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BURGER KING ENLISTS CELEBS TO CALL ATTENTION TO NEW MENU THAT MCD'S ALREADY HAS

Mother Will Handle Fast Feeder's 'Biggest and Most Comprehensive Media Push'

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The home of the Whopper is about to talk about everything but the classic burger.

In a new campaign announced today, Burger King will use a host of expensive celebrities including Jay Leno, David Beckham and Steven Tyler to push salads, chicken snack wraps, smoothies, frappes and other new menu items in hopes of climbing out of a prolonged slump. If the menu expansion sounds familiar, it's because it is: [McDonald's](#) has offered many of these same choices for years.

And that's partly why Burger King is making such a big splash with its launch, described the biggest menu expansion in the chain's 58-year history. "The platforms themselves have been out for quite a while," senior VP-North America Marketing Alex Macedo told Ad Age today, making a vague reference to his competitors. "The big challenge is how do you really grab people's attention? And most of all, how do you get them to taste the product?" he said. "We chose celebrities to get people's attention faster and to show the diversity that we have with our brand."

The agency is Mother, New York, which Burger King only recently added to its roster.

<http://adage.com/article/agency-news/burger-king-beefs-ad-agency-roster-mother-david/232046/>. The fast feeder also works with Dentsu's [McGarryBowen](#), which came on board last summer, replacing MDC Partners [CP&B](#). Mr. Macedo said Burger King considered ideas from all of its roster agencies, choosing Mother's work because it liked the way the agency used celebrities in the spots, which he said keeps the food as the star.

It is a big get for Mother. The campaign, which includes multiple spots, will be backed with what Mr. Macedo described as the marketer's "biggest and most comprehensive media push," although he declined to detail spending. The marketer is also still working with McGarryBowen. "Nothing changed really," Mr. Macedo said. "We have a great roster of agencies collaborating." He added: "Part of the reason for going to a roster of agencies [is] we just have so much ... in the pipeline right now." But when asked what McGarryBowen is working on, he declined to provide details.



With the tagline "Exciting things are happening at Burger King," the campaign debuts with a spot featuring Mr. Leno driving through a restaurant in one of his classic cars and ordering some of the new items. In another spot, Mr. Beckham orders a strawberry banana smoothie as a female cashier gazes lovingly into his eyes. In another ad, Mary J. Blige sings the praises of Crispy Chicken Snack Wraps. Mr. Tyler of Aerosmith, Salma Hayek and Sofia Vergara are also scheduled to make appearances. Check out the spots on [Burger King's YouTube channel](#).



The menu expansion continues the chain's evolution away from focusing almost exclusively on young men.

Under CP&B, that single-minded focus was pushed in advertising with a creepy King character lurking in unexpected places. While it got attention, sales later slumped and Burger King was recently passed by Wendy's as the No. 2 burger chain. Under McGarryBowen, Burger King began more of a product-focused approach, including one spot featuring extreme close-ups of the avocados, lettuce, tomato and onions in the "California Whopper."

The new campaign is a "positive step forward," said Darren Tristano, exec VP at food research group Technomic. Still, "it just might be too little too late because most consumers already know that McDonald's does all these things. So it may be a lot harder to get a new initiative like this moving quickly," he added.

The changes were based on months of research. "What consumers told us basically is we love the Whopper ... but you guys have to catch up in some important product categories specifically salads, smoothies and wraps," Mr. Macedo said.

Denise Lee Yohn, an independent restaurant-marketing consultant who works for Burger King competitors including Jack in the Box, criticized Burger King for "playing catch-up as opposed to trying to leapfrog the competition, which is really what they need to do at this point. I feel like they are following McDonald's playbook almost to a tee."