

# Big Mac

## Is McDonald's better today than it was six years ago? Where has it improved? Which competitor is doing a better job?

McDonald's was one of only two stocks that gained value in 2008 (the other was Wal-Mart). According to the *New York Times*, its performance is the result of a six-year "Plan to Win" centered on a return to Ray Kroc's original mantra of "quality, service, cleanliness and value."

So, we asked our readers how their view of McDonald's had changed, if at all, over the past six years.

First things first—our readership clearly is not composed of dedicated McDonald's customers. Most respondents—43 percent—said they went to McDonald's only "sporadically."

Despite this, their attitudes were mostly positive. The percentage of respondents who said they either "liked," "loved" or were "neutral" about McDonald's increased, while percentages of those who "disliked" or "hated" it decreased.

McDonald's also appears to be succeeding in many of the key areas targeted by its so-called "Plan to Win."

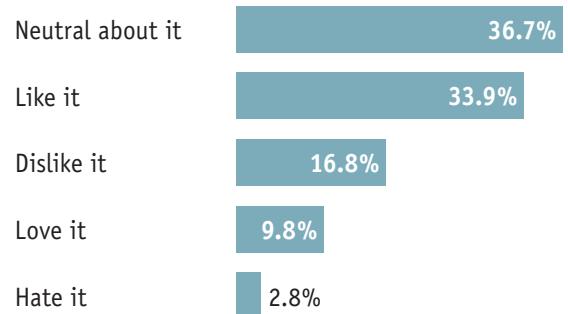
When asked which aspects of the McDonald's experience had improved, "the food" topped the list at 41 percent, followed by "price/value" at 32 percent and "image/aesthetics" at 24 percent.

In addition, a solid majority of 60 percent said that the overall "healthiness" of McDonald's menu had improved over the past six years, with only 28 percent saying it was unchanged and just four percent judging it "worse."

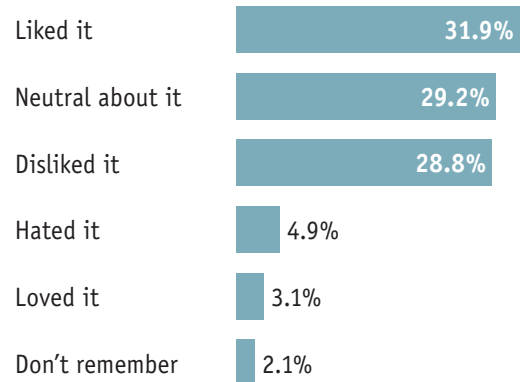
However, McDonald's still has work ahead with respect to "customer service" which was cited as "improved" by only 10 percent, and "sense of community/camaraderie" at just six percent.

Forty-three percent of respondents said the overall "quality" of the McDonald's experience had improved over the past six years, with 35 percent saying it was "the same" and just five percent calling it "worse."

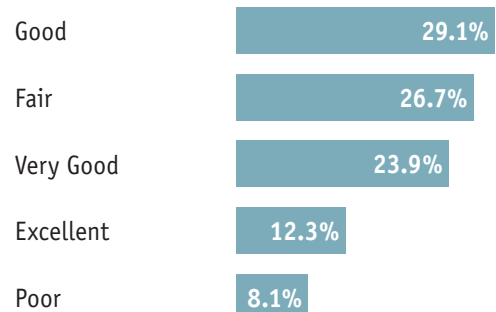
## In general, how do you feel about McDonald's today?



## In general, how did you feel about McDonald's six years ago?

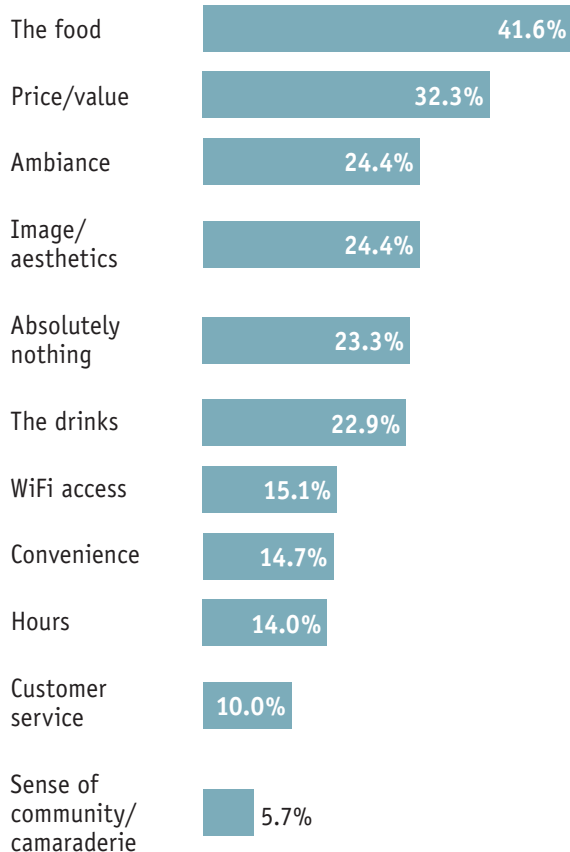


## How would you rate the effectiveness of McDonald's advertising strategy (i'm lovin' it)?

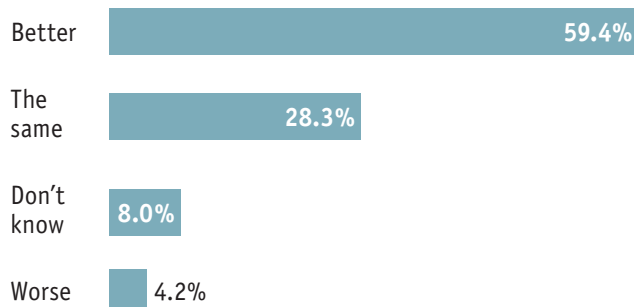


# Attack

If any, which of the following has improved your opinion of McDonald's? (pick as many as apply)



How would you rate the overall "healthiness" of the McDonald's menu today versus six years ago?



Attitudes were somewhat less rosy when it came to the effectiveness of the McDonald's advertising strategy (i'm lovin' it), which only 12 percent called "excellent," with 24 percent rating it "very good."

The percentage of respondents saying it was "good" (29 percent) was only slightly higher than those calling it "fair" (27 percent). Eight percent said it was "poor." Some felt that the advertising was too "young" and "urban."

McDonald's faces even more criticism when it comes to its use of "new" media, such as social networks, widgets, mobile phones and digital signage.

Although a plurality of 35 percent said McDonald's use of such media was "good," about 30 percent commented that they were unaware that McDonald's was using "new" media at all.

When asked, on an open-ended basis, what McDonald's needed to do to continue to succeed, most responses centered on "healthier" food options, with a number of respondents mentioning "more vegetarian options" as topping their wish list.

As to which McDonald's competitors might be doing a better job overall (also on an open-ended basis), Wendy's led the pack because of "better food" (but poor advertising) while Burger King was cited for its "better advertising" (but poor food).

Other frequent mentions included Subway, Chick-fil-A and Dunkin' Donuts, as well as Chipotle, In-N-Out, Sonic and Five Guys.

## RESPONDENT PROFILE

A total of 292 survey respondents included brand marketers (21%), consulting firms (13%) and agencies (26%).

Twenty-eight percent worked in packaged goods firms, 10% in media/entertainment and 6% in retail.

A majority were senior-level executives with 72% reporting more than ten years of experience in marketing. ■