



Highlights from “the best avocados have California in them” consumer advertising campaign, including the custom content illustrations from Eater.

Outstanding Marketing Accomplishments Despite Challenging Year

By all accounts, 2020 presented the California Avocado Commission’s marketing team with a series of challenges unlike any previously seen — a pandemic coupled with social upheaval that would alter consumer lifestyles and the business practices of retailers and foodservice chains. Nevertheless, it was a big year for California avocado marketing accomplishments, including the launch of a new advertising campaign, an overhaul of CaliforniaAvocado.com, successful retail and foodservice programs and the launch of a new online shop featuring merchandise that promotes the brand.

The Commission’s Year-End Dashboard and Top Marketing Accomplishments report chronicle the marketing team’s fiscal year achievements via a series of key performance indicators.

The Dashboard report was presented to the California Avocado Board of Directors at its November meeting and both the Dashboard and Top Marketing Accomplishments reports were shared with CAC’s Marketing Committee. Following is a summary of the Commission’s 2019-20 performance highlights from these reports.

Top Marketing Accomplishments

“The best avocados have California in them” advertising campaign — with its fun-loving California imagery — generated significant lifts in California avocado awareness. Creative executions also performed well with research participants who viewed the ads. This new campaign, combined with CAC’s marketing activities, led to big gains in unaided and aided

avoCADos

The best merch has
California Avocados on it.



The California avocado merchandise shop launched in September with items featuring the advertising campaign graphics.

brand awareness and rebounds in consumer perceptions of the premium fruit. CAC reported successful InstaPanel results (tested consumer reactions to creative), positive Nielsen results (compared consumer responses of those who viewed actual advertising to those who had not) and positive new insights and gains in consumer ratings according to the 2020 California Avocado Tracking Study.

As the pandemic spread across the nation, the lifestyles of Americans began to noticeably shift due to stay-at-home orders and restrictions placed on retailers and restaurants. The Commission successfully transitioned its media plans to engage with consumers where they were – at home. Hulu, a digital television platform, emerged as the Commission's best performing media site for California avocado awareness, favorability and purchase consideration.

CAC also decreased its participation on social media channels where negative conversations began to dominate the platform due to social upheaval. Instead, the Commission selected channels such as Pinterest and YouTube where users would welcome California avocado-branded posts sharing helpful information. YouTube, in particular, was a standout performer this year with a 60% increase in subscribers and 11.1 million video views – a 270% increase versus the prior year.

Blogger advocates supported CAC programs throughout the season, including this post for the California Avocado Summer at Home program.



Throughout the year, the Commission worked on creating an online California avocado merchandise shop, including developing the business model, designing the website and merchandise, sourcing the products and arranging for product fulfillment. The September launch of the California avocado merchandise shop (Shop.CaliforniaAvocado.com, see article page 48) generated a substantial amount of public relations buzz with a total of 45 million impressions, including an exclusive story in *Delish*. Prior to the launch, the Commission distributed a press release, conducted media outreach to local and national consumer publications and sent out an email blast to fans highlighting the collection of California avocado-inspired gear.

Dashboard Report Highlights

According to the Dashboard Report, the Commission garnered nearly 290 million consumer media impressions via its online, social media and offline advertising efforts. Highlights from these initiatives are summarized below.

- Outdoor advertising with billboards in Los Angeles and San Diego, as well as a BART train wrap in the Bay Area, generated more than 9 million impressions
- Audio advertising on the digital Spotify and Pandora music channels secured 2.8 million video views and 32 million impressions
- Digital brand advertising resulted in 153 million impressions and 89 million video views

- During stay-at-home directives in the early days of the pandemic, studio photography sessions were not possible; instead, CAC worked with the popular Eater recipe destination site and they created and featured six original California avocado recipes accompanied by beautiful custom illustrations
- Instagram influencers via Social Native showcased California-avocado inspired dishes paired with their own stunning photography
- Social-retail advertising was hyper-targeted for participating retailers and included store location data to direct drivers to grocery stores with California avocados (secured 9.3 million video views)
- Season-long advertising across top social platforms earned 5.5 million engagements and 24 million impressions

CAC consumer public relations activities in 2020 garnered 956.4 million impressions from media coverage secured with print, broadcast and online media outlets as well as retailer communications. The Commission did alter many of its public relations plans in light of stay-at-home orders, pivoting from in-person events to safe, contactless media events that continued momentum during the peak season. The PR team hosted various virtual media dinners in Los Angeles, Portland, Sacramento and Seattle for California Avocado Month and its Summer at Home program. These dinners included 57 top-tier media members and influencers, including representa-





Despite turmoil in the foodservice industry due to pandemic closures, California avocados were featured in 12 California and Pacific region restaurant chains.

AVO DOS

The Best Avocados Have **CA**lifornia In Them

There is a difference with California Avocados! That's why your shoppers anticipate the California season. From the consistent quality, freshness and homogenous taste, they want that delicious California Avocado satisfaction with every bite. It's a tradition of excellence to pass the plate with California Avocados—bringing family and friends together for nearly a century—especially during the American Summer Holidays.

 Count on California and give your customers what they're asking for all season long.




For Consumer Marketing Support: CaliforniaAvocado.com


The California Season is Almost Here!

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The California Season is Almost Here!

Retail trade and foodservice advertising integrated the consumer campaign theme, including this two-page spread featuring a textured avocado that revealed a beautiful avocado half underneath.

tives from *Eat Seattle*, *Seattle Foodie Podcast* and *Willamette Week*. The Blogger Advocate program (see article page 46) continued and yielded more than 38 million impressions.

While many websites and brands saw steep drops to their unpaid traffic during the pandemic, visits to the Commission's recipe page grew 36% year over year. Popular recipes like

Fried Avocado Dippers showed 110% in growth from the previous year. As preserving and growing your own foods began trending in the U.S., the "How to Grow Your Own Avocado Tree" and "How to Freeze California Avocados" pages grew 76% and 125% respectively from last year. Overall, the consumer website had nearly 2.3 million visits, The Scoop blog



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LOCAL GROWER



California Avocado Grower
Scott Van Der Kar checking this year's crop on his family-owned grove.



CALIFORNIA

- Scott Van Der Kar's family has been growing avocados in California for more than 50 years. The Van Der Kar's are one of more than 3,500 California Avocado growers who benefit from California's ideal climate and fertile soil that help to produce world-class avocados.
- The production practices he uses ensure he's a good neighbor to everyone. Like his fellow California Avocado growers, Scott's avocados are locally, responsibly and meticulously grown.
- California Avocados are picked at their peak from Spring through Summer, delivering tree to table freshness in just a few days. That's the California Avocado difference.



TASTES FROM CLOSE TO HOME

Retail activity includes this Save Mart ad featuring California avocado grower Scott Van Der Kar.

reported 707,000 visits and visitors spent 5% more time on its site. By investing in content creation early, CAC was able to drive traffic to the website and engage with consumers in a time of crisis.

The Commission also provided consumers with informative California avocado content and new recipes via six emails with an average of 28,000 successful deliveries and a 15% open rate.

Capitalizing on the trust consumers place in retail dietitians and bloggers, the Living Well Brand Advocates program secured 2.2 million impressions. Custom retail programs, including retail dietitian content, garnered 14.2 million digital and traditional media activations.

The Commission helped drive California avocado sales utilizing customized retail promotions with participating retailers. Those retailers included Albertsons/Vons/Pavilions, Bristol Farms, Costco, Gelson's, H.E.B., Hy-Vee, Kroger,

Mollie Stone's, Northwest Grocers, Organically Grown Company (PCC Markets, New Season Market, Newport Stores, Metropolitan Markets), Raley's/Bel Air/Nob Hill, Sam's Club, The Fresh Market and Walmart as well as export promotions in South Korea.

The Commission also assisted targeted food-service chain partners with facing the challenge of COVID protocols that eliminated or limited dine-in service. The programs encouraged diners to enjoy menu items featuring fresh California avocados. The marketing team secured eight new foodservice promotions at Erik's Delicafe, Ike's Love & Sandwiches, Islands Restaurants, Mixt, Norm's Restaurants, Sharky's Woodfired Mexican Grill, Super Duper Burger and Wahoo's Fish Taco. Del Taco, Flame Broiler, Habit Burger and Rubio's Coastal Grill — all returning chain partners — also ran California avocado promotions during the season. In addition the team contacted 70 chains, building relations for 2020-21 and beyond.

Digital and print advertising in the retail trade sector resulted in nearly 28.7 million impressions and an additional 2.4 million in the foodservice sector. Retail PR secured 9.9 million positive impressions, with foodservice impressions at 4.9 million — a 700% plus improvement upon the program goal.

The California Avocado Commission also expanded its LinkedIn audience with 526 new followers and an average of 32 new visitors per month. The top post for the season, which garnered nearly 31,000 impressions, showcased

a California avocado grower video. Overall, the social media channel had a 6% engagement rate — three times the average engagement rate of 2%.

Despite challenges presented by a pandemic and social unrest, the Commission successfully engaged with consumers by sharing information and messaging that was relevant and sensitive to their changing needs and circumstances. In a similar fashion, CAC adapted its customer promotions to help support retail and foodservice partners during a tumultuous time while simultaneously keeping California avocados top of mind throughout the season. The ability to successfully adjust plans and programs to the ever-shifting needs of targeted customers and consumers was due to a combination of factors. The team's rapid transition to remote work environments, successful adoption of new technologies and well-reasoned, nimble program pivots ensured the premium messaging of the California Avocados brand remained strong. 🥑