April Fools' pranks not just for laughs

In a concerted effort to fight obesity, the nation's major fast-food chains today jointly announced plans to sell items in one size only: puny.

Of course they didn't. That's pure poppycock.

But it's the kind of April Fools' Day prank that -- when believed for even a nano-second -- accomplishes exactly what every marketer wants more of but keeps getting less of in a fragmented world: attention. Aching particularly for social media buzz that just might go viral, major marketers from Frito-Lay to American Eagle have joined-in early on the April Fools' Day fun. But not just for laughs.

"Brands know that generating conversation on social media is critical not just for top-of-mind awareness, but for the cool factor," says Denise Lee Yohn, author of What Great Brands Do. "They do these goofy thing so they're considered relevant."

Among this year's wackiest April Fools' Day PR stunts:

- **Cheetos perfume.** As if the neon-orange munchies don't feel icky enough in your fingers, imagine wearing them as a fragrance? Frito-Lay has sent out a half-way convincing press release announcing the Chester Cheetah has "entered" the perfume category with Cheetau, "a prestige fragrance that celebrates the irreverent, intriguing and playful nature of the iconic feline."

- **American "Beagle" dogwear.** The American Eagle Outfitters website features a high profile image of a woman and her beagle in matching, pink outfits. There's a convincing, three-minute video explaining why "American Beagle" is creating clothing for dogs. One faux designer in the video even notes: "American Beagle is going to be huge. I see Milan. I see Paris."

- ** Bras for cats.** The online bra and lingere shopping site, True & Co., has posted a bra-sizing system for cats and kittens. Then, of course, this disclaimer: No actual kittens were involved with our fitting process.

- **Chocolate flooring.** Now here's a floor you can not only eat off of -- but eat the floor, itself. Chocolate flooring is being peddled by BuildDirect, a technology company for do-it-your-selfers. "You can literally taste the quality," says CEO Jeff Booth.

- **Eagle-caught salmon.** FreshDirect, the online supplier of fresh meats produce and baked goods, on its site and via social media has announced the freshest-possible product available to customers: Eagle-caught salmon.

- **Undie iron.** The wrinkles in your hard-to-iron undies can conquered with this tiny, fits-on-the-finger iron from Fruit of the Loom. The USB-powered device, the company says, "is guaranteed to increase underwear positivity by 54%.

- **Shakeless Tic Tacs.** Iconic Tic Tac mints will roll out in a new shakeless pack, the company says, with a wink. Tic Tac Shakeless packs are custom-engineered to be silent for one purpose: No shake, no share!
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