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CMOism Effective brand communications are based on time-tested principles—creativity, positioning, placement and so on—but it is vital to remember that the outcome is all that matters.

BRANDING

KFC's New Recipe for Success

A patron entering a fast-food restaurant doesn't want to be greeted by an old man with a sharp face and a funny white suit. Or so says Tre Musco, chief creative officer and CEO of the San Francisco-based brand-imaging agency Tesser, the company tasked with giving Kentucky Fried Chicken's Colonel Sanders a facelift. The project, part of KFC's effort to revamp its image, began in February 2004. Musco and his company of 12 employees sketched and designed some 250 new variations of the colonel. "Some were very abstract," said Musco. "Some were modern. Some were kind of retro. We wanted to keep

the brand's heritage, but we wanted to update it for a modern audience."

The current caricature of the colonel is based on the 65-year-old visage of the late Harland Sanders, who started the franchise in the 1950s with \$105. The design, still present in the majority of restaurants, shows his pointy and pale face. In the new version, designers have added flesh tones to make for a kinder, gentler colonel. "We wanted to give him a more organic feel," Musco says. "With soft flowing curves, he looks friendlier."

Studies conducted by KFC a few years ago found that 75 per-

cent of U.S. consumers surveyed thought of Colonel Sanders as the restaurant's brand salesman—more concerned with profits than cooking chicken. So Musco gave the colonel a red apron to place a higher emphasis on the food rather than the brand itself.

Along with other changes, the new logo can be found at some select restaurant locations. The new Colonel was used at KFC's pilot store in Louisville, Ky., last April and will be added to six test stores in Orlando, Fla., by the end of the year. The company has not yet field-tested the logo in print, creative or packaging initiatives. According to Musco, initial customer reaction to the redesign has been upbeat. "They say things like, 'He looks healthier,'" says Musco. "That's a big deal for a fried chicken chain."

—C.G. Lynch



KFC's Colonel Sanders was redesigned for a friendlier image.