

McDonald's to revamp marketing

By Meera Selva

McDonald's has begun a worldwide review of its media planning and buying agency to inject new life into its image. The 50-year-old American fast-food giant has hired Germany's Heye and Partner, part of Omnicom, to mastermind the campaign, which has a single catchline : « I'm lovin'it ».

It is the first time McDonald's has used a single set of commercials at the same time around the world. All McDonald's advertisements in the 118 operating countries will use the same slogan, though each country will have the option of using it in English or in the local language.

Justin Timberlake, former member of a US pop band and ex-boyfriend of Britney Spears, will record vocals for several of the campaigns. He will also appear in cameo roles throughout the new campaign.

McDonald's has not said how much it plans to spend on the campaign but in 2002 it devoted around \$550m on television, print and outdoor advertising. The launch follows the American « Smile » campaign, which generated only a lukewarm response among customers.

The McDonald's brand has suffered recently from overexpansion and from bad publicity about the unhealthiness of its products. Like-for-like sales in the US and Europe have slumped and critics warn that the brand is going into a slow decline. Some customers in the US are even suing the company for making them fat.

Cantalupo has embarked on a turnaround plan designed to improve the quality of the food in the group's 30,000 restaurants worldwide. He wants to use the campaign to draw more customers into existing stores, rather than opening new ones.

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