



McDonald's Tests Catfish Sandwich

>Abstract

This case describes the test marketing for McDonald's catfish sandwich in the Southeastern United States. It asks students to assume they are the new product development team and to assess the research design described.

www.mcdonalds.com

>The Scenario

Nashville, Tennessee—McDonald's Corp. is trying to hook customers in southern test markets, including one in Kentucky, on a new catfish sandwich.

The chain is serving its newest sandwich in Bowling Green, Kentucky; Memphis, Chattanooga, and Jackson, Tennessee; Huntsville, Alabama; Jonesboro, Arkansas; and Columbus, Tupelo, Greenville, and Greenwood, Mississippi, said Jane Basten, a marketing specialist for McDonald's in Nashville.

The sandwich consists of a 2.3-ounce catfish patty, lettuce, and tangy sauce served on a homestyle bun.

The company will evaluate the sandwich based on sales and supply availability after a six-week ad campaign ends in mid-April.

"The advertising will be similar to what we're doing right now with the grilled steak sandwich," Basten said. "We will promote it to the fullest and see what happens."

The Catfish Institute, an industry promotion association based in Belzoni, Mississippi, is supplying the catfish.

Catfish Institute director Bill Allen said catfish farmers, processors, and marketers are "very excited about this prospect for our industry. This is super good news.

"But we don't want to get our hopes up too much and start thinking this is going to be our salvation, because we already have a viable industry."

Allen said that catfish firms that remember earlier tie-ups with major restaurant chains such as Church's Fried Chicken are cautiously optimistic about the McDonald's deal.

>Discussion

- 1 The management team for new product development was interested in assessing relevancy of the chosen test markets to the three states designated for rollout if the test market was satisfactory (Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia).
 - a. What are your conclusions about the representativeness of the test cities to the designated rollout states?
 - b. What secondary data should you present to support your conclusions? Where will you obtain this data.

>Sources

"McDonald's Tests Catfish Sandwich (March 18, 1992), used with permission of *Marketing News*. Case notes used with permission of William R. Dillon, Thomas J. Madden, and Neil H. Firtle, *Marketing Research in a Marketing Environment*, 3/e, 1994, Irwin. Used with permission of the McGraw Hill Companies.