



## Sonny's Bar-B-Q taps Engauge to invigorate brand, boost online presence

[Lauren Bell](#)

July 02 2009

[Sonny's Real Pit Bar-B-Q](#) has signed [Engauge](#) as its [new agency of record](#), replacing seven-year incumbent [AdPartners Inc.](#)

Engauge won the regional, southern chain's business following a sixteen agency RFP, which was narrowed down to six finalists. Led by its Orlando office, Engauge will be responsible for all Sonny's creative, media planning and buying, interactive and social media and account management services.

“One of the biggest reasons we chose Engauge over all the other agencies is that they were able to capture the brand in way that we haven't in quite some time,” said Monique Yeager, director of corporate affairs and marketing for Sonny's Franchise Company. “They did such a good job in communicating what Sonny's is about, and that's what we hope will resonate in the future.”

Barb Scherer, president of Engauge's Orlando office, explained, “Across the agency we have strong restaurant experience and food category experience, and being able to walk in with that understanding and know how important the in-store experience is for consumers really helped. On top of that, so many of us live in Florida and have grown up with the Sonny's brand.”

Yeager said that Sonny's went searching for a new agency because the chain wanted to recapture and reinvigorate its brand, and it wanted to embrace social media. With Ad Partners, Sonny's had recently launched an e-mail-based loyalty club called [R U Smoking](#), but the brand's only presence on Facebook or other social media was fan-created. Under Engauge, official [Twitter](#) and Facebook accounts are expected to be up and running by the end of Q3.

Before the interactive and digital pieces launch, Engauge will run its first broadcast TV campaign for Sonny's in the first week of September.

“I’m hoping to build traffic in the stores,” said Yeager, “that would be the ultimate goal. Our job is to motivate people to take action, and we want them to act online and respond to traditional advertising but, ultimately that means traffic to the stores.”

Sonny's, a 41-year-old franchise, has 129 restaurants across the Southeast. Diners are often families with children.