

# McDonald's and Obesity

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Case Study

We will present and discuss the involvement and **overview of McDonald's** and **global obesity** through various marketing strategies and **solutions** to the global issue of obesity

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# Company Overview

## Locations

**Globally ~**  
43,000 - 43,500

**USA ~**  
13,550 - 13,800

## Number of Meals & Units

**60 - 70 million**  
meals

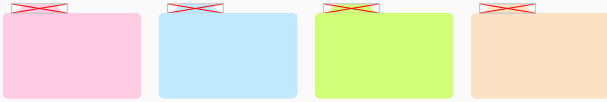
## Number of Employees Globally

**1.9 million** people  
worldwide

## Latest Revenue Figures

Fiscal 2024 global  
revenue: approx  
**\$25.9 billion USD**

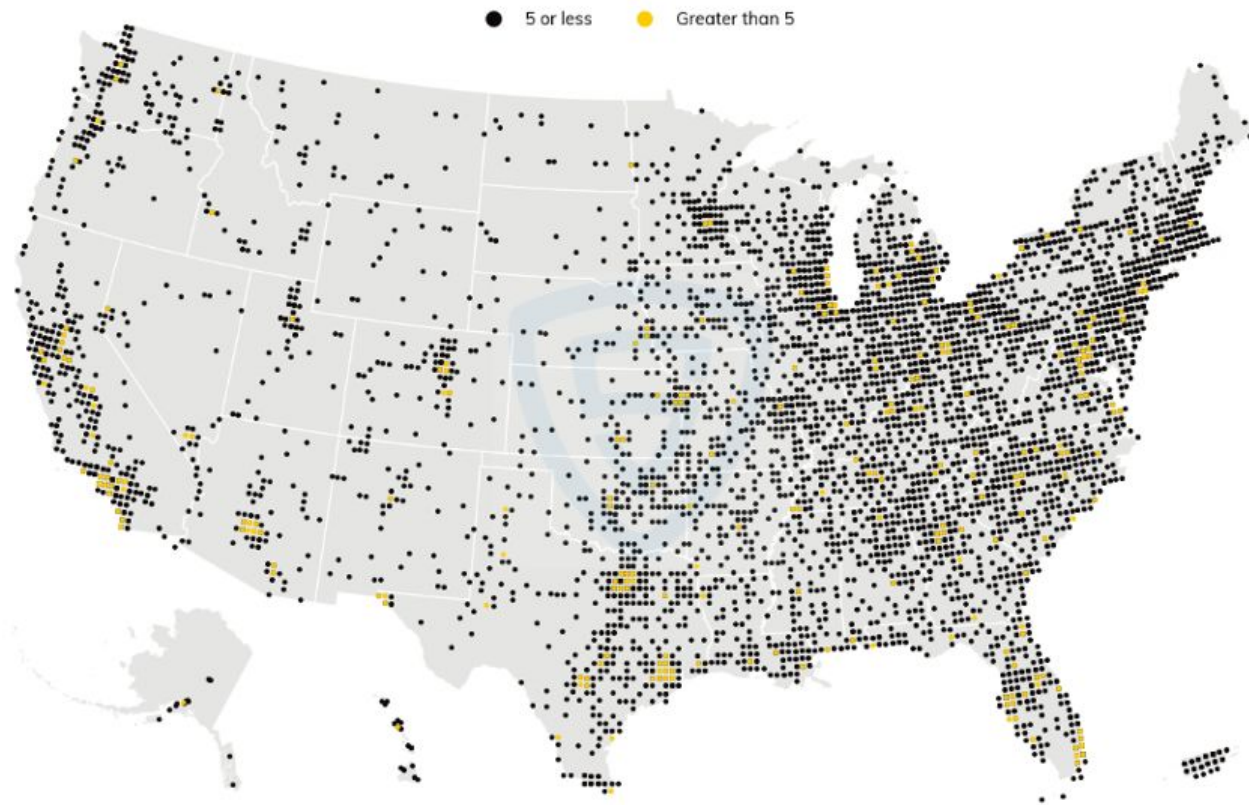
## Meals Served Daily by McDonald's



- McDonald's serves ~ **60 - 70 million** meals every day
    - largest foodservice corporation in the world
  - The top three countries that contribute heavily:  
United States, China and Japan; ~ **23,200 - 23,600**
  - **United States ~ 13,500 - 13,600**
-

## Total Number of McDonald's in Different Countries

- McDonald's operates in over **100 countries and territories worldwide**
- China - **second largest market** after US with **~6,800 -7,000 restaurants**
- Japan comes in third with numbers around **2,900 - 3,000 restaurants**
- Top International places:
  - France (~2,200)
  - Canada (~1,500)
  - United Kingdom (~1,400)



### McDonald's restaurant locations in the USA

Each grid point covers 10-mile radius with at least one location

Source: ScrapeHero.com



# McDonald's in a Global Sense

**M**

Maximize marketing moving away generic ads to culturally relevant, personalized marketing powered by loyalty programs (now has 175 million active members).

**C**

Committing to the core which is focusing on their most famous food item like the Big Mac, Quarter pounder, and French fries. While trying to expand their chicken food items.

**D**

The 3D's: Digitals, Drive-thru, and Delivery are what the company relies on. Over 40% sales come through the app and Kiosks, ordering through a 3<sup>rd</sup> party (UberEATS and Grubhub)

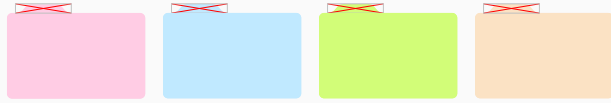
**Team 2**

# The Effects of Advertising

Restrict advertising to reduce obesity in children

- Advertisement not reduced, shifted to healthier and based on local tastes (Salmon Burgers and Rye Bread in Europe)
- UK McDonald's have characters known as Ronnie's Yum Chum Friends in advertisements about healthy eating
- Restricting advertising reduces obesity in children by shifting focus of ads to be more healthy

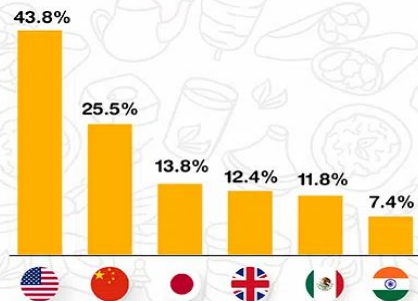
# Challenges McDonald's Faced Globally Regarding Obesity



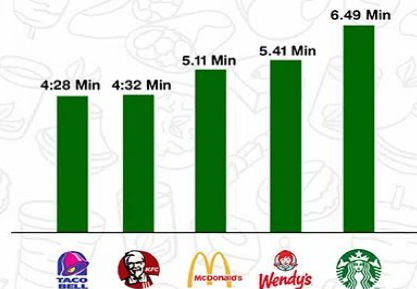
- McDonald's a most recognizable brand worldwide - company communicates menu changes, health messaging vs 40-50 years ago
  - Brand association with unhealthy food – Burgers, fries, and sugary drinks dominate public perception - **people eat with their eyes**
  - Consumers see fast-food cheaper to purchase vs eating at home – more consumers seeking lower-calorie, balanced meals
  - Government regulation – advertising bans and menu restrictions threaten traditional marketing strategies
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# Fast Food Chains and Obesity Rates Worldwide.

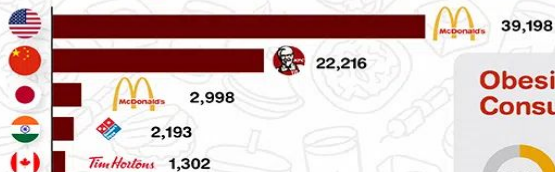
## Countries With Most Fast Food Chains



## Average Drive-thru Times For Popular Fast Food Chains In The Us



## Best-Selling Fast Food Chains in Each Country



## Obesity Rates Due to Fast Food Consumption



# Most Common Items Sold Per State



McDonald's top-selling item globally is its **french fries**, with over **3.6 billion orders** served annually in the U.S. alone. Fries, Chicken McNuggets, and the Big Mac, drive nearly **60%** of the company's total business. Fries are the **#1** item in every U.S. state, consistently outselling burgers.

- Advertising to children
- The tie between Disney and McDonald's
- Government has spent large sums promoting healthier diets
- The public is ignoring the recommendations to eat healthier
- Promoted menu changes featuring salads, pieces of fruit, cups of cappuccino
- Smaller portion sizes

**Team 3**

# McDonald's Global Marketing & Menu

## Strategies

### South Korean Marketing

- Menu focuses on promoting fresh produce from South Korean farmers
- Started in 2021 and the most popular campaign in South Korea

### U.S. Marketing

- Company claims to have changed menu - Happy Meal, to promote healthier options for children in U.S.

### UK Marketing

- Ads with products containing high amounts of fat, salt, sugar now banned before 9PM
- Sugar Tax reduced sales of soft drinks by 35%
- Companies not allowed to show products in advertisements but allowed to advertise own brands

# Menu Strategies Focus

- Diversity
- Menu Items
- Competition
- Research Regarding:
  - Culture
  - Health
  - Pricing



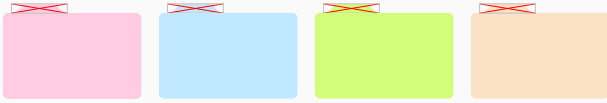
# McDonald's Global Menu & Advertisements



# McDonald's Global Menus & Advertisements



# Corporate Responsibility & Obesity: Shared Accountability



- Individuals choose what they eat, and parents guide their children's diets.
  - Fast-food companies influence these choices through:
    - Large portion sizes, heavy advertising
      - Marketing tactics targeting children (characters, promotions, ect...)
        - Who are especially vulnerable to persuasive marketing.
  - Although healthier options have been introduced, core products remain heavily promoted.
-

## Some Questions to think about:

- Are there other alternatives to eat where they are located?
- Is anyone being “forced” to eat at McDonalds?
  - Are there “external factors” to this?
- What effects do the different types of advertising have on people's choices?
  - Is it positive or negative overall?





**Team 4**

# What's in a SWOT analysis?

The good

The not-so-good

What we've got

## Strengths

What resources can we deploy?  
What are our advantages?  
What's working well?



## Weaknesses

What abilities are we lacking?  
Where are we starting to struggle?  
How can we overcome these?



What's out there

## Opportunities

Who might most value our strengths?  
What trends work in our favour?  
What prizes are within reach?



## Threats

What headwinds do we face?  
Who might challenge us?  
What could go wrong?



# S.W.O.T. Analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Consistency</b></li><li>• <b>Marketing</b></li><li>• <b>Brand Recognition</b></li><li>• <b>Core Values</b></li><li>• <b>Efficient Systems</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>High Employee Turnover</b></li><li>• <b>Lack of New Locations</b></li><li>• <b>Breakfast Menu</b></li><li>• <b>Financial Risk</b></li><li>• <b>Foreign Currency Fluctuation</b></li><li>• <b>Foreign Political Backlash</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Nutrition Education</b></li><li>• <b>Expansion of Low-Calorie Options</b></li><li>• <b>Growing Demand for Healthy Food</b></li><li>• <b>Health Partnerships</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Economic Challenges</b></li><li>• <b>Competition of Other Businesses</b></li><li>• <b>Global Cultural threats</b></li></ul>

# Minor Problems presented in the McDonald's Obesity Case Studies.

## Legal Case Study Approach

- **Failure to Establish a Duty to Warn:** The court held that McDonald's had no legal duty to warn customers about the unhealthy attributes of its products because those risks were considered **common knowledge**. The judge noted that a reasonable consumer already knows or should know that eating large amounts of fast food can lead to weight gain.
- **Inadequate Proximate Cause:** The plaintiffs failed to prove that McDonald's food was the **direct or substantial cause** of their obesity. To succeed, they would have needed to detail their entire diet and lifestyle to show that other factors—such as genetics, lack of exercise, or other foods they ate—were not the actual causes of their health issues.

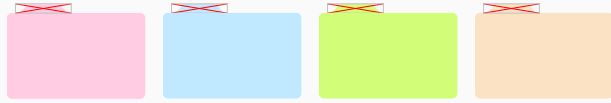
# Minor Problems presented in the McDonald's Obesity Case Studies.

## Medical Case Study Approach

- **Correlation vs. Causation:** Most medical studies on this topic identify a **strong positive correlation** between the prevalence of McDonald's restaurants and obesity rates, particularly in children. However, a major problem is proving **direct causation**. Because individuals have complex diets and varying activity levels, it is difficult to isolate McDonald's food as the sole medical cause of an individual's obesity without a controlled longitudinal study.
- **The "Confounding Factors" Problem:** Medical analyses often struggle with variables like **genetics, socioeconomic status, and lack of physical activity**. For a study to be scientifically robust, it must account for these "confounders." In many case studies, the inability to perfectly track every other calorie a participant consumes, or their exact metabolic rate makes the "McDonald's-only" medical link technically difficult to verify.

**TEAM 5**

## Conclusion



We've noticed as a team that despite global efforts of ALL companies combating obesity, consumers continue to eat unhealthy and consume more

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## Conclusion

The case study helps us understand components surrounding the company, including cultural facets, marketing to different audience segments, and health debates.

Did McDonald's perhaps knowingly contribute to the obesity epidemic around the world? Some evidence to consider:

- The food is affordable, quick & easy to obtain (locations/prices)
- People have experienced obesity due to McDonald's
- Legal cases have challenged the company

Therefore, it is our recommendation to follow a diet or philosophy that is important to each individual.

## **SWOT, Locations, & Marketing - Conclusion**

- You've heard of many angles of the study, including strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities (SWOT) of McDonald's surrounding the obesity epidemic.
- We also have learned that McDonald's, a worldwide company, has thousands of locations throughout the U.S., contributing to its widespread control over local markets. Millions of meals are served each year.
- We know that marketing works. It has helped sell the epidemic to people across the globe.

## Impacts - Conclusion

**1**

Marketing has changed, however. It has had to accommodate different cultures, and negative information.

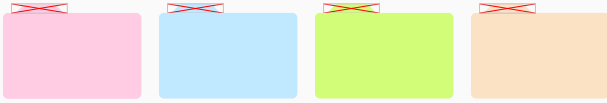
**2**

Marketing delivers its message to people differently - Kids vs. adults; people in different countries

**3**

But an ethical question remains: is the epidemic the problem of the company, or of people's decision-making?

## 2 Alternatives (ACA) - Conclusion



### Cook at home

- Advantage: Cooking at home is more affordable & healthier
- Disadvantage: Time may not always allow to cook at home, and sometimes it's nice to indulge!

### Save money

- Advantage: Allow a person to spend money on healthy habits like the gym.
  - Disadvantage: Savings is not huge (short-term)
-

### Construct and develop a conclusion identifying the problems and solutions for the case study.

- Nutrition information tells us that following a moderate diet, rather than indulging in strictly fast-food proves to be healthier.
- Portion sizes are a problem. You can order a smaller portion, kids burger etc, if you like to indulge in fast food. You can split your portion before consumption.
- High in calories and sodium- Opt for no bread, a salad with grilled chicken, apples instead of fries for children, try to avoid sodas as a drink choice, opt for water or unsweetened tea.
- Nutrition education- Educate yourself and your children about calorie intake. Introduce healthier foods to your children.

Obesity is a systemic issue, not  
just an individual choice

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**Conclusion**



# Thank you!

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McDonald's and Obesity - Case Study

# Major Problems Itemized in the McDonalds Obesity Case Study.

## High-Calorie, Low-Nutrition Products:

- Targeted Marketing to Children: Excessive Portions
- Addictive Properties/Ingredients
- Accessibility and Convenience
- Negligence Claims

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