

CASE 8

Buzz Marketing: Kayem Foods, Inc., Al Fresco Chicken Sausage

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In November 2004, Matt Monkiewicz, Director of Marketing for Kayem Foods, Inc., had to decide whether to implement another “buzz” marketing campaign in 2005 for a small but fast-growing product, Al Fresco chicken sausage. In a very short time, Al Fresco had become the number-one brand in its niche market. However, it was not clear whether this was due to the buzz campaign or to other marketing activities implemented by the firm. Although the sales increases had been impressive, it was not clear how much more growth Kayem could expect from this rather unusual marketing tactic.

Monkiewicz explained:

We seem to have a real winner with this Al Fresco product, albeit in a very small product market segment with limited penetration. The challenge is how to sustain the growth and increase market share and to do so with a very limited marketing budget.

Monkiewicz had observed that the retail trade, whose support was so important for all of the company’s brands, had been unimpressed with the buzz campaign. The sales force reported that supermarket executives and food distributors had been unwilling to increase buying and support for the brand based only on the campaign.

For 2005, the alternative was to use the limited marketing budget for more traditional marketing support activities, such as limited magazine advertising, consumer coupons, or more point-of-purchase material. In addition, Monkiewicz was considering an advertising campaign in supermarket trade magazines aimed at retail food buyers and merchandising executives. He thought that many of these decision makers were unaware of the sales and profit potential Al Fresco offered.

Monkiewicz commented:

I have two weeks to make a decision on where to spend the marketing dollars. I realize that this is a small niche market and that others have differing opinions on the sales results. I really think, however, that buzz marketing could have a lasting effect on sales—especially if we do it again.

Kayem Foods

Kayem Foods, Inc., was a medium-sized, privately held, and family-controlled meat processing company located in Chelsea, Massachusetts. For almost 100 years, the firm had experienced success as a processor and distributor of fresh delicatessen meats, hot dogs, and sausage. Historically, the firm’s trading area had been primarily New England and parts of the Mid-Atlantic area. In its fiscal year ending February 28, 2004, annual sales had been approximately \$140 million. Of that amount, approximately 60 percent was from meat products sold under several brand names, and the remainder was from private label supermarket products made for other manufacturers and merchandise that Kayem sold acting as a distributor.

While Kayem’s top-selling product was hot dogs, it also sold a variety of other meat products that included bologna, salami, sausage, kielbasa, and hams. Its products were sold under several different brand names, with Kayem being the most well-known. Table A shows the company’s principal brands and their relative percentage of the firm’s volume.

Some of the company’s brands competed on price, such as MeisterChef. Other brands were holdovers from firms that Kayem had acquired and retained due to regional loyalty. For instance, McKenzie products had a strong following in Vermont and upstate New York.

Distribution

The company sold its products primarily through supermarkets and other retail food stores, mostly in the Northeast. In the last two years, it had made a concerted effort to obtain distribution in the Midwest and Southeast. It had also obtained some supermarket distribution in California and Florida.

Kayem sold most of its volume directly to the major food chains and food wholesalers. Its trucks made weekly and sometimes more frequent deliveries to its major New England customers. In addition to food retail outlets, Kayem sold approximately \$15 million annually to the food service industry (e.g., universities, hospitals, corporate dining services, and restaurants).

Brand	Percent of Total Sales	Products
Kayem	15.7	Hot dogs, bologna, bratwurst, salami, ham, turkey, roast beef
Genoa	6.9	Fresh pork sausage, salami
McKenzie	2.9	Bacon, ham, roast beef
MeisterChef	6.8	Hot dogs
Schonland	2.2	Hot dogs, link sausage
Triple M	6.0	Whole hams, roast beef
Al Fresco	1.3	Gourmet chicken sausage
Copack	19.3	Products made for other branded processors
Private Label	26.6	Products made for supermarket private label
Resale	12.3	Products of other manufacturers, distributed by Kayem

Table A Kayem Sales, by Brand, Fiscal Year Ending February 28, 2004

Source: Company Documents.

Since the company's founding, the marketing strategy had been to focus its product offerings on high-quality hot dogs and fresh delicatessen meats. Therefore, over 80 percent of the firm's volume through supermarkets was at the delicatessen counter.

In recent years, Kayem had achieved some success with hot dogs and sausage packaged and sold in supermarket refrigerator sections. For instance, although deli counters sold most of the volume in Kayem hot dogs (the company's highest volume product), in many supermarkets the customer could find an 8-pack or 24-pack of Kayem hot dogs in the refrigerator section along with other branded hot dog packages.

The firm's emphasis on the deli counter was consistent with its competitive positioning of freshness and high quality. Thus, many supermarkets had found its products, especially the Kayem brand, to be a staple of their delicatessens' offerings.

The Sausage Market

Consumers had used sausage as a staple at all three meals for many years, often serving it as the main entrée or as a complement to other centerplate dishes.

The sausage category had recently experienced only modest growth. In 2003, the sale of sausage served at breakfast had grown approximately 2 percent, and sausage for dinner grew approximately 4 percent. In 2003, retail sales of all sausage totaled \$2.4 billion. Approximately 60 percent of this volume was dinner sausage, 33 percent was breakfast sausage, and the remainder was frozen sausage, for use with either meal.

The fastest growing product segment had been specialty sausage. This subcategory represented about 20 percent of the dollar volume. It included chicken sausage, turkey

sausage, pork sausage with various flavorings such as jalapeño or apple, cheese sausage, and kielbasa. Consumers seemed to like these differentiated products because of their desire for variety in the menu, and in some cases to serve sausage products that were lower in fat content. These specialty products had experienced 10 percent growth in 2004. Another fast-growing product area was lowfat/lean sausage, which comprised approximately 19 percent (in dollars) of all sausage sold.

On a national level, three large brands dominated the sausage market: Hillshire Farms (dollar share of national market—18.3 percent), Johnsonville (13 percent), and Ball Park (13.2 percent). However, in New England, Hillshire (46 percent share of market), and Perri (20 percent share of market), were the dominant players. In this market, Kayem (with its several brands) was number three in share with 7 percent. Al Fresco alone had a 5.3 percent share in New England.

Families at all income levels consumed sausage. In 2004, 59 percent of all households bought sausage at least once. Of those who purchased sausage, the average expenditure was \$16.95 annually per family. Per capita consumption was considerably lower among senior citizens. Residents in the South ate the most sausage, followed by those living in the Northeast. Sausage sales varied seasonally with approximately one third of all dinner sausage sold during the three summer months. Breakfast sausage sales peaked during the holiday season, November–January.

Traditional retail food outlets accounted for most sausage sales. The major firms had professional salespeople who called on supermarkets and food wholesalers in order to sell the sausage as well as their other meat products.

Consumer advertising for sausage was limited. Hillshire Farms spent approximately \$29 million per year on advertising for all of its products, which included sausage, bacon and luncheon meats. Most of this spending was on television advertising. Johnsonville spent about \$13 million on advertising for all of its broad product line. Of this, \$8 million was for

television and \$3.5 million for radio. Emeril, a small producer of specialty sausages, including chicken sausage, spent about \$1 million per year, mostly in magazines. In the previous year, Aidell, a West Coast producer of chicken sausage, had run a magazine campaign, spending approximately \$200,000.

Kayem's primary sausage brand was Genoa. Limited sample taste tests indicated that consumers considered the product to be the equivalent in both taste and quality to the market leaders, although it did not have any distinguishing characteristic. It had become a commodity product. Retailers used it as a control brand, pricing it aggressively below their own brands. As a result, they often sold the brand at a substantial discount or with substantial promotional allowances. Genoa had low brand awareness and was operating at breakeven financially.

Because the chicken sausage category was small, it was difficult to obtain many specifics about competition. Aidell, made by a small West Coast meat processor, was one of the leading national brands, with about 30 percent share. It had particularly strong distribution in food specialty stores such as Whole Foods. Sara Lee sold its Emeril brand as part of its overall sausage marketing program. Gerhard was a small specialty company in California. Analysts estimated that about one half of the chicken sausage dollar volume was private label.

Profit Concerns

In recent years, Kayem's profit margins had been eroding. Gross margin for the company had been declining for several years due to supermarkets gaining "power" through consolidation and demands for greater discounts and promotional allowances from suppliers. Declining gross margin was particularly acute for small and medium-sized purveyors due to their relatively weak bargaining positions.

Manufacturers with particularly strong consumer brand franchises were in a position to resist the pressure for price concessions. However, while Kayem Foods had a local following for some of its brands, such as Kayem hot dogs, its mix of business between high-margin and low-margin brands was not strong enough to produce the profits that the firm wanted. Price competition from other manufacturers along with the pressure from supermarkets kept profits below expectations.

In addition, in recent years Kayem had developed a significant volume in both private label and copack business (see Table A). These activities were not producing the profits that the firm wanted. The private label activity had been at a financial breakeven for the last two years. Copack was below breakeven and only slightly above variable costs.

Al Fresco

One response to this profit dilemma was to develop distinctive branded products. If the firm could have a

well-recognized "demand brand," it could potentially obtain higher prices and better margins and open doors in new markets. Therefore, the company had decided to develop a gourmet product line that, if successful, would be able to command higher margins.

To make a significant entry into the gourmet food category, Kayem introduced the Al Fresco brand in 1999. The product line consisted of fresh pizza (since discontinued) and gourmet chicken sausage. The strategy was to produce differentiated, high-quality goods for the refrigerator section of supermarkets. Kayem positioned the Al Fresco fully-cooked chicken sausage as a convenient, all-natural, low-carbohydrate, lowfat main meal entrée. Promotion emphasized product freshness and natural ingredients. A main selling point was that Al Fresco chicken sausage had 75 percent less fat than traditional pork sausage. The product was available in seven flavors: roasted garlic, teriyaki ginger, sun dried tomato and basil, spicy jalapeno, garden primavera, sweet apple, and sweet Italian.

With its high quality, healthy attributes, freshness, and distinctive flavors, Kayem management thought that the product could command a premium price. It priced the products at \$3.58 per pound (at factory) with a \$1.60 per pound contribution margin. The typical package size was 0.75 pounds, with four sausages. This resulted in a higher retail price than similar products. Table B shows typical prices at retail.

The chicken sausage segment was small by most measures. Total category sales were about \$75 million per year; however, it was growing at about 12 percent a year. The target market for Al Fresco chicken sausage was the 25- to 54-year-old woman who was health conscious. This attitude translated into a preference for all natural foods and a concerted effort to reduce fat consumption. In addition, she liked gourmet foods and tended to be very interested in foods and food preparation.

For the past several years, the marketing campaign for Al Fresco had consisted of small ad placements in trade magazines and publicity efforts that included cable TV food shows. The marketing communications budget for 2004 was

	Cost	Package Size
Al Fresco, chicken sausage	\$4.49	12 ounces
Johnsonville, pork sausage	3.89	one pound
Perri, hot Italian pork sausage	3.99	one pound
Shaw's, turkey sausage	4.49	one pound
Shaw's, pork sausage	2.49	one pound
Aidell, chicken and turkey sausage	5.99	12 ounces

Table B Typical Retail Prices

Source: One-time survey in Boston area supermarket by case writer, February 2004.

\$90,000. The sales force had enthusiastically presented Al Fresco to supermarket buyers and wholesalers by offering a onetime, buy-in allowance of 10 percent off the regular price for the period November 1, 2003, to January 31, 2004. These efforts had met with only limited success. A similar promotion was offered from June 1, 2004, to August 31, 2004, to offer Al Fresco at 10 percent off to the supermarket if the managers agreed to carry at least three of the flavors. This latter period coincided with the buzz campaign discussed below.

Buzz Marketing

Soon after the company launched Al Fresco, it became apparent to Monkiewicz that the marketing budget was inadequate to make a substantial impact using traditional media. Accordingly, he sought a means to promote the brand on a small budget but still have an impact on his target market. As he explored various alternatives, he learned about a relatively new marketing firm called BzzAgent. This firm had developed a technique to create word-of-mouth advertising ("buzz") for unique products or brands.

BzzAgent had 60,000 BzzAgents. These agents volunteered to try a new product and then talk with friends and acquaintances about the product and their experience with it. The conversations relied on the agent's own creativity and his/her enthusiasm for the product. They were not paid, but rather earned points towards a variety of premiums, although only a small fraction (fewer than 10 percent of agents ever claimed their premiums). The motivation for the BzzAgents' activities seemed to be that these people enjoyed being innovators and liked to talk about new and interesting products. BzzAgent found that many of its agents made their "buzzing" part of their social networking.

BzzAgent would only work with companies or products that were compelling, interesting or different. The company had learned that its system worked only when its BzzAgents had strong beliefs about the product or brand. The firm turned down 80 percent of the requests from companies to have their products or brands "buzzed." BzzAgent had implemented successful campaigns for many firms including Anheuser-Busch, Lee Jeans, Penguin Publishing, and Ralph Lauren.

There were two underlying premises to buzz marketing. Marketing managers generally agreed that promotional messages or product endorsements were much more credible when delivered in person by a friend or acquaintance with no business interest in the product. This was consistent with the reported decline in the credibility of mass media advertising.

Second, people liked to talk about new products or services they had "discovered." Marketing studies showed that if people were pleased with a product, they enjoyed relaying that information to friends and relatives and would often do so with enthusiasm.

Monkiewicz decided to use a buzz campaign as part of Al Fresco's 2004 marketing efforts. The campaign cost \$47,000 in addition to the cost of the coupons. The entire marketing communications budget for Al Fresco was \$90,000. He worked with BzzAgent to create a 12-week campaign the company would implement from June 23 to September 15, 2004. The firm would employ 2,000 of its agents in New England, New York, New Jersey, and selected cities in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina. Each agent would have three coupons for a free package of Al Fresco Chicken Sausage for themselves, as well as ten coupons worth \$1 off on the purchase of two packages that they would give to buzz targets. In addition, BzzAgents had a brochure with a list of suggested activities, including serving Al Fresco to guests, taking it to a party/cookout, using it as an added ingredient in their favorite entrée recipe, and taking it to work.

The BzzAgents were to try the product themselves and then relate their experience to friends and acquaintances. The goal was to have every agent talk with 10 people. After the campaign was over, BzzAgent provided Monkiewicz with a detailed summary of activities and results. Although he was quite pleased with the overall outcome, he was unsure how to evaluate the results.

Summary of Results of the Buzz Campaign

BzzAgent recruited 2,000 agents in the selected areas. Of these, 77 percent were female, and the average age was 35. While 32 percent of the agents ate sausage at least once a week, 57 percent had never eaten chicken sausage prior to the campaign, and 91 percent had never heard of Al Fresco chicken sausage. However, 43 percent had heard of Emeril's chicken sausage.

Of the agents recruited, 758 sent reports regarding their activities. There were 1,647 BzzReports completed and there was a total of 8,470 buzz hits. In other words, each report averaged 5.1 reported hits. A buzz hit was a conversation or activity about Al Fresco sausage. A follow-up survey revealed that reporting BzzAgents had an additional 3.5 buzz hits that they did not record. The fact that BzzAgents were not compensated on a per-hit basis may explain the lack of reporting. Most of the conversations took place in the home (Table C).

Agents held conversations with a wide variety of people. Forty-nine percent of people buzzed were friends or social acquaintances (Table D).

Of all the buzz activities reported, 16 percent were reported at a party or other social occasion. However, such occasions accounted for 32 percent of all buzz hits. Eighty seven percent of agents reported giving away at least one coupon. Of those reporting, the agents gave away an average of 6.8 coupons.

Place	Percent
Home	41
Social Location	16
Work	15
Grocery Store	10
Other	18

Table C Conversation Locations
Source: Company Documents.

Who	Percent
Friend	40
Relative	24
Stranger	11
Acquaintance	9
Other	16

Table D Subjects Reached
Source: Company Documents.

Seventy-two percent of the BzzAgents reported that they had had difficulty finding the product in the supermarket. This meant that they had to either ask the store manager for the product or go to a different store. Twenty-three percent were never able to find the product.

BzzAgents filed reports of their conversations. These seemed to be very enthusiastic in most cases, although there were complaints of difficulty finding the product in their favorite supermarket. Appendix A shows a sampling of the reports.

In summary, the BzzAgents reported that they personally liked the product. They enjoyed the variety of flavors as well as the ease of preparation. They also reported that they viewed Al Fresco as part of a healthy lifestyle. Of those reporting, 65 percent said they were likely to purchase Al Fresco again.

Sales Results

During the buzz campaign, Kayem sales people were engaged in efforts to obtain new distribution for the product. They were able to offer trade discounts to supermarkets taking on the product for the first time. In addition, Kayem ran a

	Percent of Shares	
	4/27/04	9/1/04
Al Fresco	41	42
Aidell	42	31
Emeril	10	19
Gerhard	7	8

Table E Market Shares for Branded Chicken Sausage
Source: Company Documents.
Note: that these measures are only four months apart.

few advertisements for Al Fresco in trade publications. These emphasized Al Fresco's leadership position and pointed out the profit potential.

Nationally, for the period November 1, 2002, to October 30, 2003, sales for Al Fresco were 0.80 million pounds. From November 1, 2003, to October 30, 2004, sales were 1.26 million pounds. It was not possible to isolate sales by the particular markets where BzzAgent had implemented its program. According to ACNielsen, Al Fresco had become the number one selling branded chicken sausage in the United States by late July 2004. Estimates of shares derived from store audits are shown in Table E.

Dollar sales for Al Fresco are shown in Table F.

Date	Sales in \$ (000)
September, 2003	\$197
October, 2003	205
November, 2003	196
December, 2003	187
January, 2004	297
February, 2004	257
March, 2004	262
April, 2004	366
May, 2004	323
June, 2004	368
July, 2004	500
August, 2004	399
September, 2004	453
October, 2004	575

Table F Sales by Month of Al Fresco Chicken Sausage (factory shipments)
Source: Company Documents.
Note: that Kayem's fiscal year ends February 28.

Additional Issues

Monkiewicz was quite pleased with the overall results of the buzz campaign. However, he was not certain how much of the sales increase in the brand had been due to this effort. Prior to the campaign, the brand had developed substantial momentum with a minimum of advertising support. In addition, the sales force had been making a special effort during the campaign period. They had offered special discounts and allowances to obtain new distribution. Thus, it was not possible to isolate the specific effect of the buzz campaign.

Decision

Because sales of Al Fresco had been increasing significantly, Monkiewicz had convinced Kayem's president that a substantial increase in the advertising budget was justified. Thus, the FY 2006 (March 1, 2005—February 28, 2006) budget would be \$185,000. Monkiewicz was considering running another buzz campaign in geographic areas not covered in the recent campaign. This would entail a fee of approximately \$60,000, plus another \$12,000 to \$15,000 to reimburse retailers for coupons that consumers redeemed.

Alternatively, he thought that a series of trade advertisements might be productive. These would target supermarket executives and buyers. Monkiewicz thought that there was now an Al Fresco story to tell. He thought he could make an impact on food retailing decision makers by telling them about the brand's sales and profit potential. It was now the number one chicken sausage brand, and he needed to tell that story. He believed it would cost approximately \$80,000 for this effort to have any impact.

As Al Fresco's sales had grown, the sales force began asking for more price-oriented promotions. Accordingly, Monkiewicz was thinking about distributing consumer price-off coupons. Kayem would probably have to spend about \$90,000 for this effort to be effective.

Several supermarket executives had said that advertising in specialty food magazines might help generate sustained demand for the brand and it was customary in the food business to advertise new products in such media. These ads announced the product to the consumer and built specific demand for the brand, often persuading supermarket executives that consumers would be looking for and expecting the brand to be on the shelf.

A full-page color advertisement in high-circulation food magazines such as *Better Homes and Gardens* (circulation approximately seven million) would cost about \$359,000 and was thus out of the question. A quarter-page ad in the same magazine would be approximately 30 percent of that figure. Although such advertising would achieve wide exposure for

Exhibit 1 Media Cost and Circulation for Magazines

	Circulation	Cost of a Single Insertion Full Page, Four-Color Ad
<i>Better Homes and Gardens</i>	7.6 million	\$359,000*
<i>Food and Wine</i>	0.9 million	\$66,275*
<i>Cooking Light</i>	1.7 million	\$96,400*

Source: Publishers' Web sites.

*The cost of a four-color, one-half page advertisement was approximately 60 percent of the full page and the cost of a four-color, one-quarter page advertisement was approximately 30 percent of the full page.

Al Fresco, the cost still seemed to be beyond what the brand could support. In order for the ads to be effective, Monkiewicz thought that the potential customer would have to be exposed to the Al Fresco message at least two or three times.

For a more focused campaign, Monkiewicz thought that perhaps food specialty magazines might be effective in reaching Al Fresco's potential customer. The readers of these magazines had the approximate demographic profile of the Al Fresco customer. The costs for two such magazines representative of that category are shown in Exhibit 1. In addition to creating multiple exposures, Monkiewicz thought that Al Fresco would have to be in two or three of these smaller circulation magazines in order to achieve effective reach.

In considering a follow-on buzz campaign, Kayem's sales executives raised some concerns about the reaction of supermarket buyers. The sales force reported that retail executives were unimpressed with the buzz campaign. They were skeptical about its ability to build sustainable brand demand. The Kayem sales executives said that they had not been able to use the buzz campaign alone to get additional placements or to expand shelf space with established customers. Supermarket merchandising managers believed that either national advertising or price-oriented consumer coupons would be more effective. They thought that Al Fresco needed more of the traditional mass media and sales promotion activities to create more demand at the consumer level. They cited the success that Johnsonville and Hillshire Farms had experienced with their several offerings in the pork sausage category. These supermarket executives commented that those brands' sales success was tied closely to their big customer advertising budgets, along with extensive coupon and other price promotion programs.

In the sausage category, it was common practice to advertise branded products in various women's service and food-oriented magazines. In addition, during peak holiday selling seasons, most of the leading sausage brands would offer a variety of sales promotions, such as coupons, free offers, and bonus packs. The attractiveness of such programs

was often influential in the supermarket buyers' decisions regarding shelf space and retail advertising locations.

Monkiewicz was very familiar with "traditional" marketing methods for food products and how much such activities cost. He thought that Al Fresco was approaching the point where it could utilize such programs; however, at this time, he was concerned that the budget was not going to be large enough to create sufficient impact. It seemed that buzz marketing had helped stimulate the dramatic growth in the brand but his own sales force, several of his major customers, and a few friends around the office continued to be skeptical.

Monkiewicz was also aware of some recent criticism in the public press about the ethics of BzzAgent-type marketing. In essence, companies employing buzz marketing were using peoples' friendship and acquaintance networks to promote their own interests. In most instances people being approached about Al Fresco were not aware that they were about to be "buzzed," and some people wondered if this activity was taking unfair advantage of personal relationships.

Monkiewicz concluded:

It is very clear to me that I have to make a difficult tradeoff. If I use the BzzAgents again, I will have to forgo some other seemingly useful marketing activity. If there had not been so much skepticism I would go with the buzz campaign again. However, there are good reasons to consider the other alternatives.

Appendix A: Excerpts From Verbatim Reports of BzzAgents

Flavor Comments

"Had some friends over for dinner this evening and the whole evening was a hit thanks to the Al Fresco jalapeño pizzas I served. I used my basic pizza recipe and replaced the veggie toppings with Al Fresco jalapeño sausage. I got many comments about this is the best pizza I ever had."

"Dinner last night was fabulous mostly because of the wonderful Al Fresco chicken sausage."

"I saw my friend Lena and her cousin yesterday. I had recently had apple flavored sausages that Al Fresco makes and I was raving to her about them. Lena is on a diet, so she said she could not eat it. I explained that it was low fat. I think that Lena will try some."

"I had my boyfriend over for a romantic dinner. I decided to cook up the rest of the sausage. My boyfriend was so excited about the sausage that he thought it was gourmet or homemade. I told him it was Al Fresco. I told him it was made out of chicken. He didn't believe me. I had to pull out the package and show him."

"I made dinner for my mom, aunt, and her family and they thought it was WOW. The children, ages four and seven, wanted more and more."

"Last night I tried the sausages for the first time. I bought the teriyaki/ginger ones. The sausages were a little bit spicier than I had expected but I enjoyed them quite a bit. They were not greasy at all. I made this dinner for myself and my husband. He also enjoyed it."

"I made a dish that consisted of the Al Fresco chicken sausage. I cooked the sausage and then added fried onions, mushrooms, and broccoli and served it over some rice. It made a great dinner for me and my family."

Ask the Manager

"I guess by now people know I really like Al Fresco Chicken Sausages. I talk about them a lot. I stopped by Sam's Club after work yesterday. Our Sam's Club always has free food samples all over the store. I went to customer service and asked for the manager. When the manager came to the service desk and I asked the manager why I never ever find Al Fresco Chicken Sausages being cooked and served at the demonstration tables. He had never heard of Al Fresco so I told him all about how excited I was about the product and about all of the flavors. The manager promised that he would look into Sam's Club bringing in Al Fresco."

"I saw on the BzzAgent Web site that Al Fresco was available at ACME markets. I was disappointed to learn that my local ACME did not carry the products. I approached the night manager (an older woman) and showed her the coupon with the recipe attached. I told her that I was looking for a new sausage that a friend had recommended. In typical night shift fashion she asked if I had looked back in the meats section—yes, I had. Well, if it is not back there, we probably don't carry it. I asked her to please go back with me to make sure I wasn't missing it. She walked back with me and I explained that I had seen a few types of sausage but that none were like Al fresco. She did pull out the Emeril sausage, but I told her I wanted Al Fresco. She expressed her apologies. I told her that I would most likely try the neighboring ShopRite. I had just wanted to try my hometown store first. She asked if she could take the part of the coupon with the picture. I thanked her and she said she would consider stocking it."

"I frequent Pathmark Supermarket about twice a month. During the whole campaign I constantly checked their meats to see if they would start carrying this product. I never thought to ask until you e-mailed me with the form. That was a light bulb for me. I did make use of it. The manager said he'd never heard of it before and was definitely going to look into it. I should see the product available within a few weeks."

"I had previously spoken to the manager of the local ShopRite market about this product. I complained that it wasn't always available."

“This morning on the way to work I stopped at Lowes Foods. I noticed the manager checking over his sausage inventory. I went up to him and told him about Al Fresco. I told him about all the flavors and that I was having to shop over at Harris Teeter to purchase them. He told me that he could say something but that the big purchasing decisions really came from higher ups at the corporate level.”

“I went to Shaw’s in Revere for my first grocery shopping in two weeks. I went to the meat case where the sausages were and looked for Al Fresco. Despite the site stating that Shaw’s was one of the stores carrying it they didn’t have it. The meat department assistant happened to be there so I struck up a conversation. First I let her know that I had initially found them at Stop & Shop but that Shaw’s was my usual store so I hated going so far to get them if I didn’t have to. She said she hadn’t heard about them. I let her know that they were terrific and they are a Massachusetts company. I happened to see some other Kayem products right there and pointed them out to her saying they must be able to get these Al Frescos then. I added that I really hated having to trek all the way out to Stop & Shop.”

Bring It to a Party

“Arrived at Pam’s party and brought along my dish, sausage and broccoli rabe, with lots of garlic. It smelled amazing! When I arrived two of the girls hosting commented on what a beautiful looking dish it was and they proceeded to take it into the kitchen. At dinner I noticed that my dish was going FAST. Meantime I took the opportunity to tell everyone about this great and healthy food and even promised to give some of the coupons that you guys so kindly provided. This stuff is awesome. I shared the recipe for my dish with some of the ladies.”

“Used the product in a recipe of mine and took it to a potluck at my church. I made a teriyaki and ginger sausage with rice dish that was a huge success. I can’t even count how many people stopped to ask me what was in it. When I told them, of course, the ‘money off’ coupons went immediately and I wound up writing down the name of the product for quite a few people.”

“We had a company picnic today, so I took in a square pizza topped with the sausage and everyone raved about it and wanted to know how to make it and where to buy the sausage. I ran out of coupons but I did have copies of the recipe cards (I hope you don’t mind that I made copies of your recipes).”

“There was a line at the butcher counter at Whole Foods. They had chicken sausage on sale today (they make it fresh in the store). Another woman who was waiting to be served asked me if I had tried the chicken sausage and I told her (in almost a whisper) that, yes, I had tried it and it was dry. If you want some really good juicy chicken sausage you should try Al Fresco. She asked, ‘Do they sell it here?’ And, I said, ‘No, you have to go to Gristedes to get it.’”

“I buzzed about the sausages at a BBQ I had at my house. I cooked the sausages with the rest of my meat and

served them along with the other meat. I did not tell anyone about them. After everyone was done, I asked about the food. My cousin and his wife raved about the Al Fresco sausages. They said that they were so unique in taste. They had never eaten anything like them before. I told them all about the product and how it is a healthy sausage. My cousin could not believe it and asked to see the packaging. After reading the package she swore she would pick them up the next time she went to the supermarket.”

Take It to Work

“A few weeks ago I brought leftovers to work of a meal that I served at a large family party using Al Fresco sausage. Everyone raved not only because the food was great but that I actually cooked it. Anyway, today a group of us was standing around, and the subject of food came up. A coworker, who had been on vacation the time that I brought the food in, actually heard from another worker that he had missed my leftovers. Too much! A couple of other friends said that they wished they had a sausage sandwich right then and there.”

“I started work a few months ago at a local attorney’s office. I’m a part time legal secretary. The office staff is big on “carry-ins” for sharing at lunch. I decided to share my Chicken Sausage Caesar Salad using Al Fresco Chicken Sausage of course. All of my coworkers couldn’t compliment me enough. They really enjoyed the salad. A few of them asked me for the recipe and I came prepared. I had the coupon/recipe cards in my purse and handed them out. This morning two of my coworkers thanked me again for the excellent dish and told me they were planning on making the Chicken Sausage Caesar Salad for their own families.”

Talk About Dinner

“My friends and I always talk about what we had for dinner and we’re all trying to eat low fat options. I thought this was the perfect opportunity to bring up the chicken sausages. I told them I had found these great new chicken sausages that were lower in fat and really high in flavor and they should try. They were actually really interested in them and asked lots of questions. By the end of the conversation I think I convinced them to try it.”

“I have this customer, Dave, who is a bachelor. He eats pretty good food but he loves meat. He is always eating and he is a great cook. We always talk about what’s for dinner. Today, he came and I had just picked up some Al Fresco. He asked what I was having for dinner and I told him spaghetti with sausage and I showed him the sausage. The best part is I don’t have to cook them. He looked at them and asked if I picked them up from here. I told him I did and led him to the case. I also gave him some coupons. He picked up two packs and said that he’d let me know.”