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### Mmmmm – Marketing Dark Chocolate

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Posted by [Neal Leavitt](#) on March 22nd, 2012 at 6:07 pm

To paraphrase that famous cartoon philosopher, H. Simpson: “Mmmmmm. Chocolate.”

I’m sure my hypothalamus is hardwired for chocolate – that old adage, “out of sight, out of mind” may work for some folks – not me. If there’s chocolate in the upper reaches of the pantry or it’s buried two-feet deep behind various foodstuffs in the fridge, my brain immediately sends out tracking signals – a cranial GPS (Godiva Positioning System), I reckon.

So not surprisingly, as a self-confessed ‘chocoholic’, I was thrilled a few years ago when I started reading reports about how dark chocolate – eaten in moderation (inhaled is more accurate for me) – may be good for the heart.

Some dark chocolate confections even contain various vitamins, nutrients and probiotics; research has also shown that flavonoids – antioxidants found in cocoa beans – may help lower blood pressure and LDL (think ‘Lousy’ – it’s the bad acronym) cholesterol, and also improve blood vessel function.

In fact, noted Joy Dubost, a nutritionist and spokesperson for the Washington, DC-based [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#), “the higher the percentage of cocoa, the higher the flavanol content, the higher the antioxidant content and thus we believe the greater positive health benefit.”

All of the aforementioned now fully justifies my quarterly trips to [Ghirardelli’s](#) in San Francisco – I now order guilt-free the hot fudge sundaes with dark chocolate sauce.

This then got me wondering about innovative marketing campaigns various companies have rolled out to drum up sales for their dark chocolate products, and in some cases if interesting enough, plain old milk chocolate.

## Cadbury

One campaign that [Cadbury](#) would probably like to recall/reboot was to promote *Bliss*, a chocolate product.

The august British company (established 1824 and now owned by Kraft Foods) ran an ad for the product with the heading, “Move over Naomi, there’s a new diva in town.”

Supermodel Naomi Campbell wasn’t thrilled about being compared to a chocolate bar and even her mum, Valerie Morris, chimed in, saying “I’m deeply upset by this racist advert. Do these people think they can insult black people and we just take it? This is the 21st century, not the 1950s. Shame on Cadbury.”

Cadbury, it should be noted, did do the right thing – the company pulled the ads and issued an apology to Campbell.

On the flip side, another campaign rolled out by Cadbury India fared much better. The objective was to publicize its premium dark chocolate brand, *Bournville* and further promote the catchphrase, “*You don’t just buy a Bournville, you earn it.*”

Cadbury launched a blog called *The Dark Truth* and introduced a virtual character – Old Hound. In one story, another virtual character, Mark, a friend of Old Hound, disappeared. While trying to find Mark, Old Hound got a clue that if he collected 100 stories about people receiving something after they have earned it, he would discover the whereabouts of his friend. The posts generated more than 2,000 daily readers.

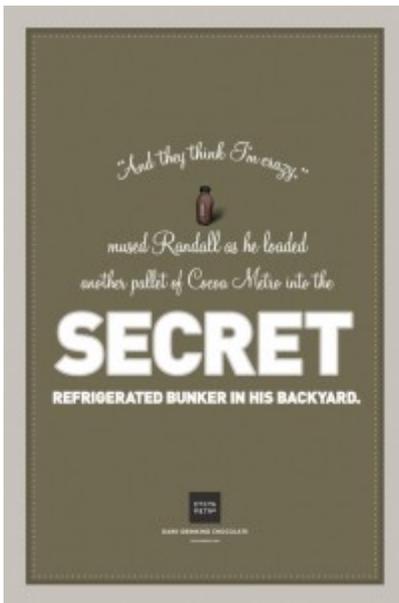
## Haagen-Dazs

A few years ago [Haagen-Dazs](#) rolled out its *Dark Chocolate Orange* flavor at 14 outlets in Singapore and Malaysia. A campaign slugged ‘*Slow Melting in Progress*’ was aimed at female professionals in their 20s and 30s who are “engrossed with their profession and family and tend to forget themselves in the process, neglecting to pamper themselves.”

That verbiage seems a bit askew but the radio/print/web campaign apparently worked as *Dark Chocolate Orange* became a popular flavor in that corner of Southeast Asia.

## Cocoa Metro

[Cocoa Metro](#), located in Auburndale, MA, markets various dark chocolate drinks. Their catchphrase on their home page immediately grabs your attention: ‘*Don’t Be Afraid of the Dark.*’



The sweet maker recently rolled a multimedia ad campaign. One image depicts how Cocoa Metro's decadent chocolate can be consumed – via juice boxes, pop cans and flasks, for example. Another series of ads relies more on clever verbiage and fonts to capture your attention (having a refrigerated backyard bunker full of chocolate seems like a very sound idea).

## Rom

While not a dark chocolate, this campaign merits a brief mention. Rom is a hugely popular Romanian chocolate bar, first introduced in 1964. It features the Romanian flag on the wrapper and probably everyone from Bucharest to Brasov to Baia Mare has gobbled one down.

To fuel international sales and branding, the company rolled out a week-long hoax – the American flag was used on the packaging and various YouTube videos explained that due to a poor economy and a frustrated youth culture, Rom was ditching its Romanian heritage. Literally tens of thousands of angry Romanians vented their outrage on Facebook, YouTube and countless blogs.

The campaign was a stunning success – it reached almost 70 percent of all Romanians. Rom's Facebook page fan total increased by over 300 percent and it's estimated the company generated about \$500,000 worth of free media. McCann Erickson's Bucharest office also garnered two Grand Prix Cannes Lions awards in the 'Promo/Activation' category (for advertising programs that bring on immediate responses/engagements), and the 'Direct' category for direct marketing.

There are scores of other examples but quite frankly, I've written enough – time for some chocolate.

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