

Commission's Foodservice Promotions Support a Struggling Industry During Pandemic

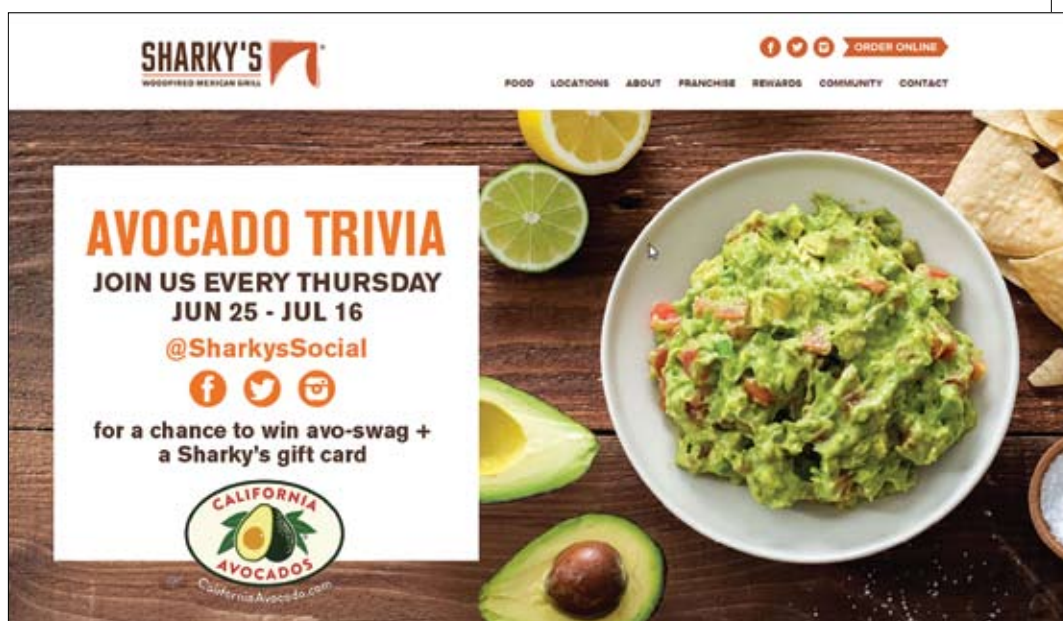
As the California avocado season began in earnest, across America consumers were beginning to adjust to COVID-19 safer-at-home orders that curtailed activities and led to devastating results for a foodservice industry that had to adapt — almost overnight — to the cessation of on-premise sales. Within three to four weeks of the initial shutdown of dining services, the California Avocado Commission (CAC) had worked with foodservice partners to put together digitally-based California avocado promotions that encouraged fans and prospective diners, who were mainly sheltering at home, to enjoy fresh California avocado menu items courtesy of the chains' drive through, take out, curbside pickup and delivery services.

With consumers eager for a respite from safer-at-home directives, the Commission developed unique promotional opportunities that showcased the distinct menu offerings of each of 10 foodservice partners around common themes — the chance to enjoy the premium Golden State fruit as a comfort, an indulgence or a “good for me” break from meals prepared at home. The chains leveraged the California Avocados brand on their websites, e-newsletter blasts and social media posts, reminding customers the fruit was locally grown and part of their mindful sourcing.

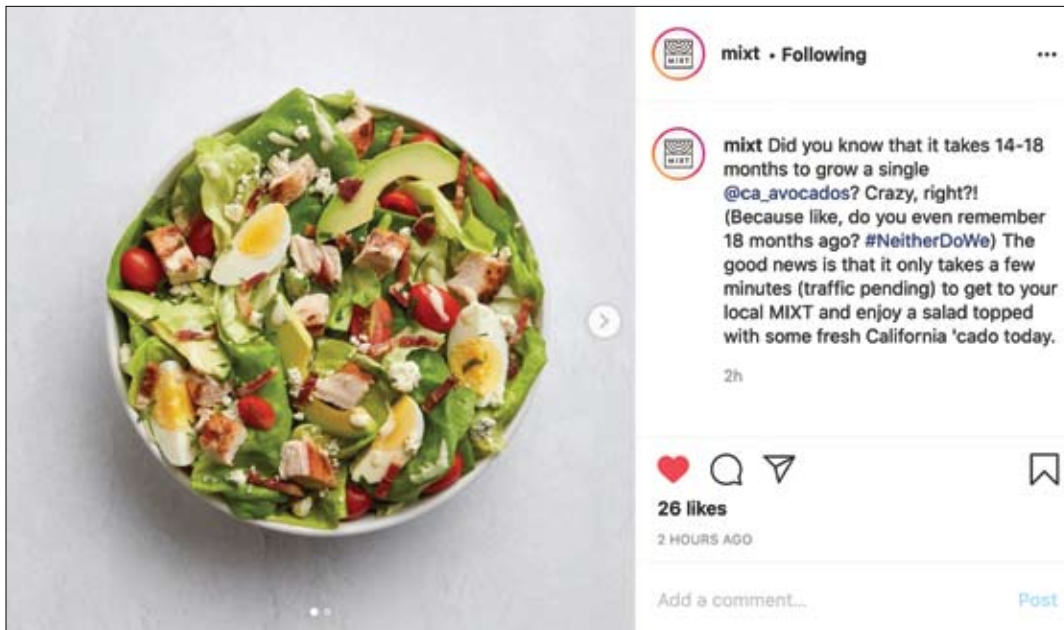
The California Sharky's Woodfired Mexican Grill — a 30+ unit chain that strives to use fresh, natural and organic ingredients — ran a two-month California avocado-themed promotion from mid-May to mid-July centered around their popular Califor-

nia avocado house-made guacamole and chips. CAC provided California avocado facts and trivia that were included in the chain's e-newsletter, which reaches more than 102,000 fans. A trivia competition was showcased on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with posts featuring California avocado prizes and Sharky's gift cards. Director of Marketing Becky Larsen Marquez noted, “Promoting California avocados on our menu supports Sharky's commitment to provide food you can ‘Feel Good About Eating.’ The California avocado promotion delivers this commitment by providing high quality avocados sourced locally whenever possible, adding greater value and connection with our guests.”

The San Francisco-based chain, Mixt, celebrated the launch of a summer menu in which more than half of the items featured California avocados. The 13-unit chain is serious about bringing better eating to everyone and throughout July it shared those messages alongside California Avocado brand imagery on its blog and social posts. According to Mixt, avocados are by far the single most requested addition to any salad,



Sharky's California Avocado Trivia Thursday promotion.



Mixt encouraged consumers to venture out and enjoy fresh California avocados atop a fresh salad.

bowl or plate order. “As a healthy lifestyle California brand, it was a natural to partner with CAC this summer. We love to highlight our local and seasonal sourcing, and our guests love California avocados,” added Matt Colgan, Mixt director of culinary.

Del Taco, a national chain based in Lake Forest, CA, is a long-time chain promotion partner. This summer the chain ran its fresh guacamole made with California avocados promotion from late April through July with social media posts and a strategically placed California Avocados brand logo alongside an enticing photo of sliced avocado on their website.

CAC’s new chain partner, Erik’s DeliCafé, is a heavy user of fresh avocados with six sandwiches and one salad featuring avocados on the menu. The 27-unit chain, which is based in San Jose, CA, promoted fresh California avocados on its website ordering platform and proudly touted its California avocado partnership on its sourcing page.

Entering its second year as a partner with the Commission, Flame Broiler offered diners the opportunity to add fresh California avocados to any bowl or plate order. Flame Broiler, which prides itself on “Simply Healthy,” showcased it was open for business and serving fresh California avocados with pop-up messages on the site’s home page.

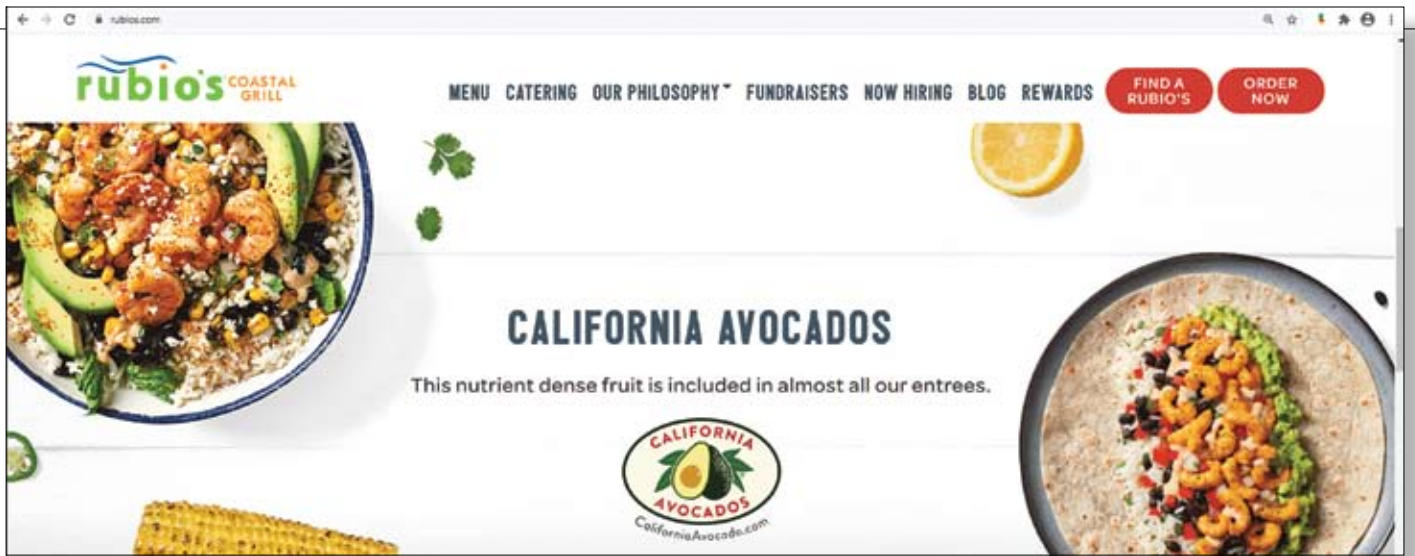
Ike’s Love & Sandwiches, a 62-unit chain based in San Francisco, is #17 on the *Restaurant Business* “The Future 50 of 2020” list. In celebration of California Avocado Month, Ike’s launched two new sandwiches, *Name of the Girl* and *Reading Rainbow* featuring fresh California avocados. Ike’s supported the launch with social media posts utilizing celebrity sightings at local units and tongue-in-cheek humor that is right in step

with the brand’s personality.

Throughout California Avocado Month, Norm’s — a 20-unit casual dining chain based in Bellflower, CA — leveraged the positive halo of the fresh fruit by promoting all things avocado on its menu. Loyalty club members received two California avocado-themed email blasts. The chain, which prides itself on value and service, rounded out its California avocado promotion with four social media posts that dovetailed with



Erik’s DeliCafé recommended diners add California avocados to popular menu items.



Rubio's homepage showcased the California avocado brand and scrumptious avocado-themed menu items.

the chain's "keeping it fresh" style.

Rubio's Coastal Grill — a returning partner — is certainly familiar with the fact that California diners prefer California avocados and are willing to pay a higher menu price for them. More than 160 units participated in a month-long mid-July to mid-August promotion celebrating the Golden State fruit.

The 12-unit Super Duper Burgers chain also appeared on the *Restaurant Business* "The Future 50 of 2020" list of the fastest growing chains in America. Based out of San Francisco, the 12-unit chain worked with their purchasing group to bring fresh California avocados to their region to capitalize on the positive value the fruit brings to their menu. The chain's promotion paired California avocados with the chain's intent on "bringing fast food burgers with slow food values".

Across Arizona, California, and Nevada, 222 Habit Burger locations added California avocados to their Culinary Adventures of California promotions from July 17 – August 31. Chef Adam Baird singled out California avocados and his excitement for their creamy texture in two of the Culinary Adventure videos that were showcased on the chain's social media feeds.

According to proprietary research conducted by Menu Matters, more than 80% of consumers believe restaurants featuring California avocados feature fresh, high-quality ingredients. By extending a generous hand with promotional efforts that created a halo effect, the Commission was able to aid industry partners who were forced to double down on their promotions efforts in order to increase take-out and delivery sales — sales channels that normally only represent a single-digit percentage of their revenue. These goodwill gestures not only improved sales opportunities for CAC's foodservice partners, but also showcased the versatility of the fruit with menu promotions designed to inspire consumers to incorporate the fruit in meals and snacks at home. Consider-

ing how much California avocado consumption occurs in the foodservice channel, these efforts played an important role in maintaining and building relationships. As of this writing, the Commission has confirmed 12 Promotion Agreements from four returning chain partners and eight new chain partners. Additional promotions are under consideration. 🥑



Ike's Sandwiches launched two new sandwiches featuring fresh California avocados.