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Pizza Hut

If there is a food that's more crave-able than pizza — I'm not aware of it. All you have to do is say the word — *Pizza* — and the suggestion of it alone will have 99.9% of humanity answering with an resounding, "Yes!" The sauce, the cheese, the toppings, the crust — all make it as delicious to eat as it is amazing to film. On top of that, the tastiness we're all so intimately familiar with translates incredibly well in creating an unrivaled level of desirability with an audience. And when you match all those inherent attributes with the Pizza Hut brand and its 2 medium pizzas for \$5.99 offer... Well, what's not to love?

The fact that you have all those strengths going for you in these spots is a big step in the right direction. All that's really necessary is to bring them to life with a film approach that treats these moments as naturally as possible — so that the understated humor can rise organically from the concepts and situations.

After that — it's all about the pizza, and we'll want to make sure that it's captured with a bite-the-screen immediacy that accentuates the heat, the crispness of the crust, the tangy, spicy, cheese-covered goodness of the toppings, and the overall irresistibility that you can only get with a great pizza.

There's no need to overcomplicate things. The fun and the appetite appeal are right there on the page. My goal is to help you bring it all to life with a filmic approach that combines great casting and understated performances with food moments that are so delicious they will clearly and unquestionably prove *No One Out Pizzas The Hut*.

The Visual Style

This is all about pairing natural nuanced performances with intimate food photography that dials up the pizza's appetite appeal. There's nothing to be gained by trying to push the comedy with the way we use the camera. Likewise, the best way to feature the pizza is to take a photographic approach that uses beautiful light, dynamic perspectives, engaging actions like cheese pulls, and stunningly close macro imagery to fill the screen with tastiness.

To add a subtle touch of naturalism to the scenes, I would use a lightly handheld camera to create a sense of well-observed realism. Rather than feel phony, forced, or overly-commercial, this will help lend the stories a quality reminiscent of watching a scene lifted from a great little indie film.

In support of that, I would design nicely layered compositions that bring some depth and dimension to the scenes. For the live action, this means generally working with medium shots instead of using long lenses. This will help lend some texture to the scenes and give the humor room to breath, while avoiding the commercial cliches of trying to manufacture comedy with the camera.

When it comes to shooting the pizza, we'll want to keep it within this same cinematic world, while getting in temptingly close and using backlight to make the pizza look their delicious best. To achieve this, I'll be working with a DP who specializes in food and table-top, and in addition to using light to add to the appetite appeal, we'll also be designing camera moves that add energy and appetite appeal.

This might involve using 3/4 angles that take us deliciously close to the hot surface of the pizza while curling slowly along the contour of the toasted crust. In other instances we can push slowly in or ease away just as a slice is lifted to create a sexy cheese pull... The basic idea is to bring the pizza moments a look that is so off-the-charts with tastiness that it will have people's mouths watering with anticipatory desire.

The Casting

So — who loves pizza? Well, just about everyone, so it makes sense to search for a mix of people who look likable, approachable, and relatable. They are the average Janes and Joes you see in your neighborhood, at the market; the young moms and dads you stand next to while watching your kids play at the Rec center or park. They're the friends you invite over for a game night, or call when you want to do something fun on the weekend. They're... us. And we want our actors to reflect that same level of honest, down-to-earth, realness.

Looks aside, It's equally important to cast actors who have the talent and understanding to play these moments with understated restraint. At no time do we want to ever feel as if these people are trying to “be funny.” They're simply living their lives, enjoying the moments they're in — and reacting to the pizza and to this great offer.

For “Yes and Yes,” we'll look for a man and woman in the right age range who have some depth and character. Since Mom is the one who's delivering the key line in the spot, we'll want to find an actress who has a little bit of an ironic attitude. Instead of coming off as your typical “commercial mom” who's just there for the sake of getting a laugh, she's a smart, self-assured woman who knows her family well enough to be a step or two ahead of her guys.

Taking a similar approach to the dad, we'll want to avoid going for the cliché oafish stereotype and instead cast an actor who can bring an equal amount of dimension to the role. Along that same line, the kid should look and act like a real kid. He's chill and relaxed and impresses us as the kind of kid others his age would like to hang out with.

If we end up shooting “Win, Win” it might also be a good idea to cast actors with improv experience — just to give us the option of letting them riff a little with the lines. Once we’ve covered the script thoroughly as written, this might lead to a moment or two that adds to the humor, without pushing things outside the realm of reality we want to create.

Yes. And Yes

I think the beauty of this spot can be found in its simplicity. We want to use the camera to drop in on this dad and kid relaxing on the sofa. Keeping things very natural we’ll use a somewhat loose handheld camera — just to add a breath of life to the scene. The lighting is subdued and naturalistic as opposed to being overdone. We’ll support that with a sound design that helps draw us into this moment.

The mood is very casual. The TV is on in the background, but the two are paying more attention to their phones. One is a mirror image of the other. Both are totally absorbed in the online game or content of their choice — with the blue light of the phone illuminating their faces.

You get the sense that they could sit there easily for an hour without moving, until... The Pizza Hut ad comes on TV announcing the two medium pizzas for \$5.99.

Not surprisingly, that information cuts through their phone-induced fog. In reaction, they both look up simultaneously from their phone screens — making eye contact for the first time in who knows how long. It’s almost as if they’re each looking to the other to make sure they heard what they just think they heard.

The kid breaks the silence. “Did he say Pizza Hut?”

Dad responds. He’s subdued, but there’s a level controlled enthusiasm evident in his expression. “For \$5.99?”

Now they know it’s for real — but before they actually have to move — Mom appears with two Pizza Hut boxes held in her arms. She’s way ahead of the game and answers both questions with, “Yes. And yes.”

The dad and kid trade a smile. It’s like magic. We think it — and Mom shows up with it. And without missing a beat, Mom punctuates her line with a knowing, “And you’re welcome.”

Just to make sure that we have these moments covered well, we’ll want to shoot a nice range of Mom delivering her lines with slightly different attitudes. But for the most part, I think the best results will come from her playing it fairly held-back. And along with

covering the lines as written, we can also explore a few more options — just so that you have a choice in the edit.

That might include having her follow “Yes. And Yes.” with “And let’s do this.” or “And I’ll be in the kitchen.” or maybe “And both of you. Put pants on.”

Either way, Dad and the Kid get up immediately and follow Mom to the kitchen — which takes us to some nice moments around the kitchen island in which we see the family enjoying the hot and delicious Pizza Hut Pizza. This provides us with an opportunity to capture some enticing and natural beauty shots of the pizza in a setting that looks and feels organic to the story.

I also like the idea of incorporating the deal on the inside of the box lid. It’s a nice touch that allows us to maintain the sense of reality we’ve built, and I’ll make a point of creating a composition that allows it to read well, while still leaving room for a hand to be seen lifting a slice away from the pie — with a delicious cheese pull.

Win - Win

We’ll want to approach this spot with the same cinematic look and feel that we used for “Yes. And Yes.” Once again, we want the content to deliver the understated humor, while keeping the lighting, the performances, and the camera subtle, cinematically real, and held-back.

As a way of adding a little dimension to the scene, we can open on a moment in which we’re looking in from an adjacent room to see the people gathered around a table playing cards. There are a couple of Pizza Hut pizza boxes resting on the table near them.

Perhaps, while the person dealing is passing out their draw cards, one of the woman reaches casually over, lifts the lid of one of the boxes, and sees the deal printed on the underside of the lid. Pausing for a brief moment, she considers it and responds in a very genuine and natural way. “That’s a great deal.”

Her partner looks over, notices the offer, and adds, “Yeah, on even better pizza.”

Meanwhile, their host has drawn his cards and taking a look at his hand, decides to be a little snarky. He shows his pair of Kings, and then in a very cool card player way says, “You might say it’s a win / win” — clearly pushing his clever idea of this double entendre.

He’s just about to reach out and scoop up the pot — when his wife stops him by dropping a pair of aces on the table. She gives him snide look that is dripping with playful one-upmanship, and as she’s pulling in the chips, very casually adds, “You’re right, I would say that.”

But, it's all in fun, and of course the real prize that everyone gets to enjoy is the Pizza Hut Pizza — which takes us to the close-up moments of them reaching in for a slice, lifting one away with a tempting cheese pull, biting in, and savoring the tasty blend of cheese, sauce, and topping.

And finally...

These are some of the thoughts I have right now, which I hope will help you get a good idea of how I would approach this campaign. The main thing at this point is to go into this with the idea of letting these scenes play out in ways that help instill the stories with a sense of understated realism.

The humor is in the concept, the situations, and the subtle interactions that take place between the characters. That being said — we'll always make sure that the Pizza Hut Pizzas are placed in the starring roles by shooting them in ways that accentuate their deliciousness and taste-tempting irresistibility.

That's it for now. Thanks again for thinking of me. I hope you all had a great holiday, and I look forward to speaking with all of you further.