

Cream Cheese Crisis Becomes An Opportunity For Kraft's Philadelphia Brand

Seems I'm Not The Only Consumer Who Can't Live Without Philadelphia Cream Cheese Schmeared By Availability Issues



Credit: Kraft Heinz

Tom Madden, Founder & CEO, TransMedia Group

As a PR and marketing aficionado, I have to salute Kraft Heinz for not letting a cream cheese crisis go to waste.

I applaud Kraft Heinz for its "Spread the Feeling" campaign as

a response to the nationwide schmear shortage caused by a home baking and breakfast boom, then exacerbated by a cyberattack.

Together they sidelined a major ingredient supplier, which made my beloved white blocks an endangered species on empty shelves at my Publix supermarket.

And to make matters worse, the shortage comes during cream cheese's high selling season, when consumers are busy making cheesecakes (sorry I'm on a diet) and other desserts (ditto) for which cream cheese is a major ingredient.

Seeing an opportunity to make something out of nothing, my City of Brotherly Love Brand responded with a message of empathy for disappointed shoppers like me and my wife Rita by promising to make things right. Once I was a news reporter at *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, hardly a cheesy newspaper in that lovable city.

The good news is the brand will reimburse shoppers up to \$20 for buying alternatives to cream-cheese desserts. Here's the voiceover on the 45-second TV spot from agency GUT's Miami Office reported by Jon Springer in *Ad Age*:

"Having a hard time finding cream cheese on shelves means having a hard time putting cheesecakes on tables, and we get that . . . so let's do this. Turn that famous cheesecake into those famous brownies. End your meal with a family fight over the last holiday cupcake. Share some cookies—anything that will make you feel anything in that cheesecake-shaped hole in your holiday heart."

The spot goes on to introduce a website, www.spreadthefeeling.com, where consumers can exchange a receipt for an alternative dessert for a limited number of \$20 digital gift cards.

Kraft's generous offer comes with a potential reward for the brand in the form of rich first-party consumer data. Shoppers'

names—and thanks to the receipts, what they buy.

According to Ad Age, cream cheese consumption skyrocketed with the onset of the pandemic in 2020, when hunkered down consumers like me ate more meals at home. Kraft Heinz said consumption soared by 18% in 2020 and has remained at elevated levels with the return of demand in the foodservice channel.

Among the issues facing cream cheese availability in the U.S. was a cyberattack affecting Schreiber Foods, a Wisconsin-based dairy processor (It wasn't clear if Kraft Heinz and Schreiber do business together).

The incident sidelined production and distribution in October, and its effects unfortunately have reverberated throughout the food world.



About the Author: Besides an inveterate blogger, Tom Madden is an author of countless published articles and five books, including his latest, **WORDSHINE MAN**, available in January on Amazon. He is the founder and CEO of **TransMedia Group**, an award-winning public relations firm serving clients worldwide since 1981 and has conducted remarkably successful media campaigns and crisis management for America's largest companies and organizations.