

# Yoplait Cups Ready for the 'Runway'

General Mills' yogurt brand launches Target-exclusive designs to attract both new and old consumers

By Joe Bush

MINNEAPOLIS — In a bid to recover the Yoplait brand's category share lost to the rise of Greek yogurt, **General Mills** dressed up Yoplait's iconic tapered cup in designer fashions. During an exclusive run at **Target** stores in January and February, the Yoplait Signature Collection included its most popular flavors paired with unique designs from Christopher Straub, an alum of the sixth season of Lifetime Channel's "Project Runway" cable series.

The campaign included online and social media tactics, and the collection was showcased at a February event in New York City during Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week. Attendees enjoyed samples and browsed the cup designs along with the dresses and sketches that inspired them. Straub also revealed the two custom gowns he created using Yoplait cups and lids. **Cone Communications**, Boston, spearheaded public relations for the campaign as well as the event.

The Yoplait Signature Collection included six flavors – strawberry, harvest peach and orange creme from the Yoplait Original product line and blueberry patch, key lime pie and strawberries 'n bananas from the Yoplait Light line. Those flavors made sense for their popularity, color difference and strength of distribution, says Yoplait shopper marketing manager Andrew Lainsbury.

The personal choices inherent in fashion drove a campaign that was a natural for social media engagement and interaction with consumers, Lainsbury says. The main digital components were a splash page at [Yoplait.com/Target](http://Yoplait.com/Target), and invitations to share selfies with favorite cups on Instagram and Twitter using a **#YoplaitStyle** hashtag. Straub monitored the hashtag selfies and sent customized sketches to those users whose photos inspired him.

"We've really seen an explosion of social media engagement, and it's interesting to see how people are responding and interacting with the campaign," says Lainsbury. "This campaign is very much about helping invite Target guest interaction in kind of a unique way. We believe that the storytelling behind the campaign is helping to elevate it beyond just the transactional."

Out-of-store elements included YouTube videos of Straub explaining the ideas behind the designs, as well as banner ads and placement in Target circulars, on [Target.com](http://Target.com), on the retailer's Cartwheel mobile savings app and on Straub's personal website. In-store activation included refrigerated endcap displays, header cards and shelf strips.

General Mills chose Target as its retail partner because of its record with visual effects. "We knew that Target has a successful history of celebrating breakthrough design in lots of other categories," says Lainsbury. "We believed this campaign would be a great opportunity to really help bring new awareness and energy to the yogurt aisles. By making it exclusive to U.S. Target stores, we thought it could be positioned as something that would also drive guest traffic and loyalty."

Lainsbury says General Mills focused on as wide of a consumer base as possible, thinking more in terms of culture, the human attraction to creativity and the individuality of fashion choices. "We tried to come up with something that would really relate to anyone who appreciates the power of bold design; anyone who likes to celebrate

their style, which is one of our campaign messages, and also anyone who might enjoy delicious snacks that make a statement," he says. "We made it very broad-based in intent because we knew there were lots of new users as well as lots of lapsed users, and we wanted a campaign that could really bring things together."

Insights began the process, says Lainsbury, and once General Mills chose Target, more of the campaign and collaboration with Straub fell into place. "As soon as this idea started to come to life as a Target-specific campaign, we really used as our starting point Target's brand promise, 'Expect More, Pay Less,'" he says. "We know that in a routine category like yogurt, bringing together a designer partnership and trendy packaging to the shelf is important, but we also know that being able to maintain an affordable price point would help to deliver on the promise. We wanted to make sure we were grounded there."

Lainsbury says the campaign goals other than sales lift were to revitalize the regular yogurt segment after a period of it taking a backseat to Greek yogurt, and to bring back lapsed users to old favorites. "We wanted to reduce



General Mills launched the Yoplait Signature Collection exclusively at Target in early 2015, while showcasing designer Christopher Straub's creations during Fashion Week in New York.



the barriers to trial of regular yogurt by providing the Target guests something extra special," he says. "In this case, we thought the designer packaging would help fit the bill."

General Mills will judge the campaign on lift during the promotion, impact at Target, earned media impressions, website visits and average time spent on the splash page to test engagement levels. "One of the things we're definitely looking at in this first iteration is to understand how did it perform, do we feel good about it, and its performance at Target," Lainsbury says. "We'd love to be able to continue it if it's something that hits our success metrics."

Digital help for the splash page came from General Mills' in-house content design studio, **Studio G**, for design, and **WPP**, New York, for development. Banner ad partners included Studio G for design, and **Zenith**, New York, for media. **UltraCreative**, Minneapolis, helped with creative. **SM**

## BRAND: Yoplait

**KEY INSIGHTS:** With the rise of Greek yogurt, the Yoplait brand lost category share. There are a lot of "lapsed users" of the brand's products. Target has a successful history of celebrating breakthrough design in various categories.

**ACTIVATION:** General Mills partnered with Target for an account-specific campaign launching a "Signature Collection" of Yoplait's most popular flavors with specially designed packaging by Christopher Straub of cable series "Project Runway." In-store activation included refrigerated endcap displays, header cards and shelf strips, while extensive social media engagement drove the out-of-store portion of the campaign.