



**CATEGORY ENTERED:** 11C. Marketing - Consumer Products Packaged Goods  
**TITLE OF ENTRY:** PEEPS® Makes a Triumphant Return to Shelves for Easter  
**AGENCY:** Coyne Public Relations  
**CLIENT:** The PEEPS® Brand

## INSIGHTS & ANALYSIS

With a shorter Easter season and smaller window to capture both consumer and media attention, Coyne PR needed to develop a strategy that would sustain excitement for the brand's comeback from January through April. To help inform the strategy, the Coyne PR team set out to better understand consumer sentiment one year after the onset of the pandemic to determine the best approach to reach the brand's target audience with news of the big return. The team also reviewed media conversations around Easter and traditional holidays for various insights.

According to "Easter Consumer Sentiment," November 2020 Pulse, consumers are proving to be more resilient than ever – relying on routines, rituals and traditions, keeping opportunities for connection and goodness a priority. They've gotten creative at planning meaningful experiences with their own families at home, and candy is a big part of those celebrations. Many indicated that in 2021, they planned to celebrate in bigger ways than in the past by buying more Easter candy, baking more homemade treats, making bigger Easter baskets and planning backyard egg hunts.

COVID-19 has inspired consumers to start new Easter traditions, including: preparing an Easter meal at home, buying Easter items online, baking homemade treats and participating in a family egg hunt at home, and PEEPS® wanted to make sure we were there to support our fans. The insights identified helped inform the overarching strategy and direction for the comeback campaign, ensuring we were providing fans with a variety of resources, activities and content to help them celebrate in a big way. Our carefully planned content and media strategy allowed us to connect with fans virtually like never before with live crafting and recipe demonstrations as well as unique partnerships that brought together our fans' favorite brands for some PEEPS® fun!

## PLANNING

For nearly seven decades, PEEPS® has been synonymous with Easter. This year was one unlike any other, so Coyne PR and PEEPS® set out to:

Increase awareness for PEEPS® during a shorter Easter season from January-April compared to 2020 as seen by:

- 25% increase in media placements February-April 2021
- 10% increase in media impressions February-April 2021

- 1% increase in social impressions February-April 2021
- As seen by 43% increase in social engagement February-April 2021
- Increase sales by 5% compared to 2020

Each year fans count on the classic Chicks and Bunnies, along with fun new products and partnerships, to add extra PEEPSONALITY® at Easter – and this year was no different. While consumers typically purchase their Easter must haves close to Easter Day, 2021 brought a shorter Easter season along with product hitting shelves as early as January. Coyne needed to ensure we were getting consumers in store to purchase their beloved PEEPS® as early as possible, while also maintaining interest up until Easter Day. To do that, we needed to drum up consumer and media excitement earlier than ever and ensure a modest budget was maximized for the duration of the season. Coyne planned to have PEEPS® come back early – and in a big way – with a variety of merchandise and licensing partnership announcements dropping throughout the season such as PEEPSxPEEPS, Kellogg's PEEPS® Cereal, PEEPSxCROCS, PEEPSxHIPDOT makeup, and PEEPS® PEZ to name a few. Each one of these non-traditional offerings were intended to add sweetness into the lives of consumers who have been searching for that quintessential holiday feeling.

Helping consumers feel more connected, in a time when social disconnect and social distancing are still the norm was also a focus to increase engagement with the brand during the holiday season. Knowing consumers were looking for connection, especially around the holidays, the team wanted to provide a variety of resources and content to ensure PEEPS® was the go-to source for all things Easter. By launching at-home programs and activities like PEEPSONALITY® Live!, and PEEPS®-themed ZOOM backgrounds, PEEPS® added the perfect amount of sweetness to virtual gatherings, bringing loved ones together in new ways. PEEPS® also teamed up with likeminded brands such as Duncan Hines and Rice Krispies® to develop simple, yet Insta-worthy recipes that fans would be excited to create with family at home, while also showing the versatility of the brand.

## EXECUTION

The PEEPS® comeback campaign was amplified through an integrated approach that included traditional PR, paid and earned social and influencer. Tapping into key consumer insights the team leveraged the following techniques to meet objectives:

### Purposeful Media Strategy



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To avoid consumer fatigue of brand news during the Easter season, we strategically timed news announcements by creating a steady drumbeat of coverage from January through Easter timed to brand milestones and moments in time. After careful coordination between the brand and its partners, Coyne strategically pulsed out announcements earlier in the year, exciting consumers and media even before Valentine's Day, and building momentum ahead of the Easter holiday. Consumer food, lifestyle, parenting and news media continuously covered the PEEPS® news at every turn. Knowing video is a key driving interest factor for many news outlets, we also leveraged a video distribution feature to amplify recipe content. Elements of the media strategy included:

- National Press Release Distribution – (February 3) “PEEPS® Are Back” press release drove additional awareness and impressions around the new products and seasonal brand partnerships
- Strategic Press Release Distribution, Mailers & Outreach (Feb-April) – Various partnership announcements pulsed out such as: PEPSI, Build-A-Bear, HIPDOT, 7-11 and more to build momentum ahead of the Easter holiday.
- Video MAT Feature Distribution (March) – leveraging DIY recipe videos created in part with Duncan Hines, PEEPS® syndicated a video compilation
- April Fools Product Announcement (March-April) – partnership with Green Giant sparks media frenzy over faux Cauliflower flavored PEEPS® bunny announcement right before Easter weekend.

### **Synchronized Social Efforts & Live Engagement**

The team developed a social and digital campaign to tease out the initial comeback news, instantly reaching our biggest and most dedicated fans on social media, encouraging them to help spread the word that PEEPS® are back. From there, we continued to drive awareness, pulsing out our content alongside PR announcements. A brand-new Instagram Live series was also executed, which brought PEEPS® fans together, making them feel more connected than ever.

- Social Media Teaser/Return Announcement – (January) – “PEEPS® Are Back” social announcement sparks media frenzy and generates excitement among consumers.
- Social Media/Digital (Feb-April) – Just Born social accounts drove additional awareness through social advertising and through an Instagram Live series, PEEPSONALITY® Live!, which featured well-known crafting and baking influencers sharing how they make PEEPS®-inspired treats.

## **EVALUATION**

**Objective 1** – Increase awareness for PEEPS® during a shorter Easter season from January-April ahead of Easter holiday compared to 2020 as seen by:

- 25% increase in media placements February-April 2021
- 10% increase in media impressions February-April 2021
- 1% increase in social impressions February-April 2021
- 43% increase in social engagement February-April 2021

Result: To date, the PEEPS® Easter 2021 campaign has garnered:

- 15,000+ placements, resulting in a 112% increase compared to 2020 including Today Show, Good Morning America, CNN, USA Today and more.
- More than 42 billion media impressions, resulting in a 22% increase compared to 2020
- The PEEPSONALITY® Live! Campaign secured 15M+ social impressions, increasing by 1% compared to the prior year.

**Objective 2** – Increase sales by 5% compared to 2020

Result: PEEPS® increased sales by 18.2% compared to 2020, exceeding the goal by almost 4X!

- Easter candy grew +9.5% vs. Easter 2020. The growth of the PEEPS® Brand was nearly double that of the category, +18.2% versus Easter 2020.
- Source: Source: IRI Market Advantage, Total US MULO, Easter 2020 (11 WE 04-19-20) vs. Easter 2021 (11 WE 04-11-21); Includes Non-Seasonal Jelly Beans.