

Burger King Brings Back 'Subservient Chicken'

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NEW YORK (AP) — [Burger King](#) [1] is bringing back one of its strangest advertising creations if you don't count its creepy King — the Subservient Chicken.

The campaign, which was considered groundbreaking when it ran in 2004, featured a website where a giant chicken dressed in garters appeared to perform any task visitors commanded. A costumed actor had been pre-recorded performing hundreds of acts so it would seem as though the chicken was obeying people's orders.

It was an unexpected take on chain's "Have It Your Way" slogan, all just to promote a new chicken sandwich. The site got 100 million hits in the two weeks after its launch, according to Burger King.

A decade later, the Miami-based chain is trotting out the Subservient Chicken once again to promote yet another chicken sandwich — a triple-decker called the Chicken Big King that resembles a Big Mac, except with chicken patties.

Burger King says it will post a short video detailing the "rise and fall" of Subservient Chicken on www.subservientchicken.com [2] at 9 a.m. EDT (1300 GMT) Wednesday.

Like a host of other companies, Burger King Worldwide Inc. is hoping to create a viral marketing hit to connect with younger consumers. The strategies have varied widely and it's not always clear whether they ultimately help boost sales.

KFC, for instance, recently captured widespread attention online when it issued a video of a boy giving his prom date a corsage made with a chicken drumstick. Whether its popularity can help turn around a yearslong sales slump is yet to be seen. In the first quarter of this year, sales at established locations fell 3 percent, after falling 5 percent for last year.

Burger King, like other traditional fast-food chains, is struggling to boost sales as well. As for attention on social media, the chain's most memorable recent moment in the spotlight may have been when its Twitter account was hacked. The hacker changed its profile picture to the McDonald's logo and tweeted messages containing obscenities, references to drug use and racial epithets.

Burger King had to ask Twitter to temporarily suspend the account.

As for the Subservient Chicken website, it is already live and shows what appears to be a shot of the empty room where the character originally performed its tasks 10 years ago, including dancing, moonwalking and doing pushups. A pop-up alert for a "Missing Chicken Error" prompts people to click a "Help Us" button, which then asks people to share the link on social media.

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Eric Hirschhorn, chief marketing officer for Burger King North America, declined to provide details about the video that will be posted Wednesday, but said the idea is that the chicken is "turning the tables" on people. It will include an appearance by Dustin Diamond, the actor best known for playing Screech on the teen sitcom "Saved By the Bell."

"I don't want to spoil it, but he's an incredible addition to the film," Hirschhorn said.

Burger King has since cut ties with the creators of the Subservient Chicken campaign, Crispin Porter + Bogusky and The Barbarian Group and says they were not involved in making the new video, which was directed by Bryan Buckley, who has created many Super Bowl ads.

To tease the video, Burger King planned to run ads in several major newspapers Sunday, including the Atlanta Journal Constitution, Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times and The New York Times.

The campaign will not include TV ads.

As for whether Burger King planned to bring back the King character, another one of its famous advertising creations, Hirschhorn declined to say.

"I can't confirm or deny at this point," he said.

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Links:

[1] <https://twitter.com/BurgerKing>

[2] <http://www.subservientchicken.com/>