

Case Study

The Company

During the 1990s, Salton Inc. experimented with and released several innovative consumer appliances, primarily for the kitchen. It had a roster of strong selling items, including the Juiceman juice extractor and the Breadman bread machine. In 1996, Salton, Inc. launched a brand new device – the “Taco Maker.” Its tilted grilling surface provided a way to easily separate the browned ground beef from its grease.

The Challenge

Salton changed the product concept to a “grilling machine” to generate more mass appeal. The grill was presented at multiple household industry trade shows to a largely uninterested public. They knew they had a viable product with great potential, but the device lacked the necessary “hook” to grab and hold consumers’ interest.

The Insight

The “hook” came in the form of boxing legend, George Foreman. Known as a solid citizen who loved food, Foreman blended an engaging personality with a huge recognition factor across a wide age demographic. Salton hired Foreman as spokesperson and product endorser, adding serious “punch” to the campaign. Thus, the George Foreman Grill was born and positioned for success, especially as it was unique in the housewares product category with no competition from other manufacturers.

The Solution

Salton was excited to apply the same DRTV branding strategies to the George Foreman Grill that made their earlier Juiceman Juicer campaign so successful. Cesari Direct structured a 30-minute Infomercial to give viewers a chance to really connect with Foreman. One key factor was Foreman’s friendly, “guy-next-door” persona... he wasn’t telling you how to eat, instead he was sharing his love for food and letting you know the health benefits of the grill while doing so. It was an irresistible One-Two Punch!

The Results

Salton, Inc.’s sales climbed from \$50M to more than \$800M due in part to its DRTV campaigns. At its peak, 100 million grills sold worldwide by DRTV sales. Cesari Direct grew sales for the George Foreman Grill by nearly a billion dollars! This indoor grill has since become one of the most popular household items of all time – in fact, it’s estimated that between 12-15 percent of all US households have at least one George Foreman Grill. Talk about a knockout.

“Rick Cesari and Cesari Direct helped us launch the original George Foreman Grill ... There is no other firm I would trust to launch a new grill product via direct response than Cesari Direct.”

Barb Westfield
Fmr. CMO at Salton Housewares inc