

Innovation as content

By [Erik de Jager & Cole Matthews](#)

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In an office meeting morning, we stumbled upon McDonald's impressive, fresh, take-away packaging (clearly, we're an easily distracted lot)...

The first is McDonald's BagTray, designed by McDonald's Hungary and ad agency DDB Budapest, which doubles as a carry bag and a reinforced cardboard eating tray (as if we didn't need another excuse to monster munch our take-away as soon as humanly possible). It should (in theory) remove the disorderly mess that's commonplace in most take-away experiences (but if you're just a messy, gluttonous monster, no such reinforced cardboard box can redeem you, sorry). The second mind-blower is the new packaging for the one and only, Big Mac; which is essentially a glorified, fast-food-laden handbag. This means it's practical AND fashionable - eat your heart (or butt) out #KimK.

Ever experienced that sinking feeling of disappointment when you can't counterbalance your proactive calorie-burning with an appetizing take-away? Neither have I, but for cyclists in Copenhagen (Denmark, for those of you that didn't pay attention in geography) that disadvantage is now a thing of the past thanks to the McBike.



With all three products, it's clear that McDonald's is working with ardent determination to fight back against the tide of negative press that's beleaguered them in recent times. Changing their packaging may seem like a minor or even ineffective strategy in this fight, but the results say otherwise. A plethora of news and lifestyle publications, who otherwise would have had no good reason to talk about McD's (unless that reason was expletive-babbling minion toys - seriously, get on that), have featured articles on the innovations, using such descriptors as 'game-changer', 'genius' and 'revolutionary'. These quirky, yet convenient changes are paving the way for a completely new kind of awareness and engagement for the fast food brand that steers clear of its recently stigmatised image regarding 'unhealthy' eating.

So, if these innovations are creating visibility, engaging with customers in a pragmatic, convenient way and destigmatising the brand's negative image, can we classify them as content? Businesses make the product, agencies make the content, right?

No, we cannot. Content is not the product. Content is the coverage of the product. In this case however, DDB and McDonald's worked together to design the BagTray, creating a product that's an automatic content generator. Evidently, it's creating exceptional visibility online and customer satisfaction through a novel and unique experience. So as this brilliant product crosses borders (and seas) to make its way into our beckoning grasp, expect articles from publications who haven't mentioned anything about McDonald's since their Minion toys starting babbling expletives. Expect Instagram posts with witty hashtags and tweets from major celebrities or influencers who may become vegan-turned-McHappy-freaks.



To conclude - the lesson/s that those brilliant Hungarians have imparted? Firstly, that the traditional lines and roles that have defined ad agencies, marketing departments, packaging companies etc. are blurring. There's no longer a clearly delineated rubicon between businesses that make the product and agencies that make the content, because splurging your precious budget on conventional print campaigns or a TVCs isn't enough to engage customers and get them talking about you. Agencies are now on an endless quest to find interesting and groundbreaking ways to communicate with people and McDonald's is doing a damn fine job of it. So, lesson learnt - work together.

Secondly, don't be afraid to be daring. You can't rock the boat if you're going to play it safe. So rebel against convention and be innovative, because innovation begets content.

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