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TRUE
FOOD
KITCHEN

The Challenge

True Food Kitchen (TFK), a fast-growing healthy eatery brand, had expanded to 43 locations across the U.S. and secured a \$100 million private-equity investment from Centerbridge Partners. The brand's next challenge: demonstrate immediate sales growth and long-term brand momentum to satisfy investor expectations—despite five consecutive years of performance decline.

TFK needed a marketing partner who could drive both online orders and in-store traffic, while proving strategic direction, data decision-making, and creative adaptability from day one.



Our Approach

We first started working with True Food Kitchen in the summer of 2023. We developed a dual-campaign strategy rooted in performance media, localized audience intelligence, and full-funnel coordination:



1. Plus-Up Summer Campaign (Austin + Los Angeles)

Focused on driving high-volume results in two key markets—Austin and West LA—this campaign tested aggressive channel mix strategies designed to maximize foot traffic and build brand energy during peak seasonal windows.

Key Tactics:



- **Google Search + Performance Max Ads**
Deployed high-intent targeting across branded and non-branded search queries, layered with geo-targeting and mobile intent triggers (Google Maps, 5-mile radius targeting). Leveraged weather- and seasonality-based offers (e.g., brunch, patio dining).
- **YouTube Select & YouTube TV**
Used premium video placements to increase top-of-funnel visibility—targeting lifestyle, wellness, and food content categories with localized messaging.
- **TikTok & Meta (Facebook/Instagram) Video Ads**
Engaged daily mobile users through short-form video content and seasonal menu promotions. Emphasized community vibes, influencer integration, and visual storytelling to drive awareness and preference.
- **iHeartRadio Host-Read Sponsorships**
Activated contextual audio ads with human connection—pairing TFK’s fresh food message with trusted local voices in each market.
- **Digital Out-of-Home (DOOH)**
Where available, DOOH placements within walking distance of store locations featured QR code-enabled creative to capture impulse traffic and direct users to menu/order pages.

2. Always-On Nationwide Campaign

While Plus-Up focused on hyper-local lift, our Always-On campaign created national continuity—building TFK’s presence, familiarity, and conversion volume across the rest of the U.S.

Key Tactics:

- **National Google SEM Campaigns**

Automated and manually optimized search campaigns across core markets focused on value propositions like “healthy dining,” “patio brunch,” and “online delivery.”

- **Meta Video Retargeting**

Re-engaged site visitors, email subscribers, and past video viewers with social-first creative that encouraged return visits and order conversion.

- **YouTube & Display**

Delivered high-reach, cost-efficient video across U.S. markets with consistent brand storytelling and evergreen messaging around nutrition, taste, and transparency.

- **Audience Lookalikes & CRM Segmentation**

Leveraged TFK’s HubSpot database, website visitors, and campaign responders to seed national audience models for scale and efficiency.



Optimization & Flexibility in Action

As campaigns launched, we encountered unforeseen disruptions—such as Hurricane Hilary. Because of our nimble campaign infrastructure, we immediately adjusted budget allocations, creative rotations, and platform strategies in real time.

From there, we deepened bottom-funnel efforts:

By Q4, we executed a pivot to national targeting only, finding higher ROI and operational efficiency in consolidating efforts around our best-performing audience segments. Bottom-funnel media was focused solely on growth in online orders, while upper-funnel media divided our approach between national brand support and plus-up store support. From our strategy pivot point in early November through the year’s end in 2024, we increased in-store visits by a remarkable 255.8%behavior shifts and regional cues

- Refined Offer-Based Segmentation (e.g., January = Delivery, Spring = Patio/Brunch)
- Performance Max Activation to drive mobile maps engagement and walk-in traffic
- Creative Refresh Cadence to respond to consumer behavior shifts and regional cues



Now through 3/31
**BUY ONE ENTRÉE
GET ONE FREE**

Online or in restaurant. Redeemable weekly.*

Use Code: **DM8BGL**

ORDER NOW

*Not valid on third party delivery. One offer per table, cannot be combined with other offers. Must use code DM8BGL to receive offer. Entrée of equal or lesser value is complimentary. Not valid on Starters or Brunch Tower. Offer can be used multiple times. Expires 3/31/24.



Now through 3/31
**FREE STARTER
WITH \$40 PURCHASE**

Online or in restaurant. Redeemable weekly.*

Use Code: **37PC2Y**

ORDER NOW

*Not valid on third party delivery. One offer per table, cannot be combined with other offers. Must use code 37PC2Y to receive offer. Purchase must be \$40 minimum after discount is applied. Offer can be used multiple times. Expires 3/31/24.

Results

In just six months, Leap reversed a five-year decline and helped TFK prove its business case to investors:

- 255.8% increase in store visits
- Maintain a 3.67 ROAS to 3.78 ROAS showcasing strong audience/message/channel alignment.
- National media model adopted for Q4 and through 2025
- Surge in mobile-to-map conversions and online ordering
- Always-On approach continues to support long-term visibility and engagement

Performance vs. Industry Benchmarks

Metric	TFK Results	Industry Benchmark	Performance Verdict
ROAS	3.67-3.78	2.5-3.0	Above Average
In-Store Visit Lift	+255.8%	50-100	Exceptional
Mobile-to-Map Engagement	Activated via PMax	Rarely used in QSR	Innovative Execution
Targeting Strategy	CRM Lookalikes & Real-Time Pivot	Basic audience lists	Best-in-Class Agility
Channel Mix	Full-funnel, Multi-platform	Meta/Google only (typical)	Advanced Omnichannel



Why It Worked

We met the urgency of private equity expectations with performance discipline—and exceeded them by integrating brand-forward creative, audience-centric targeting, and operational agility.

With an adaptive media strategy rooted in real-time optimization, Leap didn't just deliver results. We helped True Food Kitchen deliver a marketing strategy as wholesome, scalable, and sustainable as the food it's known for.

- **Surge in mobile-to-map conversions and online ordering**
- **Always-On approach continues to support long-term visibility and engagement**

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