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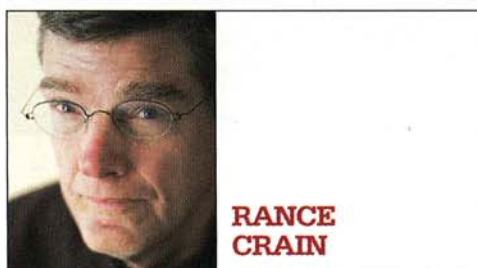
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Today's the day that all health could break loose for marketers

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THE BIG PROBLEM with the U.S. health-care system is that there are few incentives for keeping people healthy.

Doctors get paid for finding out you're sick; hospitals get paid for letting you in their beds and conducting tests on their expensive diagnostic machinery; surgeons get paid for operating on you; drug companies get paid for selling you their pills. Nobody gets paid if you stay healthy.

That's why health-care costs so much yet we're less healthy than ever. Did you know that three out of nine children born since 2000 will get diabetes? And that today's kids are the first generation of Americans who won't live as long a life as their parents?

It's nice to say that people need to eat right and exercise more, but what's needed is some sort of a trigger to encourage healthful behavior changes. What's needed is a way for healthful living to get on the calendar, so people can get in the groove of good health.

What's needed is an adman's touch, and that's where Sid Lerner enters the picture. Sid, a former creative director at the old Benton & Bowles and Norman, Craig & Kummel, serves on an advisory board of the Bloomberg School of Public Health with his wife, Helaine, and he borrowed from a wartime slogan to push "Meatless Monday" to help curb heart attacks and other prevalent maladies.

But the idea soon broadened to focus on not just nutrition but wellness in general, and the line extension Healthy Monday was born, this time under the auspices of Columbia University.

The idea is to provide an umbrella so marketers can tie in their own messages. So far Fresh Direct, Jenny Craig, Hain Celestial Group, Revolution Health and institutional feeder Chartwells are joining in with their own variations of the theme. The idea is to make Monday "the day all health breaks loose."

As the Healthy Monday website says, "People plan their lives around the week, with Monday as the start. What if each and every Monday of every week became the day to start and sustain healthy behavior? Imagine what could happen if health organizations, government agencies, voluntary health groups, schools, businesses and individuals all came together to make Monday the start of a

healthier life."

As Sid told me, there hasn't been a "hijacking" of a day of the week since Prince declared Wednesday "Prince Spaghetti Day." He added that all companies with a wellness message will benefit. Since there's no cost, no licensing fee, "people might think there's a hitch to it, or it's some Commie trick," he said.

But it isn't a pinko plot. He says the engine that will drive the campaign is the collective marketing power of the businesses and media organizations that have made Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Halloween such successful marketing events.

So far, though, the groups involved have yet to sign up an insurance company or a sneaker company. Even McDonald's, which has been blasted by nutritionists for artery-hardening foods, could tie in to boost its healthful offerings such as salads and chicken. They could call their promotion McMonday, Sid volunteered.

Dr. Audrey Cross, director of the Healthy Monday campaign, said most health promotions lack a compliance component. She added that the weekly recurrence of Monday "adds that specific, regular and repeated stimulus or reminder to act. The good part is that if you fail during any week, there's another Monday coming up to start again."

**Healthy
Monday** 