

## *All About a Healthier U Wellness Launch*

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**Brinker International, in partnership with PartnerComm Inc.**

**Dallas, Texas, U.S.**

### Need/Opportunity

Brinker International Inc. is one of the world's leading casual dining restaurant companies, serving more than one million guests daily. Founded in 1975 and based in Dallas, Texas, Brinker owns or franchises more than 1,600 restaurants in 24 countries. Brinker restaurant brands include Chili's Grill & Bar, Romano's Macaroni Grill, On the Border Mexican Grill & Cantina and Maggiano's Little Italy. In 2006, the company was named one of *Fortune* magazine's "most admired companies" and was also honored by the magazine as one of the "top 50 employers for minorities" and the "top 50 employers for women."

Brinker has always offered valuable health care benefits to both full-time and part-time employees. But in 2006, like many employers, Brinker continued to face the challenge of rising health care costs. Research showed that one-half the money spent on health care was subject to individual employee choices. In addition, studies showed that every dollar a company spent on wellness programs could translate into three or four dollars of health care savings. Armed with this knowledge, Brinker decided it was time to enhance their wellness benefits to help employees make positive lifestyle changes and, in turn, combat rising costs.

In 2005, Brinker introduced a total rewards brand, All About U, which met with very positive feedback from employees for its simplistic, user-friendly approach to benefits and compensation. For the new wellness initiative, Brinker wanted to build off the success of this brand. To do this, they turned to their communication partner, PartnerComm Inc., who had worked with them to develop the original brand. They also partnered with WebMD, a leading provider of health and wellness resources, to offer employees online tools and resources.

The first year of the campaign would focus on raising awareness of health care and wellness issues and highlighting key tools, such as the HealthQuiz, an online risk assessment. Eventually, the cumulative data about the Brinker population gathered from the HealthQuiz would help target their highest cost areas and determine which types of health programs to offer in the future.

### Intended Audience

Brinker has approximately 110,000 U.S. employees. Hourly employees make up the largest segment of this population, with over 100,000 employees spread all over the U.S. About 1,000 salaried employees are located at the headquarters in Dallas, and the remaining salaried employees are managers and directors for the restaurants throughout the country.

Brinker employees are 52.8 percent male and 47.2 percent female. Their average age is 27.1 years old. Typical of a retail environment, turnover in the hourly population is fairly high, and many employees are young students working their way through school.

Because Brinker is concerned about the health of all employees, wellness benefits are available to the entire population. However, the launch primarily targeted salaried employees (field managers, directors and home office employees) for two reasons:

- 1) Ninety percent of Brinker's salaried population was enrolled in company-provided benefits, while only 13 percent of hourly employees had benefits. Brinker would get the greatest return on investment by focusing on its highest users of health care.
- 2) Salaried employees are typically older than hourly employees, and thus more susceptible to health problems, so they would benefit most from wellness intervention.

Brinker did reach out to hourly employees to educate them about wellness benefits, but used fewer touch points given this audience's demographics, size and geographical distribution.

## Goals and Objectives

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The overall goal was to launch a wellness initiative that would encourage employees to take charge of their health with online tools and other resources. Specifically, the objectives were to:

- Get at least 10 percent of field salaried employees to register on the All About a Healthier U web site.
- Get at least 30 percent of home office employees to register on the All About a Healthier U web site.
- Of those registered on the site, have at least 50 percent take the HealthQuiz.
- Have at least 10 percent of registered users utilize key online tools.
- Get at least 50 percent of wellness fair attendees to participate in the on-site health screening.

## Solution Overview

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### Creating the Look and Feel

To build off the total rewards brand, All About U, Brinker used the original logo and inserted "a Healthier" with a small carrot. This conveyed to employees that "All About a Healthier U" was part of the total rewards package. They borrowed heavily from established brand elements, such as bright, vibrant colors, an emphasis on the letter "U" in headlines, and a combination of whimsical illustrations and photography. But they also added a few twists to give the wellness communication its own flair. Instead of inserting photographic heads ("bobbleheads") into the illustrations as with the original brand, they chose full cutouts of people in active, everyday situations, such as jumping and swinging.

### Gaining Buy-In

Brinker built a business case for wellness by staging a series of meetings with key audiences: salaried employees at the all-employee meeting in Dallas, home office and

field PeopleWorks (HR) and recruiting teams, and area and regional directors in the field. Key messages that were woven into presentations included:

- If we don't make some changes, our health care costs will soon outpace our profits.
- By building a great wellness program, we can save millions of dollars.
- Brinker wants to help you get healthier and stay healthier.
- Brinker is introducing new tools, resources and programs to meet your wellness needs and goals.

In disseminating messages to the audiences, Brinker made sure the sender was the most credible source. For example, high-level executives delivered the messages to PeopleWorks teams, home office employees and directors. In the field, PeopleWorks representatives were equipped to handle restaurant manager questions. And restaurant managers were provided with tools to help their hourly employees.

### **Offering Incentives and Reimbursements**

To motivate and capture attention, Brinker used incentives to engage employees. They offered trendy, sought-after prizes such as iPods and Amazon.com gift cards. Employees registered at the All About a Healthier U web site and then completed the HealthQuiz assessment or used online tools to be eligible for the prizes.

To appeal to salaried employees, who are high users of benefits, Brinker expanded its fitness reimbursement program (previously available only for health club memberships) to include personal training, exercise classes and fitness lessons. For home office employees, they staged on-site health screenings and held drawings for additional wellness prizes.

### **Developing the Communication**

Because home office employees would have some additional, on-site benefits available, Brinker developed separate versions for home office employees and for field managers. For hourly employees, they enlisted managers' help in promoting wellness tools, and wove information about the tools into open enrollment communication.

The key messages included easy, "bite-sized" steps to make wellness actionable and doable. Here's a sampling:

- Save time and money.
- Uncover hidden health risks.
- Win cool stuff.
- Kick the habit.

Another important key message emphasized the confidential nature of the online tools by simply stating, "Your info is safe."

Timing	Communication	Audience(s)	Distribution	Description
July	All About a Healthier U web site	All employees	Online	This web site, powered by WebMD, was the cornerstone of Brinker's wellness program. Employees were directed here to take advantage of personalized online tools, such as the HealthQuiz assessment, improvement programs and health trackers. Brinker developed a customized banner for the site that incorporated the All About a Healthier U look and feel.
July	Postcard	Field managers	Mailed to homes	This home mailer introduced the All About a Healthier U identity. Content included information on online tools, cool prizes and Brinker's wellness reimbursement programs.
July	Manager toolkit	Field managers	Shipped to locations	The toolkit included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>A quarterly calendar (August to September):</b> The first in a series of mini wall calendars focused on wellness. Brinker used this conveniently sized format for posting in the small restaurant break rooms. The first calendar listed key Brinker dates and heavily promoted online tools and prizes.</li> <li>◆ <b>Talking points card:</b> a laminated card for managers' reference highlighting specific points to share with employees (printed in both English and Spanish to accommodate Brinker's large Spanish-speaking population).</li> <li>◆ <b>Gel packs:</b> giveaways to encourage employees to get healthy and use the wellness tools on the All About a Healthier U web site.</li> </ul>
July	Quarterly calendar (August to September)	Home office	Chair drop	Similar to the manager version, the calendar highlighted key dates, online tools and other wellness benefits.
September	Wellness week materials	Home office	Chair drop/handed out at wellness fair	Wellness week materials included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ A brochure that used a healthy dose of humor to promote the on-site wellness fair and broke wellness activities into easy, manageable steps.</li> <li>◆ A poster that showcased the on-site activities and promoted the prizes.</li> <li>◆ A wellness lotto ticket distributed to those who got an on-site screening.</li> </ul>
September	HealthQuiz card	Field managers	Mailed to homes	Using the same humorous top five instances from the wellness week brochure, the home mailer outlined easy steps to take advantage of the online HealthQuiz and to enter the raffle drawing.
September	Quarterly calendar (October to December)	Two versions: Field managers and home office	Field: shipped to locations Home office: chair drop	The second quarterly calendar included creative ways to manage stress, promoted online tools and emphasized the importance of exercise to stay mentally strong. The separate versions allowed Brinker to list home-office and manager-specific key dates.
September	Open enrollment materials	All employees (versions for hourly part-time, hourly full-time and salaried)	Mailed to homes	In the enrollment guides, quick enroll sheets and manager materials, Brinker included messaging on the valuable tools available at the All About a Healthier U web site. These pieces emphasized that employees could take advantage of the tools even if they didn't enroll for medical benefits.

## Implementation and Challenges

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One of the challenges Brinker faced involved the personal nature of the HealthQuiz and other online tools. Employees had to enter data about their health history and lifestyle, and might be sensitive about the company seeing that information. To put employees' minds at ease, Brinker emphasized confidentiality in their pieces. They assured readers that their information was protected under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and that Brinker would only receive general information about the population that could be used to tailor future wellness programs. This tactic worked, as demonstrated by the participation results.

Budget was also a challenge. With a widely dispersed population, mailing costs can quickly add up. Brinker kept costs under control by including manager materials in packets that are shipped weekly to restaurants and distributing home office materials through interoffice mail. Rather than mailing materials home, information was disseminated to the hourly population through their managers. Staff also looked for other ways to make efficient use of the budget. For example, they purchased royalty-free illustrations that could be used again in future wellness materials.

The communication budget for the project was US\$70,000, including writing, design, printing and mailing costs. The budget for the customized WebMD site was US\$850,000. Brinker successfully stayed within budget. From the initial planning meeting to distribution, the campaign was executed over a span of six months.

## Measurement/Evaluation

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The following table summarizes the results achieved by the project.

Objective	Results
Get at least 10 percent of field salaried employees to register on the All About a Healthier U web site.	Across all restaurant brands, an average of 11 percent of field salaried employees registered on the site.
Get at least 30 percent of home office employees to register on the All About a Healthier U web site.	Thirty-three percent of home office employees registered on the site.
Of those registered on the site, have at least 50 percent take the HealthQuiz.	Sixty percent of those who registered on the site took the HealthQuiz.
Have at least 10 percent of registered users utilize key online tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ The percentage of registered users that took advantage of the "Symptom Checker" totaled 10.1 percent.</li><li>◆ Fourteen percent of registered users enrolled in the "LEAP Fitness Program."</li><li>◆ The percentage of registered users that tried the "CostCompare" tool totaled 15.7 percent.</li></ul>
Get at least 50 percent of wellness fair attendees to participate in the on-site health screening.	Five hundred home office employees attended the wellness fair. Of those, 250 (50 percent) got an on-site health screening.

