

Steaming hot pizza, up on a billboard And it's real steam pumped out to create the effect

By Toni Fitzgerald

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The pizza looks piping hot and very inviting. The crust is golden brown. The veggie toppings glisten. You can actually see the steam billowing off the pie.

Thing is, you're not looking at a pizza fresh from the oven.

The pizza you see is on a billboard.

But the steam you see rising up from the billboard is quite real. It's being pumped out to create the illusion of a pie that's just been pulled out of the oven.

It's part of a campaign for Donatos Pizza, a chain based in Columbus, Ohio, promoting its new hand-tossed pie.

There were two goals that helped inspire the idea, says a spokesperson at Columbus-based Engauge, the agency that worked on the campaign for Donatos.

The first was to communicate that the pizza tastes great. And the second was to show that this new Donatos hand-tossed pizza comes in slices (Donatos specializes in thin crust pizza that is cut in rectangles).

The agency worked closely with Clear Channel Outdoor and an independent contractor to get the effect just right.

First ducts were installed in the billboard to emit the steam, then the pizza had to be positioned at a certain height on the board in order to create the illusion that the steam was rising from the pie. The steam was released every minute during peak commuter hours in downtown Columbus.

The idea worked because it really stood out amid the other static billboards. The steam was visible from nearby buildings and roads, and it got people talking about the billboard, the steam and how it was created.

Anytime people are still talking about a billboard when they've already passed, that's an accomplishment.

Engauge has received a lot of anecdotal comments passed along from the client. Their vendors and partners, associates and customers have been calling and emailing to comment on the boards.

Local radio station WCMH mentioned the billboard several times on air, and in addition to receiving coverage in various advertising publications, the billboards were written about in the industry trade publication *Pizza Marketplace*.

The other part of the campaign involved two other billboards, also in Columbus. The billboards were split into two parts.

The left side showed a Donatos pizza. On the right was a dummy billboard on which the person appearing in the ad was shown eating a slice of pizza they had stolen from the adjacent pie. A string of cheese draped from the pie on the left side to the slice on the right.

The idea, of course, is that the pizza is so irresistible that even fellow billboards can't ignore it.



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