

## “Re-Colonization”: KFC Salutes Colonel Sanders With Brand Refresh

**Author :** Shirley Brady

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In a major announcement on Monday in New York, **Kentucky Fried Chicken** made a public recommitment to the standards set forth by founder **Colonel Harland Sanders** in 1952 and reiterated in this 1980 TV commercial:

<https://youtu.be/nuwAMztxL1E>

As [Fortune](#) notes, the world’s biggest chicken restaurant chain hopes to return to its glory days, with Yum! **Brands investing \$185 million** into the fried chicken brand as well as “a quarter of a billion dollars in finance” to pledge allegiance, once again, to its iconic founder’s way of making chicken — “The Hard Way” with “Colonel Quality Guaranteed.”



That money is helping fund **KFC's** "Re-Colonization" plan, which includes a refreshed focus on its menu and [upgrading](#) all **KFC** US kitchens and remodeling 3,000 assets. Indeed, **KFC** plans to remodel 1,000 restaurants this year alone.



The new store **design** reinforces, in a visually engaging (made for **social** media) way, that it's going back to how the Colonel made chicken back in the early days, going back to the beginning — and hopefully taking millennials and younger consumers along for the journey.





“If you think of the craveable taste of **KFC** as the recipe and the process, it’s been the process piece that we’re focused on,” KFC US President **Jason Marker** (below) told *Fortune*.



In line with what the brand's US restaurants are calling a "Colonel Quality Guaranteed" benchmark going forward, the changes will see all **KFC** locations "slow down" with remodeled restaurants and a return to the roots and heart of the **brand**, which [turns 54](#) in the US in August, in a counterpoint to today's fast food.

It's also re-embracing where it all began with a new focus on how it makes its [KFC Original Recipe](#) fried chicken — the iconic menu item (Sanders's original 1940 recipe is a hallowed [trade secret](#) in the food industry) that's "seasoned with our secret blend of 11 herbs & spices and then hand-breaded all day long by a certified cook."



As **KFC** Chief Marketing Officer Kevin Hochman [explained](#) to AP, one example of Re-Colonization includes paying attention to details and appearance to the minute degree that Sanders did: “The Colonel wanted no bald spots on his chicken. When you’re hand-breading chicken, and you’re doing a lot fast, you could have a bald spot. So you’ve got to make sure you inspect each piece. And if there’s extra breading, you’ve got to tap it together.”

<https://twitter.com/kfc/status/716998075915481089>

“To everyone who grew up with the familiar taste of **KFC** and has turned away from us in recent years, you can come back again,” Marker explained at the press event this week. “**KFC** is getting back to the way our founder made chicken – [The Hard Way](#) – the right way. We’re ensuring every **KFC** cook understands the Colonel’s once-patented process that helped make **KFC** the world’s most famous chicken.”





The return to its roots and getting its original recipe right are in line with its **social** media bio: "Kentucky Fried Chicken. Founded by The Colonel. Practitioners of The Hard Way. Purveyors of the World's Best Chicken."

The so-called "Re-Colonization" will affect every one of the more than 4,200 US KFC locations and include:

**Chicken Mastery Certification** – The food in every **KFC** restaurant is cooked by real cooks, freshly prepared in store every day. To help ensure consistent training across the country, managers and cooks underwent re-certification in **KFC's** "Chicken Mastery" program, retraining them in the 25-minute process for prepping and cooking Original Recipe® chicken. The process starts with quality chicken raised on US farms, which is hand breaded and seasoned with the

Colonel's Secret Recipe of 11 herbs and spices and then pressure fried.

**Colonel Quality Taste Guarantee** – **KFC** stands behind the changes it has made, and to show its commitment to doing things The Hard Way has instituted the “Colonel Quality Taste Guarantee,” which promises customers will be satisfied or the restaurant will remake the portion of their the meal they didn’t love.



KFC kicked off its Re-Colonization initiative with an internal **brand** engagement kick-off, hosting 43 rallies across the US with more than 97 percent of its restaurant general managers, followed by a national training event in each and every restaurant in the country — all in an effort to retrain every single **KFC** employee on “cooking the world’s best chicken.”





“This wasn’t a media stunt where our restaurants closed for a few hours. Over the past six months we have invested more than 100,000 hours retraining more than 20,000 employees in cooking and serving Kentucky Fried Chicken the way the Colonel intended,” said Marker at the press conference, which featured a *Saturday Night Live* alum in comic actress **Rachel Dratch**, and **KFC** US head chef **Bob Das**. “And today is the day we’re ready to welcome you back.”

[https://youtu.be/ZeaTI\\_DMCK8](https://youtu.be/ZeaTI_DMCK8)

This is not the first step in **KFC’s** turnaround, which started in earnest last year with significant reinvestments in updated restaurants, increased **marketing** spend and new equipment. **KFC** has updated kitchens with state-of-the-art equipment in 98 percent of its restaurants, set a bold goal of remodeling 3,000 restaurants over the next three years, and launched its new **advertising** campaign featuring a reintroduction of the Colonel, leading to its current iteration as portrayed by comedian [Jim Gaffigan](#).

<https://youtu.be/hBVq3NEIVTE>

While re-embracing its Original Recipe, the world’s most popular chicken restaurant chain still specializes in Extra Crispy™, Kentucky Grilled Chicken® and Extra Crispy™ Strips, Hot Wings™, Go Cups, **KFC** Famous Bowls™, Pot Pies, freshly made chicken sandwiches, biscuits and home-style side items. There are more than 19,400 **KFC** outlets in 120 countries and territories around the world, but it needs to rekindle the love in its home country.

<https://twitter.com/kfc/status/718149908348346370>

As its [press release](#) puts it, “Re-Colonization continues KFC’s journey to becoming no. 1 on taste by the end of 2017.” Customers are paying attention, as shown on its Facebook page:



*[Images via KFC]*

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