NewsBank inc.

A stroke of Guinness - 'Crunch 'n' Munch guy' - Boston Herald (MA) - December 19, 2002 - page 67
December 19, 2002 | Boston Herald (MA) | Jill Radsken | Page 67

At the recent Patriots/Bills game, Dave Kerpen walked the food concourse as if he were mayor of the Gillette Stadium.

He high-fived the many waiting hands and willingly accepted a shower of hugs and kisses from female fans.

"I remember you," said one guy, pointing and smiling. "I remember you from the Garden."

Asked another: "You're the Crunch 'n' Munch guy, right?"

Indeed he was the Crunch 'n' Munch guy, the man who tranformed food vending into entertainment with his acrobatic act at Celts and Sox games in the late 1990s. Now Kerpen has re-established himself as the Guinness Coach - boss of 35 Guinness Guys who work the stands selling the dark Irish beer at Gillette Stadium. And he's as popular as ever.

"I basically consider myself an ambassador," said Kerpen, 26, smiling at the continued recognition.

In just a half-dozen games at Gillette Stadium, Kerpen's crew of Guinness Guys has already gained crowd recognition. Christian McMann, regional marketing manager for Guinness, said he has measured success in part by the increase in Guinness-drinking tailgaters before the game.

And Kerpen's charges have high praise for their boss's unique approach to sales.

"It's namedropping to the Nth degree," said Gareth Cook, who hawks the dark beer for Kerpen. "I've yet to meet a Boston sports fan who doesn't know who he is.

"That's the coolest part of having him as a boss - the weight that his name pulls," he added.

Cook, who sports oversized sunglasses on his scruffy face,started his Guinness gig this fall. He works the crowd enthusiastically with such phrases such "Buy Guinness - it's better than bacon" and "Breakfast in a can."

Cook performed comedy and theater in college - a set of skills that appealed to Kerpen, who did not want to hire guys with vending experience. He noted that Mickey Gallagher, one of his favorite Guinness Guys, sells only two cases per game because he's too busy doing handstands and cartwheels, and beseeching the heavens to pour down the $6.50 beers.

"I want people to go home saying, 'That Guinness guy was so funny,' " Kerpen said. "We're all about making that great impression. It's not whether we sell three or five cases."

Of course, Kerpen's persona comes, as it always has, with some drama. He got in trouble with Pats owner Bob Kraft earlier this seasonfor blowing a whistle during the game.

But "if I can't toe the line a little bit," Kerpen said defensively, "I'm not doing my job."

Kerpen hopes his gig with Guinness is the beginning of a career as a consultant to companies looking for creative marketing. He loves his role as Guinness' informal ambassador, but finds management - keeping track of cup supplies and his often-tardy staff - tiring.

"What I have to bring to the table is somewhat different than what other people do. It's my personality. It's hard to estimate that worth," he said.

And while most fans still refer to him as "the Crunch 'n' Munch guy" - or even worse, "the Cracker Jack guy" - some now know him as "Crazy Dave," or even just Dave Kerpen.

"That's a step in the right direction," he said.

Kerpen has even inspired Richard C. Whiteley, a Boston-based motivational speaker and cofounder of Forum Corp., a global training firm, to reference him in seminars. Whiteley suggests in his latest book, "Love the Work You're With," that Kerpen is an inspiration.

"Like Dave Kerpen, we can break out of our self-imposed or externally implied expectations . . . and then pour it into whatever it is we do," Whiteley wrote in the introduction.

Kerpen hopes to go global with Guinness but, if not, he's considering other options. Having recently dropped 60 pounds, he imagines himself the perfect pitchman for Weight Watchers. And a run for public office - a seat on the Medford City Council, for starters - is also a possibility.

"Jesse Ventura went from pro wrestler to governor, so the sky's the limit for the Crunch 'n' Munch guy," he said.

Caption: BEER BUNCH: Former 'Crunch'n Munch guy' Dave Kerpen, above center and top, is enjoying his new status as 'Guinness Guy Coach' at Gillette Stadium. Many fans, like Raquel Mullaney of Plymouth, top right, still recognize hi. Staff photos by Matthew West

CITATION (AGLC STYLE)

Jill Radsken, 'A stroke of Guinness'Crunch 'n' Munch guy' makes spirited career change', *Boston Herald* (online), 19 Dec 2002 67 ‹https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/1306F1716937E140›

Copyright 2002, 2010 Boston Herald