

# PRWeek



## IMAGE BOOST

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## Denny's CEO sees a bigger marketing-mix role for PR

**BY KIMBERLY MAUL**

**SPARTANBURG, SC:** Denny's recent sandwich giveaway promotions are part of its revamped PR and communications plan, according to its CEO Nelson Marchioli.

More than 2 million took advantage of its Super Bowl Grand Slam Giveaway on February 3; and Marchioli said it "changed the way this brand is perceived." A second giveaway promotion for its new Grand Slamwich was introduced April 8.

The efforts are part of Denny's push to increase PR in its marketing mix, a goal it has had since Miami-based Hill & Knowlton/Samcor became AOR last summer, he noted.

"All we really did with PR was deal with crisis," Marchioli added. "We needed to have an integrated strategy. This particular promotion plays off of that."

Denny's announced the latest promotion April 1, after the campaign gave exclusives to *The Wall Street Journal* and *CBS Evening News with Katie Couric*, said Cori Rice, president of H&K/Samcor. Marchioli and CMO Mark Chmiel did interviews and a radio tour leading up to April 8. B-roll of the event was also made available to media.

The new "Come Back to Give Back" promotion includes a friendly pay-it-forward message.

"We wanted to give Americans the opportunity to do something for someone else," Marchioli said.

Newly created Facebook and Twitter pages were also added to help interact with Denny's fans, Rice noted. Working with LA-based interactive firm Filter, the campaign also has a Flickr page and a contest with music Web site Lala.com. ■