

McDonald's french success story



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With a presence in 124 countries, 31, 000 restaurants and more than 1. 5 million employees across the world, McDonald's establishment has been successful in several parts of the world, and especially in France, its second world market (according with McDonald's website). That sounds impressive because McDonald's symbolizes " Americanization" and junk food whereas France is famous for its high-quality food and its cultural exception. Actually French culture and McDonald's look entirely opposite (in bulldozed restaurant in Millau in 1999 by Jose Bove).

So how McDonald's has managed to be so successful in a country appearing not welcoming ? To build this report, we used several documents, from specialized press articles to a University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business paper. To have a complete analyse of McDonalds keys success, we also overlooked all departments from human resources management to marketing and logistics. All our sources are mentioned at the end of the report in APA style. Along our different researches we had some complementary information on McDonald's strategy and adaptability on French market.

Thanks to sociological articles and essays we have a better understanding of French perception over American fast foods and especially McDonald's. In this article Rick Fantasia resume the initial misunderstanding between Fast food and French culture " Fast food, with its suggestion of speed, standardization, and the homogenization of taste, would seem to represent the direct inverse of French gastronomic practices, and thus the combination of the two has been the subject of considerable speculation from a variety of perspectives".

Indeed French people love to take a long time to eat and share a moment of conviviality, we don't sit at a table only for the food even if we are demanding with it. McDonald's learn this aspect and adapt it strategy, their restaurants and the overall experience. The French sociologist Michel Crozier report that " for many French people there is an association that good food is French and fast food is American and foreign and bad". Despite this suppose lack of gratitude, the author remind us that the number of Fast food establishments expanded quite dramatically during the decade of the 1980s.

The number of fast-food establishments grew from 109 at the beginning of the decade, to 560 in 1982, to 1629 in 1988, to 2036 in 1991. The most relevant and cliché example of McDonald's adaptability to French market is the " McBaguette". The promotion is in line with the U. S. company's successful global strategy of updating its restaurants to appeal to a broader clientele, while offering a more varied menu, up and down the price scale. In France that involves tapping into a national obsession: bread. Marion Issard from the Wall Street Journal said that " French research center Credoc found that 98% of French people eat bread every day".

In particular, they are major fans of the baguette. " A recent study for the Sandwich and Snack trade fair in Paris showed that 65% of the two billion sandwiches sold each year in France are baguette-based" (Marion Issard). All those findings help us to get McDonald's evolution and success through sociology, marketing strategy and products. These findings show us how strong is the McDonalds' strategy in France and hard to criticize. It has implemented a new way to successfully enter into a new market. It has managed to turn its global strategy into a locally adapted strategy.

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Which is amazing is that now McDonald's acts as a French company (the sourcing, the logo, the restaurant, the meals and even the company strategy are French) but still with an American brand image. It has shaped the forms to please to French consumers and has kept the crux of its business (it's still a fast food and the Big Mac is still the bestseller). Moreover as a consequence of this strategy, McDonald's is able to target a large part of the French society even the elderly generations. Now McDonald's is assimilated as a part of the French culture and do not afraid as it was the case during the 90's).

McDonald's frequentation has never been so high and its revenue grows each year. In a nutshell the keys to success to break through a tricky market has been adaption, assimilation and diversification. KFC France which is currently trying to gain market share in the fast-food market should be inspired by this strategy. Actually KFC's issue is that they are still too American for French market and target a too narrow part of the French population. According to a Capital business article " KFC veut grandir hors du ghetto", people who are going to KFC are mainly ethnical people but their marketing strategy tend to be more diversified.

For instance, they launched Hallal chicken in their sandwiches to try to target a new part of the people. Now their challenge is to get " outside the ghetto" to become more mainstream. Based on our research, it would be recommended to KFC to keep going in this way of diversification. But they should also adapt their products and their image to the French market. For instance, it is a good idea to launch light meals (as it is explained in the Capital article) but it is still not enough.

KFC is currently too assimilated to America and junk food especially because of the French people perception of fried chicken. KFC should work on this image and try to promote more friendly chickens who could be raised in local farms. They should also try to diversify their meals by adding specific sandwiches or salads for people who do not like chicken food to allow them to accompany their family or friends who love KFC. To conclude with, KFC should be inspired by McDonald's success story in France and keep its identity to provide an alternative in the fast-food market which is leading by Ronald's company.