

## April Fools' pranks not just for laughs

(Photo: Cheetos)

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-yourselfers. "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 be 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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