



Client: Kraft

New Product Line: South Beach Diet

Communities: Health and Wellness

Community: From concept to shelves and beyond



Customers co-create 48 products THEY want to buy.

THE SHORT STORY

Kraft is known as the creator of powerhouse brands and products that define new categories. The company's success is due, in no small part, to their being on the leading edge of getting at consumer insights. So what do they do when there's a promising product concept in an emotionally charged food category that has blockbuster potential, but a very short competitive go-to-market window? They tap Communispace to build an online community that involves consumers every step of the way, letting them co-create a line of 48 South Beach Diet branded entrees, snacks, and frozen foods they want to buy, and rack up sales of \$100 million in the first six months.

THE BACK STORY

In late 2004, Kraft was looking for a way to connect with their consumers to understand their desires and headset around successful weight loss. They were considering aligning with the popular South Beach Diet weight loss plan, but needed insight and clarity on exactly what consumers really wanted, trying to avoid the possibility of adding just another product line to an already crowded category. If the company was to take advantage of the momentum around the South Beach Diet brand then the Kraft team had to move fast, compress a typical product development cycle, and get it right the first time.

Already well on their way fueling the phenomenally successful Nabisco 100 Calorie Snack Packs with rich insights from the Communispace community, Kraft leveraged Communispace's expertise to build and manage a Health and Wellness community. Ready. Set. Go.

Step 1: Invite the right group. Communispace invited 300 target consumers to participate in this private, branded community to help Kraft surface and test attitudes, emotions, ideas and issues—while enjoying some surprises along the way. The community was a blend of 150 women who wanted to lose or manage their weight and were aware of the South Beach Diet; the other 150 women were considered Health and Wellness opinion leaders. For many of these women, 'diet' was a four letter word. They had tried it all, yo-yo dieting with some success, but mostly failure.

Step 2: Create the 'social glue' to build relationships and an experience that uncovers new 'a-ha' insights. Community members were highly involved and passionate about helping Kraft figure how they could eat satisfying meals and do their best to lose weight. They understood each other's complex feelings and challenges, and appreciated there was a company listening to them and actively working on satisfying their—and millions of others'—needs. They passionately shared their stories, ideas, and frustrations.

In the course of involving these consumers in the community, Kraft had two major 'a-ha' moments that led to critical business decisions.

First a-ha: women had trouble maintaining their diets throughout the day—that is, they started off the day with great intentions, but the realities of life often encroached on their plans to eat well all day long. Kraft realized consumers could succeed if the right food products were available to help them around the clock—morning to night.

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Second a-ha: consumers were confused by the different branded diets that were out in the market, particularly when it came to the core philosophies of Dr. Atkins (intense no carbs diet) and Dr. Agoston (founder of South Beach Diet with a focus on a more balanced approach to carbs). Kraft realized that consumer education about the South Beach Diet would be essential to successfully support the introduction of a new product line. This led Kraft to develop, for the first time ever, a pre-launch advertising campaign to educate consumers about the diet and how this line of soon-to-be-available products would meet their needs.

Step 3: Involve consumers in every phase of the product development life cycle from concept through post launch and beyond. The community members helped refine product concepts and packaging, were involved in the merchandising and test marketing—and then, just 16 months after the community was first created, the new South Beach Diet line of healthful entrees and snacks arrived on supermarket shelves. Post launch, consumers in the community continued to help Kraft by sharing their retail experiences (e.g., their difficulties trying to find the product in the stores) and usage patterns (e.g., cereal bars were snacks, not breakfast food) that proved invaluable to refining and optimizing the South Beach Diet product line and business across the Kraft organization.

FROM 'A-HA' TO 'KA CHING'

Throughout the new product development cycle for the South Beach Diet foods, the Kraft team relied on their community members' perspectives to inform every move. The intimacy and trust established among members and with Kraft allowed the company to explore deeper emotions about dieting and brought rich texture to consumer insights and market trends. Also, Kraft had the key advantage of continuously accessing the same group of consumers to build a relationship over time. Part of that relationship was the Kraft team reporting back to the community how they were using what they learned, and why they sometimes didn't take member's advice. These authentic conversations created a strong bond between the Kraft brand and consumers, where consumers would go to any length to help the organization figure out issues—like creating food journals, testing and refining numerous ideas and concepts, responding to language, claims and communication materials, trying new products while still in test and much more.

Overall, embracing and engaging consumers in the online community generated the critical insights that allowed Kraft to realize phenomenal success for South Beach Diet products. Real time access to a passionate group of highly involved consumers meant that across the company, people could move more quickly than ever before to develop and market a new product line. Furthermore, the community helped reduce the risk of new product failure as Kraft was able to test and understand all the elements before moving to a national rollout.

In its first six months in the market, Kraft's South Beach Diet products reached \$100 million in sales. This line of 48 products pulls from every Kraft division and runs the gamut from pizza and cookies to wraps and frozen entrees to salad dressing. Consumers give South Beach Diet products high praise, for their great taste, convenience and how they help them successfully manage their weight.

It's almost as if someone knew just what they were looking for...



ABOUT COMMUNISPACE

Communispace Corporation, headquartered in Watertown, Massachusetts, is the leader in building, managing and facilitating private branded communities that deliver the voice of the customer and enable businesses to generate continuous insights, drive faster innovation, and build loyalty.

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