

Marketing News & Strategy

SEA-WEED? BOSTON SEAFOOD CHAIN CELEBRATES LEGAL POT WITH TRIPPY CAMPAIGN: MARKETER'S BRIEF

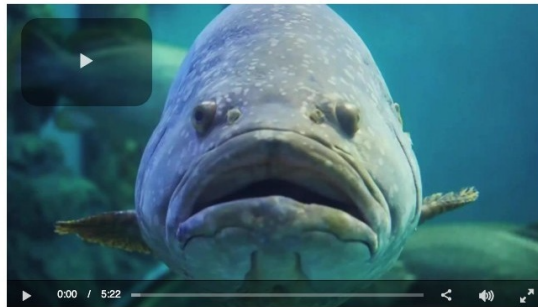
Legal Sea Foods' effort includes 'toke-out menus'

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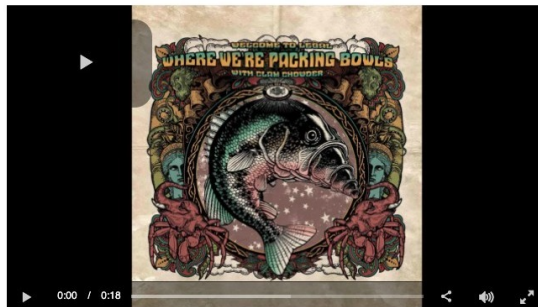


Welcome to the latest edition of Marketer's Brief, a quick take on marketing news, moves and trends from Ad Age's reporters and editors. Send tips/suggestions to eschultz@adage.com.

A Boston-area seafood chain is giving new meaning to baked fish. Legal Sea Foods is celebrating the legalization of recreational marijuana in Massachusetts with a psychedelic campaign that has all kinds of fun with fishy pot puns. The trippy spots are set to run at 4:20 p.m. on local TV for about a month.



The "Welcome to Legal" campaign, which comes from agency DeVito/Verdi, includes psychedelic-style posters and even a van serving free clam chowder parked near marijuana dispensaries. But wait, there's more: The chain is offering "toke-out menus" to people leaving those shops and the chance to win chowder if people text the chain at 4:20 p.m. Recreational marijuana became legal in Massachusetts in late 2016, but dispensaries didn't start opening until late 2018.



The campaign "comes with some degree of potential controversy," says Ellis Verdi, president and founder of the agency. Of course, it's a way to generate buzz for a regional chain that doesn't have the marketing budget of, say, Red Lobster. Legal Sea Foods has taken advertising risks before, he notes. A transit campaign suggesting what fresh fish would say to passengers, such as "If that's your girlfriend, I'd throw her back," was blocked for a time by the transit authority. The media plan for the new campaign includes digitally targeting people in the greater Boston area who have visited dispensaries, based on location-based tracking data, and those who have clicked on cannabis sites.



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