

# Exclusive Look Inside the Peace Day Burger from Krystal® CMO Jason Abelkop

*Regional Restaurant Chain Explains How Small Brands Can Make a Big Impact.*

ATLANTA, GA, UNITED STATES, September 29, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On the heels of a huge event for Peace Day on September 21st, Krystal® Chief Marketing Officer Jason Abelkop explains how a relatively small restaurant brand was able to successfully share the stage with a giant like Burger King and several other participating brands. The cornerstone of the event was the Peace Day Burger, which featured the iconic small square Krystal® patty, signature Burger King ingredients, and donations from Denny's, Wayback Burgers, and Giraffas. Originally posed by Burger King to McDonald's as "The McWhopper," the initial request was turned down and Krystal® immediately jumped in to save the concept.



Chief Marketing Officer Jason Abelkop illustrates how Krystal® can engage in community initiatives with other giant brands in the industry.

"What you have to understand is size doesn't dictate how 'big' you can play when it comes to community relationship building," says Abelkop. "There's no major leagues and minor leagues like you'd find with traditional advertising where it's all about the spend." Indeed, as advertising costs continue to skyrocket, many brands are quickly finding traditional placements are outpacing budgets at alarming rates. In fact, two out of three marketers have moved at least 30% of their budgets away from traditional advertising and towards digital media and community relations according to a 2012 study by Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. "Community efforts are a chance to build deeper relationships with an audience... in our case, going well beyond just a sandwich when our guests are hungry," Abelkop continues. Relationships, he explains, are the keys to communicating corporate values that truly distinguish one brand from another.

In the case of Krystal® and the Peace Day celebration, the opportunity was clear. "When Burger King got turned down by McDonald's as a partner for the event, we never thought we were 'too small' to do something," Abelkop explains. "Rather, we saw a situation that struck right at the core of who we are as a brand. We're from the South... and that means Southern Hospitality and a way of treating people with respect and civility... which fundamentally is where peace begins. In many ways, we may have been better suited for the Peace Day initiative than a larger brand. We can be more nimble and flexible because of our size." The Krystal® executive also explains that other small brands can leverage their own strengths by getting involved in their own communities – whether through

supporting little league teams on a very micro level, or getting involved in larger metro or regional efforts, showing an alignment between brand values and community values makes that brand relevant and meaningful to the audience.

“It’s not always as quick as advertising,” Abelkop clarifies. “People don’t just walk in with a coupon or after seeing a billboard. Community relations takes a bit longer to be authentic and sustainable. But when done right, you end up with a more loyal customer base and guests who aren’t simply driven by price or advertising. We’ve been fortunate at Krystal® that though our presence is smaller than global chains, we’re a real part of the heritage and the legacy of the Southern experience in the locations we serve. Our corporate values were right in line with what Peace One Day and Burger King were trying to organize. And we know world peace is important to all our guests, too. This was more than a chance to bring that message to our guests but also make it easy for them to participate, by us making a donation on their behalf when they ate with us on Peace Day. We also asked guests to go on social media and other venues to tell us what they were personally making peace with. That little conversation is what opens the door to discussing the bigger issues of making peace around the world. For that end goal, we would have gotten involved no matter how many other brands were involved.”

#### About The Krystal Company

Founded in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 1932, The Krystal Company is the oldest quick service restaurant chain in the South. Its hamburgers are still served fresh and hot off the grill on the iconic square bun at more than 350 restaurants in 11 states. Krystal’s Atlanta-based Restaurant Support Center serves a team of 6,000 employees. For more information, visit <http://www.Krystal.com> or <http://www.facebook.com/Krystal> or follow the brand on Twitter and Instagram @Krystal.

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