fruit Cup	Chicken Soup	Side Salad				
BREAKFAST										
	CFA Chicken Biscuit	Plain Biscuit	Bacon, Egg & Cheese Biscuit	Sausage, Egg & Cheese Biscuit	CFA Spicy Chicken Biscuit	CFA Chick-n-Minis				
										
	Chicken, Egg & Cheese on Sunflower Multigrain Bagel	Cinnamon Cluster	Chicken Breakfast Burrito	Sausage Breakfast Burrito	Multigrain Oatmeal	Yogurt Parfait				
										
CFA Sausage Platter	CFA Chicken Platter	CFA Bacon Platter	Hash Browns							
DESSERTS					DRINKS					
	Milkshake	CFA Frosted Lemonade	Icedream	Cookie						
										

CFA restaurants also have exemplary customer service. Associates ask for your name in the drive-through so they can greet you at the window; respond with, “my pleasure”, no matter what you order, ask or say; offer free samples; clean the restaurant thoroughly; and offer customers refills, extra napkins, and general service. Most notable is that CFA employees are always polite, respectful, professional and friendly, (Lawrence, 2014). In 2015, CFA won the Consumer’s Choice Award for, “pleasant, friendly service” in Technomic’s 2015 survey which asked 85,000 consumers to rate 120 leading restaurant chains on more than 60 attributes, (CFA, Thumbs Up, 2015).

Another distinguishable attribute is that all CFA locations close on Sundays. Since 1946, CFA has believed all CFA operators and employees should have an opportunity to rest, spend time with family and friends, and worship if they choose to do so. This contributes to what CFA calls its “recipe for success”, (CFA, Sundays, 2015).

Price

CFA prices are slightly higher than typical QSRs. For example, a CFA Chicken Sandwich, waffle fries, and a medium drink averages \$7. In comparison, a Big Mac Extra Value Meal with fries and a medium drink at McDonald’s averages \$4, and a 2-Piece Chicken Combo with an individual side and medium drink at KFC averages \$6, (Fast Food Menu Prices, 2015).

Product

With a few exceptions, CFA serves chicken; specializing in the chicken sandwich and waffle fries, CFA’s most popular items. CFA also offers a variety of wraps, salads, breakfast items, and desserts. In 2014, the Chick-fil-A Sandwich was named, “the tastiest chicken sandwich” in a *Consumer Reports* survey of 32,405 readers, repeating the results of the magazine’s last fast food report in 2011, (CFA, Thumbs Up, 2015).



CFA positions itself as a “healthy alternative” to the questionable ingredients and processing methods used by competitive QSRs. CFA prides itself in using trans-fat free peanut oil, (QSR, 2008; CFA, 2015), and 100% pure breast, antibiotic-free chicken, with no fillers, additives, hormones or steroids, (CFA, 2015).

Promotion

CFA has a limited, yet very effective promotion portfolio. Although CFA has only launched one campaign in 20 years, the campaign was so clever and well received, that it's now an established part of CFA's brand.

Chick-fil-A's Website

CFA's website is simple, appealing, and easy to navigate. It provides information on CFA food and nutrition; corporate, career, and foundation information; the CFA cows; kids, family and community involvement; CFA locations, FAQs; news and media; customers stories; and how to connect with CFA.

Chick-fil-A's "Eat Mor Chikin" Campaign

In 1995, CFA ad agency, The Richards Group created and launched the "Eat Mor Chikin" campaign, featuring cows wearing signs with the same message. Due to the modest

budget, the campaign began with cow sculptures painting the message on billboards. "We had no idea it would become the icon of our brand that it has today," said CEO Dan Cathy. "We're going to milk it till the



cows come home," (Robinson, 2010), and CFA certainly has. In the 20 years since the campaign launched, CFA has produced three television spots, seven annual "cow" calendars, CFA cow merchandise, and celebrates an annual Cow Appreciation Day. CFA also launched the

website, eatmorchikin.com as well as eatmorchikin Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages, (CFA, Cows, 2015).

Chick-fil-A's Social Media

CFA is actively involved in social media. It sends out a monthly Email Insiders newsletter; and has a Facebook page with 7.3 million followers; a Twitter page with 553,000 followers; and a YouTube channel with 2,800 subscribers. Its Eat Mor Chikin cows also have a Facebook page with 725,000 followers; and a Twitter page with 29,000 followers.



Chick-fil-A's Sports Sponsorships



As one of its most important core values, "Making a positive impact on our communities and the people in them," CFA sponsors a number of sports events, including: The Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl (college football), The Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game (college football), The College Football Hall of Fame and Chick-fil-A Fan Experience, and The Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl Challenge (charity golf), as well as The Chick-fil-A Classic (high school basketball), and the Chick-fil-A Kyle Petty Charity Ride Across America (charity motorcycle tour), (CFA, Partnerships, 2015).

Chick-fil-A's Community Involvement

Over the past three years, CFA and its franchised Restaurant Operators have given more than \$68 million in contributions to more than 700 educational and charitable organizations, and have provided millions of dollars in food donations all across America, (CFA, Giving Back, 2015), these include:

GIVING TOWARD YOUTH & EDUCATION



From providing scholarship opportunities for Team Members to supporting youth programs across America, the Chick-fil-A Foundation has committed millions of dollars toward education and youth development, some programs include: Restaurant Team Member College Scholarships; Scholarships and educational development to various

colleges and universities across the nation; support toward sports programs for disadvantaged youth in Atlanta; foster care through WinShape Homes, Lighthouse for the Blind, and academic coaches through Play It Smart; the Junior Achievement's Chick-fil-A Foundation Discovery Center; the WinShape College Program; and day camps and overnight camps for thousand of boys and girls, (CFA, Giving Back, 2015).

GIVING TOWARD LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Serving local neighbors with food donations, supporting those in need and taking care of the people who take care of communities, CFA's franchised Restaurant Operators are committed to serving beyond their

restaurant doors, some programs include: donating food for those in need; providing disaster relief; and military appreciation events, (CFA, Giving Back, 2015).

GIVING TOWARD LEADERSHIP & FAMILY ENRICHMENT

The WinShape Foundation, created in 1982, grew from CFA founder Truett Cathy's desire to "shape winners" by helping young people succeed in life. Today, the foundation provides several programs focused on creating strong youth through leadership programs and supporting families and enriching marriages, these include: WinShape Camps; WinShape Marriage; WinShape Homes; and WinShape International, (CFA, Giving Back, 2015).

Chick-fil-A's Merchandise

CFA offers logo and/or cow merchandise such as cups, mugs, apparel, books, and home/office items. These items can be ordered on CFA's website, (CFA, Store, 2015).

Chick-fil-A's Home Office Backstage Tours

The CFA Home Office Backstage Tour is a walking, guided cultural tour that focuses on Founder Truett Cathy. Throughout the tour, customers experience hospitable people, delicious food, the "Eat Mor Chikin" Cows, and the unique CFA story, (CFA, Backstage, 2015).

Chick-fil-A's Public Relations

CFA maintains a Press Room on its website. This area contains the latest CFA news, a CFA Press Kit, CFA videos, CFA images, and CFA PR contact information, (CFA Press, 2015).

Marketing Assessment

Overall, CFA does an amazing job consistently conveying its brand across marketing channels. CFA places high value on brand awareness, intentional brand implementation, and purposefully living out its brand. Marketing approaches reiterate CFA's core values, manage consumer expectations, and interrelate with consumer's expected outcomes. CFA demonstrates that an industry challenger that remains loyal to its purpose, customers, and brand, can reap tremendous bilateral rewards. ■



Keller's purpose for a brand exploratory is, "to provide detailed information about what consumers actually think of the brand." He suggests conducting qualitative and quantitative research, "directed to understanding what consumers think and feel about the brand and act toward it, in order to better understand sources of brand equity, as well as any possible barriers." (Keller, 2013, p. 295). The following is Chick-fil-A's (CFA) Brand Exploratory:

Target Consumer Demographics

CFA's target demographic are people who eat chicken at QSRs. They are typically suburban families, in the South or Midwest, with traditional values, seeking a healthy alternative to typical QSR products. They are willing to pay more for great quality, convenience, and service; recognize and appreciate family-friendly experiences, community engagement, and environmental responsibility; and readily share their positive experiences with others.

Consumer Psychographics

CFA also identifies a target psychographic it nicknames, "raving fans". These are roughly 10% to 15% of the seven to ten million customers eating at CFA each week. The raving fan visits CFA four or more times each month, and are so loyal, they dress up as the brand's famous cows to celebrate "Cow Appreciation Day" to win a free sandwich, (Davis, 2013). These are CFA's loyal evangelists and brand ambassadors.

Consumer Attitudes and Perceptions

The research conducted for this Brand Exploratory found that consumer perceptions are overwhelmingly positive toward CFA. In addition to ranking fourth, (after Microsoft, Disney and Walmart), on *Forbe's America's 25 Most Inspiring Companies* in 2013, (Smith, 2013), CFA also ranked fourth in "customer experience", according to Temkin's 2015 survey of 10,000 consumers who rated 293 national companies across 20 industries, including 22 fast food chains, on success, effort, and emotion, (Temkin, 2015).

Rank ▲	Company	Industry	Temkin Experience Rating (TER)	Company TER vs Industry TER
1	Publix	Supermarket Chain	85%	6
2	Aldi	Supermarket Chain	84%	5
2	H.E.B.	Supermarket Chain	84%	5
4	Chick-fil-A	Fast Food	82%	6
4	Amazon.com	Retailer	82%	7
4	PetSmart	Retailer	82%	7
4	Trader Joe's	Supermarket Chain	82%	4
8	A credit union	Bank	81%	10
8	USAA	Bank	81%	11
8	Papa John's	Fast Food	81%	5

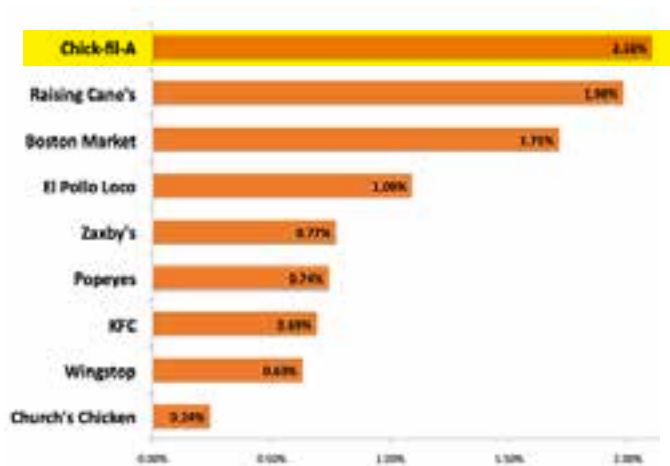
2015 Temkin Experience Ratings

CFA also captured the top spot for “pleasant, friendly service” in Technomic’s 2015 Consumer’s Choice survey that asked 85,000 consumers to rate 120 leading restaurant chains on more than 60 attributes, (Technomic, 2015).

Pillar of Excellence	Quick Service	Fast Casual	Full Service
Pleasant, Friendly Service	Chick-fil-A	McAlister's Deli	Cracker Barrel Old Country Store
Welcoming, Comfortable Atmosphere	Caribou Coffee	Firehouse Subs	Maggiano's Little Italy
Unique Items You Can't Get Elsewhere	Cold Stone Creamery	Zaxby's	The Cheesecake Factory
Availability of Healthy Options	Jamba Juice	Jason's Deli	Seasons 52
Intent to Recommend	Papa Murphy's	Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers	Cheddar's

Technomic's Chain Restaurant Consumers' Choice Awards

In 2012, CFA was voted “America’s No. 1 Chicken Chain” in an industry survey of more than 7,600 consumers, conducted by Market Force, a worldwide leader in customer intelligence solutions. The survey measured food quality/taste, service, cleanliness, atmosphere, and overall value, (Restaurant News, 2012).



Favorite Chicken Chain, Indexed by Door Count

Food Quality/Taste	Service	Cleanliness	Atmosphere	Overall Value
Raising Cane's (17%)	Chick-fil-A (6%)	Chick-fil-A (67%)	Raising Cane's (17%)	Chick-fil-A (43%)
Chick-fil-A (71%)	Raising Cane's (61%)	Raising Cane's (64%)	Chick-fil-A (64%)	Raising Cane's (46%)
Zaxby's (17%)	Zaxby's (12%)	Zaxby's (14%)	Zaxby's (15%)	Zaxby's (46%)
Wingstop (12%)	Wingstop (40%)	Wingstop (41%)	Wingstop (13%)	Wingstop (38%)
El Pollo Loco (14%)	Boston Market (14%)	Boston Market (44%)	Boston Market (14%)	El Pollo Loco (17%)
Church's Chicken (12%)	El Pollo Loco (16%)	El Pollo Loco (11%)	El Pollo Loco (17%)	Church's Chicken (11%)
Popeyes (11%)	Church's Chicken (14%)	Church's Chicken (20%)	KFC (13%)	Boston Market (10%)
Boston Market (11%)	KFC (11%)	KFC (26%)	Popeyes (15%)	Popeyes (10%)
KFC (11%)	Popeyes (11%)	Popeyes (20%)	Church's Chicken (11%)	KFC (17%)

Top 9 Chicken Chains Ranked by Attribute

Also in 2012, NetBase, an Enterprise Social Intelligence (ESI) Platform company, published its analysis of more than 27 billion conversations in social media, over one year, to reveal the top ten things that men and women want. Eighty percent of their top five wants focused on food, and the results found that both men and women rave about CFA. “Chick-fil-A, the most loved brand for men and women, generated 25% of the overall chatter for both genders. For women, CFA had the highest Passion Intensity score of the ten brands by a margin of 15 points, with a 75. The verbatim showed that this is due to many factors, including outstanding customer service and various menu options. For men, CFA generated not only the highest Net Sentiment, with a score of 75, but also the highest Passion Intensity with a score of 70. Verbatim showed that, much like their female counterparts, this is due to the top notch customer service, as well as the delicious chicken.” (NetBase, 2012).

Brand Elements

According to Keller, “the key to creating a brand is to be able to choose a name, logo, symbol, package design, or other characteristic that identifies a product and distinguishes it from others. These different components of a brand that identify and differentiate it are called the brand elements;” (Keller, 2013, p. 30). CFA’s brand elements consist of its name, logo, slogan, characters, and packaging.

Chick-fil-A Name

Because the Chick-fil-A name cleverly and clearly communicates exactly what CFA provides, customers quickly identify and understand the primary purpose of this brand. After the customer is exposed to the other brand elements, as well as CFA’s marketing support programs, the name then reinforces the consumer experience.

Chick-fil-A Logo

Because CFA’s logo is its name, and includes a graphic representation of the head of a chicken, consumers quickly identify and understand the primary purpose of this brand. Again, after the customer is exposed to the other brand elements, as well as CFA’s marketing support programs, the logo then reinforces the consumer experience.

Chick-fil-A Slogan

This Brand Audit has identified three slogans that CFA routinely uses, “We Didn’t Invent the Chicken, Just the Chicken Sandwich”, “The Original Chicken Sandwich”, and “Eat Mor Chikin”.

Consumers are quickly aware that CFA serves chicken, and specializes in the chicken sandwich.

Chick-fil-A Characters

Customers love the CFA cows! In addition to 725,000 Facebook followers, and 29,000 Twitter followers, CFA cow fans also celebrate an annual Cow Appreciation Day, with cow activities for kids, pictures with the cow mascot, and free CFA food for customers who show their bovine spirit, (CFA, Cow Day, 2015).



Chick-fil-A Packaging

CFA's customers appreciate the effort CFA takes in environmental awareness and responsibility. Although CFA takes the lead to inform its customers of proactive measures it takes to be environmental stewards, (CFA, Environment, 2015), customers are also eager to solicit environmentally friendly businesses, as well as join in the recycling effort. This bilateral relationship contributes to brand loyalty, as well as creates a unique benefit toward the customer's CFA experience.



Brand Element Assessment

Keller's brand equity model suggests that brand elements should enhance brand awareness; facilitate the formation of strong, favorable, and unique brand associations; or elicit positive brand judgments and feelings, (Keller, 2013, p. 142). To assess CFA's name, logo, slogan, characters, and packaging, Keller's six criteria for measuring successful brand elements will be used, (Keller, 2013, p. 142):

Memorable

The CFA name and logo are uniquely recognizable, descriptive, and memorable for customers. The slogan(s) are memorable with customers because they clearly explain what CFA specializes in. The cows are probably the most memorable (and enduring) brand element with customers. Other than the recycling benefits, CFA's packaging (alone) doesn't have uniquely memorable qualities for customers.

Meaningful

The CFA name and logo have meaning for customers because they clearly describe CFA's product and service. They also set (and exceed) expectations for customer's experiences. The slogan(s) are meaningful to customers because they reassure customers that they're receiving a great chicken sandwich. The cows

are meaningful to customers because of their persuasive messages to eat more chicken. Some packaging is meaningful to customers because it describes what's in the container, but the majority of packaging isn't meaningful beyond being a container for the food.

Likeable

The majority of customers who have experienced the CFA brand, love it. The CFA name and logo are likeable to customers because of the fun and interesting way it describes the product and service CFA offers. The cows are easily recognizable, and contribute to customer's engagement and enjoyment in CFA promotional activities. Other than the appreciation customers have about CFA using recyclable packaging, the packaging has no extraordinary likeable features or benefits.

Transferable

Consumers understand CFA only operates in the United States, within the QSR chicken industry, other than CFA's extracurricular sponsorships and community involvement projects. There have been no requests from customers to venture beyond this market, and viable transferable opportunities are limited.

Adaptable

Although, CFA has never needed to adapt any of its brand elements for consumer preferences, consumers aren't requesting brand changes, and are satisfied with CFA's current brand elements.

Protectable

Generally, consumers understand and are aware that the brand name, logo, and slogan can't be copied or infringed for competitive gain. Consumers don't try to replicate the brand, its likeness, or copy the brand's protected elements, as they are aware of the repercussions.

Brand Associations



Although consumer criticism toward CFA was relatively non-existent before the 2012 anti-gay controversy, and very little consumer criticism has occurred beyond the controversy since, the position and statements that CEO Dan Cathy made had an impact that still resonates today.

At the time of Cathy's perceived anti-gay remarks in July 2012, CFA's overall consumer brand health with fast food eaters dropped to its lowest levels since mid-August 2010. It was also the first time CFA had sunk below the fast food consumer perception average of the top QSR restaurant chains, (Marzilli, 2012). A 2012 study by consumer insights company, The Intelligence Group explains why. The study surveyed 900, 14-34 year-olds online, asking about a variety of social issues related to their social consciousness. Among those surveyed, 59% expressed that a company's ethics and practices are important factors in deciding what brands they will buy. "When I disagree with a brand's ethics, I seek out their competitors, or alternatives to their product or service," one respondent said.

Coining the term, "wallet activism," the survey found that 30% of respondents stopped supporting a brand because of something they learned about its corporate practices or ethics – CFA was included among brands mentioned.

"I can't support a company which has funded a cause that I'm opposed to," one respondent said. (Consoli, 2012).

Although CFA eventually apologized for the statement, many gay-rights activists are still boycotting the restaurant.

Marketing Support Programs

Although CFA's brand elements are successful in its brand awareness, CFA's customer loyalty is clearly a product of its marketing support programs. Customers become believers after visiting a restaurant, eating the food, and truly experiencing CFA's products, service, and atmosphere. But, customers become CFA ambassadors after learning more about CFA's commitment to food quality, community involvement, environmental practices, and the CFA social media community.

Place

In an article titled, *Brand Loyalty And Chick-fil-A User Experience*, blogger, John Buscall adequately encapsulates a typical CFA customer experience, "Here's what happens at the Chick-fil-A restaurant we frequent in Centerville, WA:

- They greet you with a smile every time.
- They provide free newspapers for you to read, along with free hand sanitizers.
- They come to your table to ask if you need a refill and if everything is OK.
- They come to your table to clear refuse even though patrons do it themselves.
- They say, "bye," when you leave and, "thanks for coming," (when it's not too busy).
- There's a coupon for a free this or that twice monthly, and they text you with deals, too.
- They take your order while you're waiting in line in the drive-thru on a busy days.

All age groups frequent the establishment, and it caters to sports teams, school clubs, senior citizens, fundraisers, and more. The bathroom is always clean, and so too is the facility." (Buscall, 2012).

When CFA employees were surveyed, CFA was the only QSR chain named to Glassdoor's *Top Company for*



Culture and Values list in 2014. Ranked at seventh, an online survey asked employees to rate a number of factors including how satisfied they are with the job and company along with key workplace facets like compensation and benefits, work-life balance and of course, culture and values, (CFA, Thumbs Up, 2015).

Price

Customers don't seem to mind that CFA's price is little more than other QSRs. In fact, they feel the price is justified. "Not only is the food delicious, the service and environment is worth the cost, especially if customers are willing to pay." (Lawrence, 2014).

Product

Customers love CFA's signature Chick-fil-A sandwich and waffle fries. In 2014, the Chick-fil-A sandwich was named, "the tastiest chicken sandwich" in a *Consumer Reports* survey of 32,405 readers, repeating the results of the magazine's last fast food report in 2011, (CFA, Thumbs Up, 2015).

Promotion

Although CFA promotes itself through its marketing programs, CFA's promotional efforts seem to provide a platform for CFA to engage with its customers, and, more importantly, for customers to share their CFA experiences. These efforts are where customers move beyond the food and service to connect with CFA, with each other, and ultimately build a loyal community.

Chick-fil-A's Website

Although many CFA chains have their own website, StatsTool reports the corporate CFA website has 24,600 daily unique visitors, and 105,300 daily pageviews, (StatsTool, 2015). In addition to information on CFA food and nutrition; corporate, career, and foundation information; the CFA cows; kids, family and community involvement; CFA locations, FAQs; news and media; and how to connect with CFA, customers can also share unique and/or unexpected CFA experiences. The *Customer Stories* section offer customers a place to browse inspiring stories, videos, and images of amazing people, situations, interactions, and connections with CFA. The area also offers an opportunity for people to submit their own stories, (CFA, Stories, 2015).



Chick-fil-A's "Eat Mor Chikin" Campaign

CFA's "Eat Mor Chikin" campaign was a huge success in 1995. The public instantly embraced the cows and the message. Today, CFA customers still love the cows! They interact with Twitter @EatMorChikin, and on EatMorChikin's Facebook page, they engage with the Eat Mor Chikin calendar (and coupons), and celebrate an annual Cow Appreciation Day by dressing up in true bovine spirit.



Chick-fil-A's Social Media



Customers are active on CFA's social media. Most customer posts are either praising a product or service posted by CFA, offering encouragement or inspiration to others, or requesting a location to be built in their neighborhood. CFA's Facebook page has 7.3 million followers, averaging two to four posts per week, and 10,000-50,000 likes per post. CFA's Twitter feed has 555,000 followers, averaging two to four tweets on an average day. Customers also show appreciation for CFA's prompt and concise responses to questions posted on Facebook.

Chick-fil-A's Sports Sponsorships

Customers are informed and interact with CFA's sports sponsorships by visiting individual websites and social media.

The Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl at chick-fil-apeachbowl.com, The Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game at chickfilakickoffgame.com, College Football Hall of Fame and Chick-fil-A Fan Experience at cfbhall.com, (CFA, National Partnerships, 2015).



CFA's Chick-fil-A Bowl Facebook page has 33,800 followers. CFA's Chick-fil-A Bowl Twitter feed has 19,700 followers. The College Football Hall of Fame Facebook page has 15,000 followers. The College Football Hall of Fame Twitter feed has 7,400 followers. Although these interactions and relationships are outside of CFA's core QSR offerings, customers still comment on the quality of the venue and hospitality, a further reflection of CFA.

Chick-fil-A's Community Involvement

Communities are beyond grateful for the generous support of CFA. The stories and causes vary from benefits and fundraisers, to tragedies and homelessness, but CFA is embedded and involved in serving people beyond the table. A few examples include, "The area we're located in is one of the least



served in the city," says Tara Omilami, Director of Volunteer Services for Hosea Feed the Hungry. "Groups like Chick-fil-A enable us to shine a little more light into these peoples' lives and bring them closer to being self-sustainable," and, "Chick-fil-A is helping the lives of our people be transformed for eternity," says Wayne Fields, president and CEO of Olive Gospel Mission.

Marketing Assessment

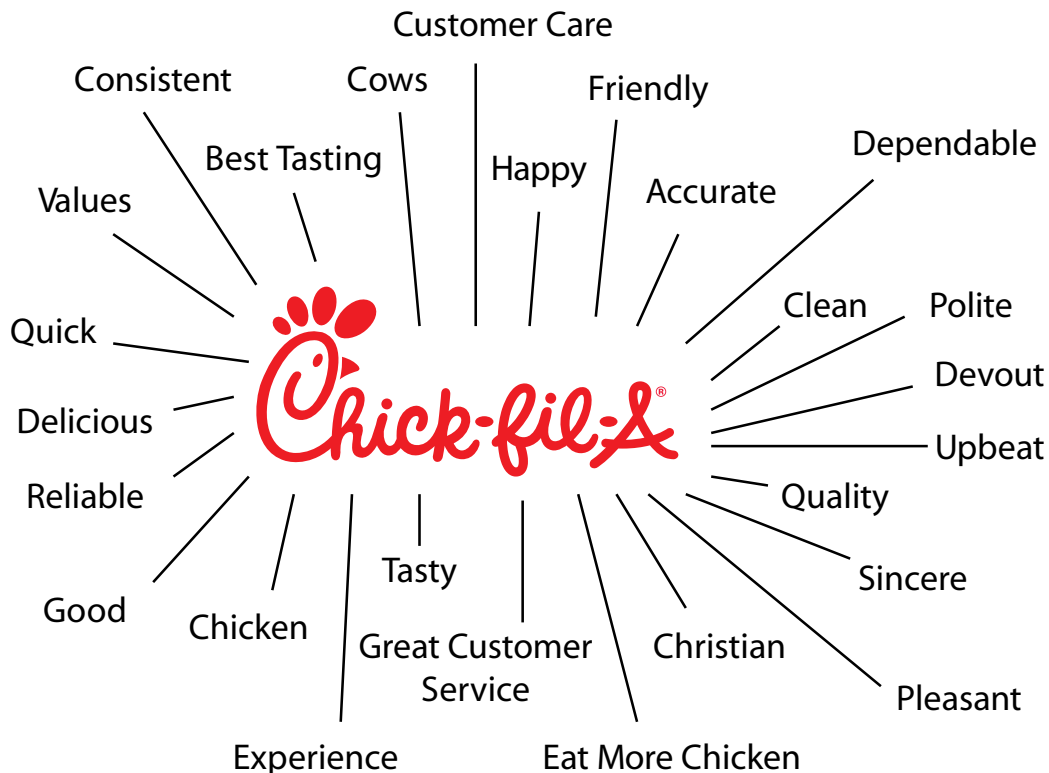
Overall, customer's perceptions of CFA's marketing support programs are very positive. Customers feel informed, enlightened, and inspired; as well as feel their voices are heard, their questions are answered, and their views are shared. Additionally, CFA's promotional efforts contribute to a loyal community of CFA ambassadors, who eagerly promote CFA's brand.

Qualitative Survey

Eleven students and faculty from West Virginia University's Integrated Marketing Communications graduate program were surveyed. The following results were gathered from three survey questions presented in a discussion forum for IMC 613: Brand Equity Management. The consumers polled in this method are professional men (27%) and women (73%), between the ages of 23 and 50.

When asked if CFA accomplishes its Mission Statement to, "Be America's Best Quick-Service Restaurant," 73% felt CFA absolutely does, 18% felt the mission statement was too broad or unclear, but commented that CFA is definitely the best in service, and 9% hadn't eaten at CFA enough to answer. All of the respondents, (100%) said they would recommend CFA to a friend.

The mental map below illustrates respondent's top-of-mind brand associations when asked, "What comes to mind when you think of Chick-fil-A?"



Detailed responses and comments to the qualitative survey questions are on the following page.

Qualitative Survey Questions and Responses

Chick-fil-A's Mission Statement is "Be America's Best Quick-Service Restaurant." Do you think it has met this goal? Explain why or why not.

- Yes. I believe Chick-fil-A is America's best QSR. I believe this because Chick-fil-A offers a higher quality food than other QSR and they provide a different menu offerings than other QSRs. All employees are also trained and deliver exceptional customer service that goes beyond consumer expectations.
- Yes. Absolutely! Chick-fil-A's customer service far exceeds any other QSR that I have frequented. In addition, I believe the quality of food, at least the ice cream (or Icedream) and waffle fries are of superior quality to other QSR. The only area that I could see Chick-fil-A lacking is in the number of locations (i.e. availability). However, somewhat limited availability may make their brand even more lust worthy. Just a thought.
- Yes. It's always the drive thru with the shortest wait time. I think it fulfills its mission through its strong company values.
- Yes. I wouldn't say they are the best but they are one of the best. Service is usually always good. The food is pretty straight forward and is a bit healthier than other fast food options. However, it is a limited menu if you don't eat chicken and don't want fries. I wish they had a veggie wrap option.
- Yes. Chick-fil-A is exceptional in every way: great taste, quality ingredients, and exceptional customer service.
- Yes. I think it has definitely met the goal of being America's best QSR. The only "problem" and it's not really a true problem is their schedule of not being open late or on Sundays. However, I realize this is how employees are treated like normal human beings who have a life, I completely understand and support it.
- Unknown. What they mean by 'best' is unclear, is it food or service or location? For me, they are definitely 'best' in service, always fast and friendly. However they aren't best in food.
- Unknown. It depends on how you measure it. In many ways, yes! Guest service would be one example.
- Yes. I definitely think Chick-fil-A has met this goal. When I go through its drive-thru line, the line is constantly is moving. Even if I have to wait more than 5 minutes, I am greeting with friendly service, which makes up for the wait.
- Unknown. It is difficult for me to answer this one since I am not really one of their customers. I feel like I haven't eaten there enough to judge.
- Yes. It absolutely has! Chick-fil-A has top caliber owner/operators, refreshingly polite and enthusiastic employees and consistency.

Would you recommend Chick-fil-A to a friend? Explain why or why not.

- Yes. I would and have recommended Chick-fil-A to a friend. Chick-fil-A offers delicious, quality food at a competitive price. Moreover, Chick-fil-A has a clean restaurant and provides exceptional customer service.
- Yes. For sure, I have recommended Chick-fil-A to friends. I buy based on customer experience, and Chick-fil-A has always provided a positive customer experience.
- Yes. I absolutely would recommend them if asked. The problem is that the nearest CFA is 10 miles away, so I have not been in a position to do so.

- Yes. The multiple Chick-fil-A establishments I have visited have been consistent in product and customer service.
- Yes. I would definitely recommend Chick-fil-A to a friend! The food is consistent wherever you go, compared to other QSR where you don't really know what the consistency will be. For example, sometimes Wendy's has great fries, other locations they do not. Chick-fil-A never lets you down.
- Yes. Yes to most people. However I do know that the restaurant's stance on some issues keeps me from recommending them to everyone for fear of offending anyone.
- Yes. Definitely – For great quality and service.
- Yes. I would recommend Chick-fil-A to my friends because it is one of my favorite restaurants. It has the best fries and even though the food is a bit expensive, I do not mind spending extra for a meal there. It has a great atmosphere and the employees are very friendly. I have never had an issue at this restaurant as I have with other quick service restaurants.
- Yes. Even though I don't eat it as much anymore, when I did eat it I enjoyed it. I don't have anything negative to say nor have I had a bad experience. If there were more restaurants where I lived, I would definitely go there to eat.
- Yes. It is good to support companies that give back to communities.

Additional Comments By Respondents

"I love Chick-fil-A!"

"I love Chick-fil-A, even though I'm a vegetarian. I love the chain's Icedream, and I'm a big fan of their customer service."

"I am a vegetarian but I still like Chick-fil-A for their lemonade, frosty lemonade. My kids love Chick-fil-A"

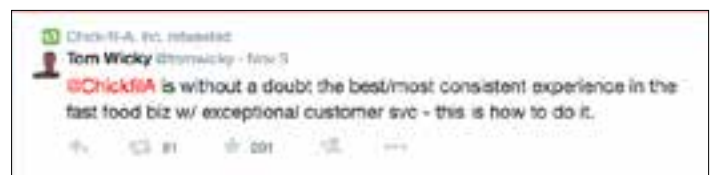
"I love this brand!"

"Chick-fil-A is one of my favorite restaurants."

"I actually didn't know about Chick-fil-A before I went to college. Once I discovered it though, I was impressed!"

Conclusion

Overall, the feedback gathered for this Brand Exploratory demonstrates that CFA customers love the brand. As a private, family-owned QSR challenger,



CFA is a force to be reckoned with. More importantly, CFA customers are eagerly, (and consistently), advocating, cheering and promoting CFA's brand, products, services, and values to anyone and everyone who will listen. ■



CFA is doing an amazing job at managing and strengthening its brand. Although CFA will continue to be a challenger brand to McDonald's, and compete closely with KFC, CFA will experience growth and success where these brands consistently fall short: quality/taste, service, cleanliness, atmosphere, and overall value.

CFA's products and service will attract many more loyal fans, but McDonald's global presence and enormous marketing budget will continue to dominate the market. As consumers continue to share their preferences and requests, CFA must be prepared and willing to adapt and evolve, while maintaining its core mission, vision, and values. The following recommendations will enable the CFA brand to achieve and sustain market success:

1. **Stay true to the core values** – Surprisingly, CFA has inspired consumer loyalty that is the envy of its fast-food rivals...for all the ways it has said no: to working all weekend, to expanding too quickly, and to abstaining from sharing its family values. As Drew Harwell shares in his article, *Chick-fil-A rules the roost, even 6 days a week*, "The closed-on-Sundays policy has become a perennial business-trade target because of the potential billions of dollars in lost sales, but it also has been a rallying point for diners who see the policy as a rare big-business show of faith," (Harwell, 2014). Future IMC strategies should focus on staying true to the morals and values the CFA brand was founded on, and expanding to new markets that share these values to open new opportunities and enjoy future success. Continued humility and transparency of CFA executives, operators, and employees will also strengthen brand equity and encourage consumer engagement in memorable and meaningful ways.
2. **Build the fan base** – Raving fans are CFA's brand ambassadors. These customers are enormously valuable in terms of publicity for this private company. Although these customers became fans by merely partaking in CFA's products and services, CFA must implement deliberate strategies to deepen/incentivise these relationships. Continually contributing to mutually beneficial relationships will advance CFA's market share, and sustain market gains in spite of PR setbacks. Consider creating and implementing a loyalty program to show appreciation to these diehard CFA evangelists.
3. **Open more locations** – The demand for more CFA locations is tremendous. In fact, the most asked question on CFA's social media is, "Can you open a CFA in (my city)?" (Facebook, 2015). Although CFA has a valid development strategy, and an appropriate response, "Thanks for your suggestion! We open

a limited number of Restaurants each year and there are several factors we take into consideration, including target markets and other business factors. We love to receive feedback from our guests on where you would like the next new Restaurant to be located," the requests keep coming. CFA has an area on its website dedicated to Restaurant Openings, (CFA, Openings, 2015), but CFA must also develop PR strategies to keep these prospective advocates content, interested, and engaged while they are waiting. Micro-site locations and Mobile-site locations may be options to consider.

4. **Continue community engagements** – Without a doubt, consumers are getting rich brand exposure to CFA through CFA's service to its communities. CFA loves to serve, and community giving is a natural way for CFA to live out its brand. CFA must continue to give nationally, but also focus more on these invaluable bilateral community engagements to strengthen its mission, its involvement, its values, and its brand. Also, although CFA promotes its local charitable events on its website, (CFA, Community, 2015), local (and national) media exposure of these life-changing events would broaden the audience, message and opportunities for CFA.
5. **Test new ideas** – With consumer demand extremely high, CFA can be open to trying new and different products (within its brand offerings). The Icedream is a great example of the possibility and potential this approach has. Since consumers are requesting healthy options, this is a great place to start, and will help to further differentiate the brand from competitors. Also, testing new ways to deliver superior customer service, interactions, and experiences will only solidify CFA's dominance in this area of the QSR industry.
6. **Leverage existing campaign efforts** – The Brand Exploratory reveals that CFA fans love the CFA cows and "Eat Mor Chikin" slogan, and enduringly identify them with CFA's brand. CFA should continue to use these elements with future campaigns and promotions to increase brand awareness and strengthen favorable associations. The CFA cows should also be utilized when developing and implementing CFA family activities and events as well as school, church, community, and other non-profit endeavors.

Ultimately, these recommendations challenge CFA to keep raising the bar; not only for QSRs, but for industries that are willing to produce quality products, provide superior service, at a reasonable price; while purposefully and faithfully living out its brand values. ■



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