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In Greece, Kraft Scores a Hit for Lacta Chocolate With Crowdsourced Film

Branded Movie Tells Story of Romantic Encounter on Train

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LONDON (AdAge.com) -- Kraft Foods has scored a hit for its Lacta chocolate bar in Greece by crowdsourcing a 27-minute branded-entertainment film, involving the audience in everything from writing the story to casting the film and styling the actors. Some even popped up as extras in the finished film. And in a down market for chocolate bars, Lacta's sales are growing.

Created with OgilvyOne Worldwide in Athens, the "[Love in Action](#)" campaign started with a series of [traditional TV spots](#) inviting people to submit their own personal love stories, one of which would be made into the movie. In response, people posted 1,307 love stories.



'Love in Action' includes only three shots of Lacta in 27 minutes.

Panos Sambrakos, executive creative director of OgilvyOne Worldwide, Athens, said, "In a way this was our most valuable and popular content, since people loved reading the stories, or to share their own, even if it wasn't made into a movie. Some even did it in order to express their love to current or past lovers."

After a month of reading and selecting entries, the top five were judged by three Kraft executives, three OgilvyOne executives and the screenwriter, George Kapoutzidis.

The winning story was about a musician and a new army recruit who meet on a train journey. Online polls decided casting (full screen tests were put up online), the characters' names and even what they wore.

A total of 11,500 people registered and voted on pre-production decisions, and some were invited to be extras in the film. Updates were posted on Facebook and Kraft's blog during the two-week shoot.

The plan was to run the film online, but the making of the movie created such a buzz in Greece that the country's leading TV station, MEGA Channel, offered to screen it free of charge on Feb. 14 as part of its Valentine's Day programming.

"Love in Action," which is 27 minutes long, includes only three shots of Lacta. "Our client didn't want the audience to be distracted by the product," Mr. Sambrakos said. "He wanted it to be entertainment first."

The film attracted a 12% share of viewers and was seen by more than 335,000 Greeks on TV. In the first few weeks online, the film was viewed 150,000 times and attracted more than 20,000 fans on Facebook. And the song featured in the film became a hit.

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The "Love in Action" campaign ran at a difficult time for Lacta: Greece's warm winter was bad for chocolate sales. In the last quarter of 2009, the start of the "Love in Action" campaign helped to raise sales by 0.6% in a declining market. Figures for the first quarter of 2010, when the campaign reached its height, are not yet available.

Penny Axiotou, who was a real-life girl in the story, was given a credit on the posters and in the main credit sequence of the film. Unfortunately, she had split up from her army recruit by the time the film aired, but for her efforts she won a romantic trip to Venice -- for two.

OgilvyOne did an earlier branded content effort for Lacta last year, called "Love at First Site." It told the story of an English girl meeting a young Greek man while on vacation on the island of Paros. "Love at First Site" was an interactive web experience, where users who made the correct choices online advanced the love story to a happy ending. The story was integrated with sales by including codes on Lacta wrappers, which gave tips on how to develop the story.

Mr. Sambrakos said that the agency is redesigning the Lacta website and will soon start work on another entertainment project with the brand. "By popular demand, we will continue the concept of making movies out of real love stories," he said. "For the next one, I would like to go back to interactive storytelling. It's a great way to engage an active audience."

Lacta is, according to Mr. Sambrakos, the best-selling chocolate bar in Greece. It was originally a Greek product launched in the 1970s, and was bought by Kraft in the '80s. Ogilvy has been working on the brand for about four years, and created its long-running endline, which translates as "Lacta is the sweetest piece of your life."

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