

HOW TO CRAFT A WINNING RAMADAN CAMPAIGN

Ramadan, the ninth month in the Islamic calendar, is not just a time of religious significance for Muslims – it has great cultural and social appeal, too. This infographic explores the dos and don'ts that marketers should heed to craft relevant campaigns for Muslims, and for a wider non-Muslim audience interested in the Holy Month's cultural aspects.

CONVENTIONAL APPROACHES TO RAMADAN MARKETING CAMPAIGNS IN THE MIDDLE EAST:

- Moons and lanterns as primary visual elements ❖
- Typical visuals of Arab families dining together ❖
- Generic TV, radio and print ads ❖
- Sales-y copywriting sans evocative messaging ❖

HOWEVER, THESE APPROACHES COULD BE IMPROVED HUGELY BY:

- ❖ Starting at the drawing board to develop interesting promotions
- ❖ Emphasising USPs of the offering – however small
- ❖ Targeting various audience segments via digital and social media
- ❖ Engaging approaches to visual development and messaging

STRATEGY DOs and DON'Ts

✔ **DO** work with your behind-the-scenes teams and your marketing agency to work out an interesting and differentiated proposition.

IDEA!

How about weaving in an aspect of charity (such as donating a portion of sales to the Red Crescent society) or social consciousness (limiting food offered at your buffet to minimise wastage) to appeal to a more charitably-inclined audience?

✘ **DON'T** limit your target audience. Your offering could also be an interesting cultural experience for tourists and non-Muslims. For example, this might mean a small, targeted sub-campaign for Chinese tourists, with messaging in Mandarin.

✔ **DO** enhance your offering so that it aligns better with the essence and traditions of Ramadan. For hotels and restaurants, this could mean incorporating a vibrant spectrum of regional Ramadan cuisine in the menu, or light oud music with a modern twist.

✔ **DO** consider 'value' vs. 'values' – does the value that you offer align with your customers' values? As an example, your offer may be attractively priced, but if your audience cares more about a good ambience for family get-togethers, focus more on the latter.

✔ **DO** consider your campaign's timing at least three months beforehand – Is Ramadan this year coinciding with another event that might compete with or complement your offer?

DESIGN DOs and DON'Ts

✔ **DO** ensure that your creative approach accurately reflects the offering. For example, the colours used in your communication could be inspired by the palette in your retail store or Ramadan tent.

✘ **DON'T** resort to using typical visual elements such as the moon and lanterns. Try inventive, even symbolic or conceptual ways to differentiate your proposition and attract attention.

✔ **DO** consider changing your online storefront's look-and-feel temporarily so website visitors feel more welcome.

✔ **DO** adopt a respectful approach to your designs, and avoid showing skin, and physical intimacy of any sort. In markets like KSA, be especially mindful of the media considerations.

MESSAGING DOs and DON'Ts

✔ **DO** ensure that your copy accurately captures what is special about your Ramadan offering. For a hotel, this might be a special dish the Moroccan chef is famous for, or delicious interpretations of Iftar and Suhour cuisine from across the entire region. For a retail store, this might mean an offer timed to coincide with the period just after Iftar.

✘ **DON'T** use an excessively celebratory or extravagant tone that is out of sync with the solemn and spiritual tone of the month.

✘ **DON'T** make an overtly sales-y pitch, especially for items or services that may seem excessively indulgent.

✔ **DO** differentiate your copy for sub-sets of your target audience. For Muslims, focus on the traditional aspects, while for tourists, emphasise the cultural and experiential nuances.

MEDIA DOs and DON'Ts

✔ **DO** consider engaging and immersive media such as Facebook Canvas or an interactive microsite, which allow you to cover a wide range of experiential aspects and offer-related messaging.

✔ **DO** leverage your database to distribute campaign materials, and dispatch appropriate material to sub-sets of your database. For instance, a French- or Urdu-speaking audience would include both Muslims and Non-Muslims (think Lebanese, certain African nationalities, Pakistanis), and you'd need to use the appropriate media to target them.

✘ **DON'T** develop your Ramadan social media calendar without considering the best times to post. Let primary posts or reminder posts coincide with Iftar and Suhour times. Some posts may make more sense to send out earlier in the day, so people can plan the evening's Ramadan activities.