Like a PRO

Beyond choice pilot

Using communication to encourage alternative protein engagement



What is the beyond choice pilot?

The beyond choice pilot tested how different communication frames can influence attention, curiosity and early engagement with alternative proteins (APs).

A three-week Meta Ads campaign ran on Facebook and Instagram in the Netherlands, Denmark and Spain. It tested gain, loss and priming frames across health and sustainability themes. Ads used recipe imagery, local-language copy and linked to downloadable AP recipes.

How did consumers react to the pilot?

1

The campaign generated substantial engagement

It reached 37,781 people, generated 1,663 clicks and resulted in 487 recipe downloads.

2

Attention was consistent across countries

Click-through rates ranged from 3.17% to 3.33%, showing similar levels of initial attention across the three countries.

3

Gain framing performed most consistently

Gain-framed messages generated the strongest conversion from exposure to recipe downloads across contexts.

4

Priming also showed potential

Priming performed well in several settings when positive associations aligned with local motivations and norms.

What concerns emerged?

Engagement does not guarantee behaviour change

Recipe downloads show early engagement, but do not confirm cooking, repeat purchasing or longer-term dietary change.

Negative framing can create resistance

Loss-based, moralising or pressure-oriented messages can trigger defensiveness and may be less effective at encouraging follow-through.

One message does not work everywhere

Health and sustainability themes performed differently across countries, highlighting the need to adapt communication to local motivations and cultural contexts.

Platform algorithms influence who is reached

Meta's optimisation favoured users more likely to engage, meaning campaign results reflected both message design and platform delivery.

Photo: istock.com/michellegibson



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What did food scampaign professionals observe?

Campaign professionals described communication as shaping the wider motivational context around food choices. They favoured positive, inclusive and practical framing over moralising or fear-based messages.

They stressed that communication should make change feel achievable through small, realistic actions. Cultural adaptation was also considered essential: themes, language, imagery and references should reflect local motivations, norms and sensitivities.

What should practitioners consider?

1 Prioritise positive framing

Highlight enjoyment, vitality and shared benefits rather than guilt or pressure.

2 Make action achievable

Translate broader goals into small, realistic actions, such as trying a recipe.

3 Use priming strategically

Build positive associations that help normalise plant-forward eating.

4 Use loss framing sparingly

Pair it with constructive and achievable pathways.

5 Adapt communication locally

Test themes, language and imagery rather than relying on one-size-fits-all messaging.

6 Connect communication to supportive environments

Ensure practical support and food environments make repeated action easier.

Key Takeaway

Behaviour-change communication can encourage early AP engagement when messages are positive, practical and culturally relevant. Its role is catalytic: communication can invite exploration, but lasting change depends on supportive food environments that enable repeated action. .

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