

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Ozempic Maker Tries New Ad Tack

Novo Nordisk is playing off an Apple campaign from the early 2000s

By MEGAN GRAHAM

Drugmaker **Novo Nordisk** is running ads that play off **Apple's** humorous early-aughts "Get a Mac" campaign to try to distinguish Ozempic from other GLP-1 drugs taken for Type 2 diabetes.

The new ads reunite Justin Long, who embodied a hip Mac laptop in Apple's commercials, with John Hodgman, who played a hapless PC. Long now stars as Ozempic, which he says has Food and Drug Administration approval for more indications than other GLP-1s when taken for Type 2 diabetes. Hodgman represents the other GLP-1s.

The campaign comes as Novo Nordisk's early grip on the market for GLP-1s has slipped following production challenges and mounting competition.

"2025 was a difficult year," Chief Executive Maziar Mike Doustdar said at the JP Morgan Healthcare Conference last week. "I will not belittle that one bit. But I will say, it's the curse of a leader."

As patents begin to expire for semaglutide, the key ingre-



Novo Nordisk is looking to differentiate Ozempic from other GLP-1 drugs with irreverent ads that reunite Justin Long, left, and John Hodgman of Apple's 'Get a Mac' campaign.

dient in Ozempic and sibling weight-loss treatment Wegovy, Novo Nordisk said it was focused on expanding the market overall, he said.

"Because in a number of markets we have lost exclusivity this year, we will get competition. And when you have a very high market share, competition will take some of that share away, we need to focus on the market expansion,"

Doustdar said.

The company hopes efforts like its just-released pill form of Wegovy will help.

The new ads, themed "There's Only One Ozempic," feature Long making clear that Ozempic is FDA-approved to lower the worsening risk of chronic kidney disease and cardiovascular events, unlike its drug counterparts in the space. "Ozempic has become the

category name for GLP-1s," said Ed Cinca, senior vice president of marketing and patient solutions at Novo Nordisk. "We see it day in and day out, and that's really pretty awesome as a marketer. The challenge with it, though, is that for better or worse, all of the GLP-1s are being ascribed the things that Ozempic has earned."

The campaign uses a more irreverent tone than most

pharmaceutical ads to catch consumers' attention, Cinca said.

After it begins running on social media and connected TVs this week, Cinca said Novo Nordisk would track social media to gauge its effectiveness at setting Ozempic apart from other GLP-1s.

Hodgman and Long said that though they have worked together on other projects after "Get a Mac," this is the first ad they have done together since.

"The reality is that pharmaceutical ads have become kind of themselves, generic, right?" Hodgman said. "There's lots of people dancing in slow motion in fields or driving convertibles down the Pacific Coast Highway or whatever. You don't know what they're saying. You don't even know what they're advertising, and they're certainly not helping you understand what the conversation is around the product."

Long in some ads reads a list of potential side effects and safety information for more than two minutes while Hodgman looks on silently, at times while enjoying a bowl of popcorn.

"I had not heard most of those words," Long said.

Megan Graham writes for WSJ Leadership Institute's CMO Today.

GSK Will Buy Food Allergy Treatments Company

By AIMEE LOOK

Drugmaker **GSK** said it agreed to acquire Californian biopharmaceutical company **RAPT Therapeutics** for about \$2.2 billion, a move set to bolster its respiratory, immunology and inflammation portfolio.

GSK said Tuesday that it made a deal to pay RAPT shareholders \$58 a share, with \$1.9 billion upfront investment in cash. The acquisition is expected to close in the first quarter of 2026 with an estimated aggregate equity value of \$2.2 billion.

The British company said the acquisition of RAPT included ozureprubart, an antibody that is in development for protection against food allergies. Data from the drug's trials are expected in 2027.

"The addition of ozureprubart brings another promising new, potential best-in-class treatment to GSK's pipeline," GSK Chief Scientific Officer Tony Wood said.

Though the drugmaker might still encounter various hurdles in the deal and getting the new treatment to market, GSK's agreed acquisition of RAPT is exactly the sort of risk that the big pharma firm should be taking, AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould said in a note.

"If GSK can crack the formula for a more convenient treatment, it stands to potentially make big bucks," Mould wrote to clients. Around 6% of adults in the U.K. have a food allergy, which is around 2.4 million adults there, according to the Food Standards Agency. The treatment-in-testing, which GSK would acquire as a part of the deal, could offer less-frequent dosing than alternative drugs.

Citi Hires Former Paramount Executive to Head Media Banking

By LAUREN THOMAS

Citigroup has hired former Paramount executive and longtime media banker Alex Berkett to run its media division, according to a memo delivered internally Tuesday viewed by The Wall Street Journal.

Citi has been bulking up its banker ranks under new banking head Vis Raghavan, who joined from JPMorgan in 2024. Other Wall Street firms

are making similar pushes to hire top talent to win bigger deal mandates.

Berkett is set to join the investment bank later this month and report to Dan Richards, Citi's global head of media and communications investment banking, the memo said.

Berkett started his career on Wall Street, holding various roles at Bear Stearns and then JPMorgan. He later co-founded an investment firm

focused on buying up distressed local radio stations during the financial crisis. That company, called Townsquare Media, went public in 2014.

Berkett then joined MTV parent company Viacom—what is now known as **Paramount Skydance**—to

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lead strategy and corporate development. He oversaw Paramount's sale of Simon & Schuster and was involved in its recent merger with David Ellison's Skydance.

Berkett hasn't been involved in Paramount's pursuit of Warner Bros. Discovery and

left the company at the end of last year.

The media industry has been ripe for dealmaking as advancements like AI and streaming force traditional players to rethink their businesses or consolidate.

Citi last year advised Charter Communications on its merger with Cox Communications. It has also been advising Paramount Skydance on its hostile tender offer for Warner.

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