



Dr Hans Maurer

The Sauerkraut Corner

Native spuds, witches & peppermints

I have three items sitting on my desk this morning, two *Herald on Sunday* articles and a Telecom promotional pack.

The first article is called "Maori potato new vege choice", the second one deals with the Scottish Baronial Court of Prestoungrange, "pardoning 81 witches and their cats" burned 400 years ago. The Telecom promotional pack, looks like an instant noodle container, is trying to get me interested in a process called "instant conferencing" and contains a pack of peppermints.

What's the connection between those items you may well ask?

"Killing" & marketing!

Maori potatoes, taewa, are being produced by a Maori vegetable growers' collective called Tahuri Whenua. It appears that they will be marketed from January under the Purefresh organic label by Fresh Direct. Taewa are prized for their heirloom quality and have until now been just about extinct in the commercial market.

The Scottish Baron who has been dishing out pardons to executed witches is a colleague from IMCA/Revans University and a frequent visitor to New Zealand.

Telecom needs no introduction - they are the ones who are making a killing from our basic communication needs.

Forget about the "killing" bit. It's the marketing side we ought to focus on.

It wasn't all that long ago that any grower wanting to sell a new produce line would simply front up on the first available auction day after harvest and leave it to the buyers on the day to determine success or otherwise.

The auctioneers were usually the last ones to find out that there was a new line to be sold. Ironic therefore that the company involved, Fresh Direct, is owned by Jeffery & Peter Turner. Things have come a long way.

Gordon, Baron of Prestoungrange, has made full use of his remaining feudal powers in granting the pardons, much to the consternation of the Scottish parliament. Even the Queen has now got involved, as Gordon has engaged her help to grant Royal pardons to those witches who had also been found guilty of treason.

Telecom's marketing gurus have produced a high quality piece of cardboard, featuring a laptop, mentioning coffee and biscuits and "as many servings as you want" - and producing said pack of peppermints.

All three items are excellent marketing examples. Fresh Direct is trying to generate demand and gauge initial market response well in advance of the product being released.

Gordon has a flash pub on his baronial lands at Prestonpans on the outskirts of Edinburgh, which was recently completely renovated and now includes a 50,000 British Pound lift as he tells me! He is therefore keen to see as many guests on his premises - and talking about witches at Halloween sounds like a good strategy. The fact the story has gone global is an added bonus.

And Telecom can always be relied upon to come up with good marketing ideas even if the substance is often lacking.

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