



## Wendy's Markets to Youth With Red-Wigged Man

Friday, July 20, 2007

**LOS ANGELES — A red-wigged man screaming about juicy hamburgers to dozens of people kicking trees in a forest has become an unlikely advertising success for Wendy's International Inc, which spent five years searching for a TV campaign that would once again make its hamburger brand cool.**



The chain's ads have not taken off with customers since the death of founder and pitchman Dave Thomas in 2002.

In the new ad, tree-kicking people are interrupted by the man wearing a red pigtailed wig -- recalling the hairdo of the young girl in Wendy's logo. The nonconformist cries out for a "hot juicy burger" instead of one made from frozen beef, rousing the crowd from its stupor.

[Click here to view the video.](#)

The downright weirdness of the ad has made it a hit among the very consumers the chain felt it needed to win over -- young people. It has been viewed nearly 800,000 times on video sharing site YouTube.com and also has inspired amateur copycat videos, now spreading across the Internet, Wendy's Chief Marketing Officer Ian Rowden said in an interview.

Sales of Wendy's hamburgers which the company promotes as being made from fresh beef unlike some competitors have increased since the ad began running about two months ago, Rowden said, but he declined to say by how much.

"For the first time since Dave Thomas passed away the brand is finding a voice that is not only consistent, but is completely current and relevant," Rowden said.

### **A RED WIG FOR EVERY AD**

The company has rejigged its ad lineup to include a different red-wigged character in every commercial.

Three more spots have hit airwaves in the last two weeks. One features a young man in the red wig playing a didgeridoo -- a long, Australian Aboriginal instrument -- inside a freezer in a Wendy's restaurant. Another shows

obsessed fans tearfully screaming in awe at another man in a red wig who is eating the company's new Baconator burger.

Later this month, a spot will debut in movie theaters showing people jumping into a huge hole in the middle of a field with a red-wigged figure asking why.

Thomas appeared in over 800 Wendy's commercials. Since his death, the company's advertising has lacked either the catchiness of campaigns such as McDonald's Corp's "I'm Lovin' It" or the quirkiness of Burger King Holdings Inc's ads featuring a bizarre, plastic-masked king mascot.

An attempt to create a new Wendy's spokesman, "Mr. Wendy," flopped in 2004. The more recent "Do What Tastes Right" campaign showed improvement, but earlier this year Wendy's dropped the ad agency that created it, Interpublic Group of Cos Inc unit McCann Erickson.

Tony Granger, chief creative officer of Saatchi & Saatchi New York, which came up with the new ads, said the key with a brand like Wendy's was to entertain in quirky and unexpected ways.

"You have to be more random," he said. "It's like when you meet someone at a party and they don't take themselves seriously, you kind of like them more. It's the same principle, really.

Saatchi & Saatchi is a division of Publicis.