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## FINDING 3RD FRED: PHILADELPHIA BANK MARKS 90 YEARS WITH MASCOT ODYSSEY

11 weeks and counting as plush mascot shows up around the 'world';

'Newscast' on YouTube alerted the world to the disappearance of 'Third Fred,' the odd, green mascot of Philadelphia's 3rd Federal Bank in late May.

3rd Federal Bank's newscaster, Carolyn Maniscalco, alerts viewers on ways to keep up with the whereabouts of the bank's missing mascot.

By Steve Cocheo, executive editor

Since Memorial Day, Philadelphians have been treated to a hunt for '3rd Fred,' the funny-looking mascot for the city's 3rd Federal Bank. In a social media campaign using the bank's website, Facebook, Twitter, and, especially, YouTube, the bank has been updating followers on the travels of the green 'marshmallow' since his Memorial Day weekend disappearance during a parade.

'One minute he was there &hellip; The next minute, he was gone,' reported a bystander quoted in the first

of a series of YouTube reports anchored by Carolyn Maniscalco, who, when she isn't broadcasting the latest Fred sightings, is assistant marketing manager in the \$692 million-assets savings association's marketing department.

Dana Dobson, vice-president, marketing, says the campaign, an early "toe dip" into social media on multiple platforms for the bank, is working up to the eventual redesign of "3rd Fred"; and the introduction of family-friendly 3rd Fred financial spots.

The entire project has been put together by the three-employee marketing department, with guest performances by various members of the bank staff, including Kent Lufkin, president and CEO. Lufkin played himself, issuing a plea for information leading to recovery of the mascot. Other players have hammed it up as a famous explorer, a Secret Service agent, and other roles.

Dobson says production costs have been minimal. A portable "green screen" set up in Dobson's office serves as the "studio" that staff photographs Maniscalco in, as she delivers the latest update. Backdrops for "remotes" with Maniscalco and other material are added in later on a computer. Andrew Ortwein, marketing specialist, handles the technical work that combines the videography with stock backgrounds of Paris, the Great Wall of China, airports, and more. The overall result is above-average for YouTube DIY productions.

During each broadcast, a phony "crawl" appears at the bottom of the screen, also courtesy of Ortwein. Some of the comments are funny riffs on real crawls, other speak of the bank's products. Overall, however, the spots and the campaign in general avoids any kind of hard promotion.

"Social media is all about engagement, not selling," says Dobson, so the bank has been careful to keep the spots funny. Some are a bit over the top, in fact, as the character actors can be a bit more "characters" than actors.

Hundreds of visitors have watched the spots thus far, and the bank's following is gradually building on the various social media platforms tapped. Dobson says the bank has traditionally relied on print promotion, including direct mail marketing, but has been adding more and more electronic marketing to its mix.

Starting in September, the bank plans to expand its efforts with a series of 90 video spots featuring bank employees, customers, and others sharing their banking memories. Examples include folks opening their first bank accounts to signing the mortgage documents for their first home. The bank plans to air one story a day for 90 days on its website, in celebration of its 90th anniversary.

Meanwhile, the Fred spots keep evolving.

In the latest posting, he's been spotted in Los Angeles, where he shot an independent film. The scenes, appearing with captions like the one below, are narrated in French, and anyone who has watched obscure foreign films will feel right at home.

We can do no further justice to Fred's film than that, and leave it to you to click on the image below to see the spot in its entirety.

In the spot "Fred's Independent Film," viewers are "treated" to a black and white short that is reminiscent of some of the more unusual offerings on late-night public television. We suspect Fred's green tongue is firmly in cheek, and that Kermit the Frog granted special dispensation.