

CHOICE HOTELS // DRIVE! CAMPAIGN

Branding // Web Design & Development // Promotional Items

Choice Hotels is one of the largest and most successful lodging companies in the world. Their annual Drive! campaign rallies associates around the company's annual business goals by helping them understand how their roles affect Choice's overall success. The campaign's target audiences include all associates in Rockville, Maryland, and Phoenix, Arizona, as well as field staff throughout the country.

CHALLENGE

The Drive! campaign uses a variety of tools and activities to engage associates throughout the year. By April, momentum had slowed significantly, and Choice tasked Novak Birch with reinvigorating the campaign to increase participation, improve productivity, and meet business goals. For brand continuity, Choice required that the campaign retain the Drive! name and car theme; they also sought to recognize Choice Hotels' 75th anniversary.

SOLUTION

Novak Birch revamped the Drive! campaign to generate excitement and engage associates throughout the year. Components included:

- **Brand refresh:** Updated the logo and graphics with a modern, inspiring logo and compelling car-related graphics that convey progress, e.g., a car dashboard with the speedometer needle moving forward.
- **Anniversary recognition:** Incorporated engaging messaging that recognized Choice's 75 years in business, e.g., "Drive! 75" and "Elevate Drive, Celebrate 75."
- Associate-centric, empowering messages such as "You are in the driver's seat" communicated that Choice's success relies on all associates and departments working together.
- Kick-off events in Arizona and Maryland, including pop-up displays, window clings, floor graphics, table tents, and PowerPoint templates.
- Associate gift bags, including a welcome note, mouse pad, travel mug, and brochure explaining the factors used to measure success/failure.
- Email campaigns: Pre-event emails generated excitement, emails throughout the year communicated progress and maintained interest, and post-event emails provided results.
- **Voice of Choice:** Monthly dashboard updates on the employee website.
- **Summer Road Trip Trivia:** The trivia game kept associates engaged throughout the summer, when the campaign had lost momentum in years past. Trivia included questions about Drive! goals, Choice's history (as a nod to the 75th anniversary), and road trip-related movie trivia. The associate with the most correct answers each week received a prize, such as a gas card. We branded the game to align with the Drive! look-and-feel while infusing it with a fresh, summery vibe. The game was hosted on the employee website, Voice of Choice. Quiz functionality included the ability to:
 - > Send weekly notifications of new quizzes.
 - > Open the quiz at a specific date and time and close it on a specific date.
 - > Automatically post the answers as well as a graphic (e.g., pie chart) showing the percentage of people who selected each answer.
 - > Post the winner announcement.

RESULTS

- **Surpassed goals:** Surpassed Choice goals ahead of schedule by increasing room occupancy, profitability, and consumer awareness within the first six months of the fiscal year.
- **Active participation:** Associates participated in the campaign throughout the year, generating 100-300 responses to each weekly quiz and earning the incentive—an extra paid day off.
- **Increased engagement and profit:** The campaign engaged associates, which in turn engaged investors, and franchisees and increased profit margins.
- **Continued with subsequent campaign:** Choice enlisted Novak Birch's support on the Summer Road Trip Trivia Game the following year.