



# Fast Food Marketing 360° Briefs

2012-2013

Children and teens are exposed to fast food marketing from every angle. They see ads on television, the internet, cell phones, and more.

Click on the links below for in-depth information on how children and teens are targeted through various media.

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FOR FOOD POLICY & OBESITY

# Fast Food Marketing



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## On Television



### What has improved?

The number of fast food TV ads viewed by older children (6-11 years) declined by 10% from 2009 to 2012.

Both of the top advertisers in 2009 (McDonald's and Burger King) reduced TV advertising to children in 2012. This resulted in a reduction of almost three ads viewed per week.

### What hasn't?

Youth still see a lot of advertising. In 2012, the average preschooler saw 2.8 fast food ads-per-day, children saw 3.2 ads-per-day, and teens saw 4.8 ads-per-day.

In 2012, McDonald's ads accounted for more than a third of fast food ads viewed by children. It was the only restaurant to advertise more to children than to older age groups on TV.

Teens saw 6% more fast food ads in 2012 than they did in 2011, reversing a downward trend since 2009.

Ads for healthier kids' meals represented just one-quarter of fast food TV ads seen by preschoolers and children.

In 2012, total calories viewed daily in fast food ads decreased across all age groups, but more than 75% of menu items featured most often in ads viewed by children and teens promoted unhealthy products.

Wendy's, Subway, and Sonic aired ads for menu items such as Wendy's Baconator Burger (970 calories) and Subway's Footlong Meatball Marinara (1400+ calories) on children's networks such as Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, and The Hub.



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## On Company Websites



## What has improved?

Three popular children's websites have been discontinued: DeeQ's.com (Dairy Queen), Line Rider.com (McDonald's), and ClubBK.com (Burger King). McDonald's also discontinued its website targeted to preschoolers (Ronald.com).

The average number of child visitors declined for 95% of restaurant websites.

The number of display ads placed on third-party youth websites decreased by almost one-half.



## What hasn't?

The number of teen visitors to fast food restaurants has risen steadily since 2009. Teen visitors to Subway.com, Starbucks.com, and McDonald's MeEncanta.com (Spanish-language site) increased by over 90%.

Consistent with 2009, PizzaHut.com, McDonalds.com, and Dominos.com attracted the most unique teen visitors. These sites gained 27%, 75%, and 5% more monthly unique teen visitors, respectively.

Three websites (BKCrown.com, Happymeal.com, and Subwaykids.com) appeared to target children under 12. These sites offered advergames (i.e., branded games with advertising messages embedded within the game) tied to kids' meals and were more likely to be visited by children.

Children saw ads for products other than kids' meals on third-party kids' websites like Nick.com and Roblox.com. Along with advertisements for Happy Meals, McDonald's also placed millions of ads for its regular menu items on these websites.



Coffee Menu Coffeehouse Responsibility Card Shop

### Coffeehouse



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## On Display Ads



## What has improved?

The number of display ads placed on third-party youth websites decreased by almost one-half since 2009.

## What hasn't?

Display advertising on Facebook appears to have substantially replaced advertising on third-party youth websites for many restaurants. Ads on Facebook represented 19% of fast food display advertising in 2012.

Over 18 million 2-to-17-year-olds visit Facebook every month on average and are exposed to billions of ads for unhealthy foods while there. The most popular products promoted on Facebook were Wendy's Frosty (297 million ads/month), Starbucks Coffee (132 million ads/month) and McDonald's Filet-o-Fish (73 million ads/month).

Children are seeing ads for products other than kids' meals on youth websites. Along with advertisements for Happy Meal, McDonald's also placed millions of ads for its Filet-o-Fish on websites with a disproportionate number of child visitors.



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## On Social Media Sites



The popularity of fast food restaurant social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) grew exponentially from 2010 to 2013. For example, 17 of the 18 restaurants we evaluated had 1 million or more Facebook likes (compared with nine in 2010), and six had more than 10 million.

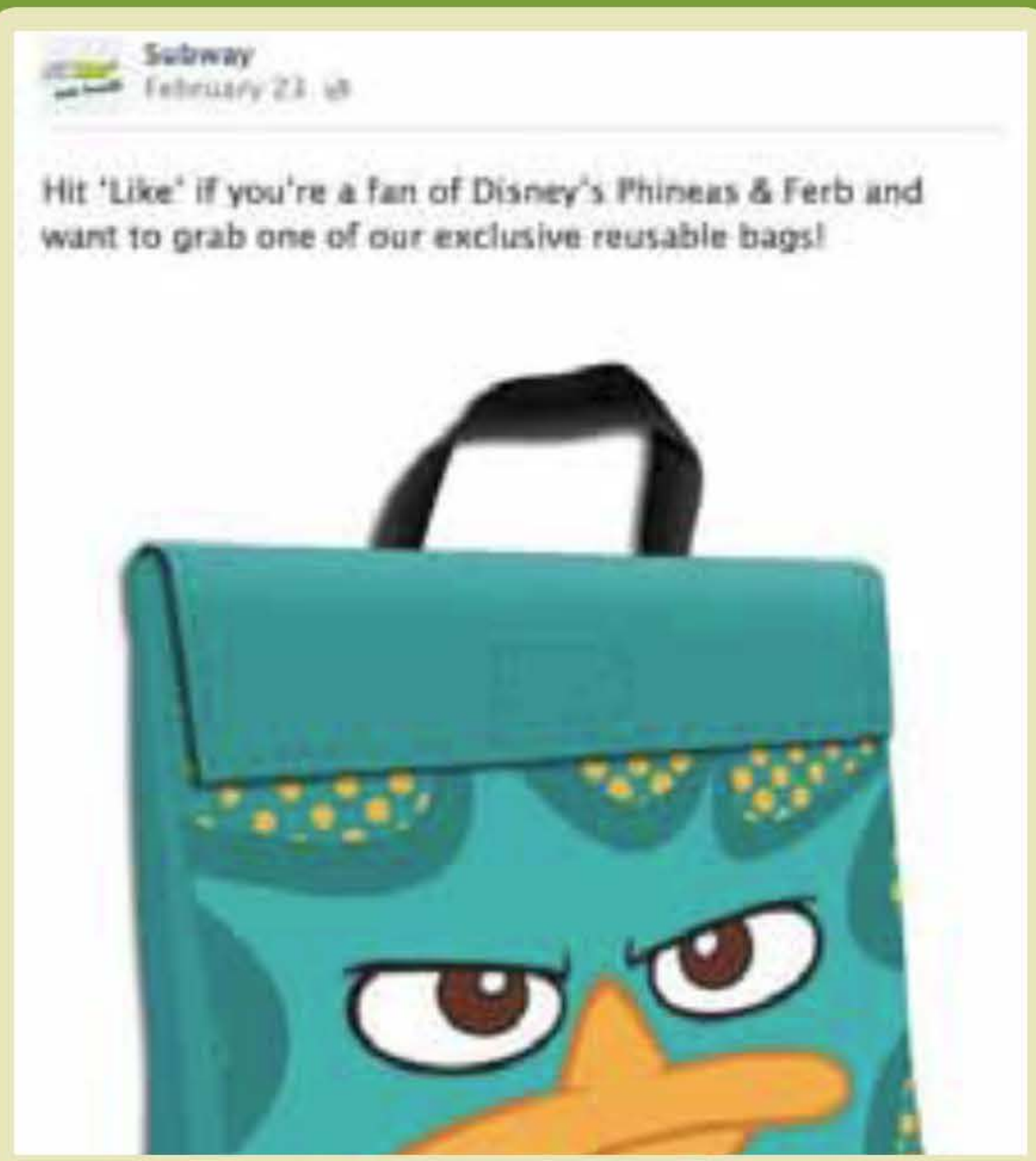
Starbucks maintained its position as top restaurant in social media overall, while McDonald's became the second most popular restaurant on Facebook and Twitter with increases in fans and followers from 11 to 67 times as many since 2010.

Seventeen of the 18 restaurants we evaluated in 2012 had 1 million or more Facebook likes (compared with nine in 2010), and six had more than 10 million.

Although Facebook's terms of agreement do not allow children under 13 to maintain accounts, younger children often visit the site. A few Facebook posts from Subway and Wendy's appeared to be directly targeted to children under 13.

Taco Bell overtook Starbucks as the most popular restaurant on YouTube with almost 14 million video uploads.

Restaurants posted far more YouTube videos in 2012 than they had in 2009. McDonald's, Panera Bread and Starbucks uploaded the most videos in 2012, compared with Starbucks and Domino's as the top two in 2009.



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## On Mobile Devices



### What has improved?

Very few display ads were viewed on mobile websites compared with traditional third-party websites. KFC and Dairy Queen discontinued their smartphone applications.

Five restaurants allowed users to look up nutrition information on their mobile phones (up from one in 2009).

### What hasn't?

Starbucks had the most unique visitors of any mobile site with over 3 million per month.

Pizza restaurants made up three of the four most popular mobile sites.

On average, visitors to most of the mobile websites spent less than 3 minutes per visit, but visitors to the three top pizza mobile sites spent 7 to 10 minutes per visit on average.

Although Burger King reduced its display advertising on traditional websites from 2009 to 2012, it was the top advertiser on mobile devices during the time period examined.

As of August 15, 2013, ten of the eighteen fast food restaurants in our analysis plus Papa John's offered smartphone applications available for download by iPhone users.

Papa John's and Pizza Hut had popular mobile applications with almost 700,000 average monthly unique users each.

All restaurants allowed users to click a button to submit the current location of the phone and receive a list of nearby restaurants. Ordering and special offers were more widely available on smartphone apps in 2013, compared to 2009.

