

Cassies 2004 Cases

Brand: Quebec Milk

Winner: **Off to a Good Start—Certificate of Excellence**

Client Credits: Les Producteurs Laitiers du Canada

Nicole Dubé, Marketing Director, Québec

Agency Credits : BBDO Montréal

Martin Beauvais, Executive Vice President / Creative Director

Stéphane Charier, Senior Copywriter

Patrick Chaubet, Senior Art Director

Lyne Clermont, Account Director

Caroline Singher-Boucher, Broadcast Producer

Colette Dumay, Print Production Producer

Crossover Notes: All winning cases contain lessons that cross over from one case to another. David Rutherford has been extracting these lessons (he calls them Crossover Notes) since Cassies 1997. The notes for this case are as follows, and are attached. The full set can be downloaded from the Case Library section at www.cassies.ca

- Crossover Note 1. What the Brand Stands For.
- Crossover Note 9. Turnarounds.
- Crossover Note 16. When a campaign stumbles.
- Crossover Note 14. Refreshing a continuing campaign.
- Crossover Note 11. The Eureka Insight.
- Crossover Note 18. Keeping it Simple.
- Crossover Note 31. Transcending Advertising.

To see creative, go to the Case Library Index and click on the additional links beside the case.

Executive Summary

Results Period: September 2003 to May 2004.

Start of Advertising/Communication Effort: September 15, 2003.

Base Period: September 2002 to May 2003.

From 1998 to 2003, the Quebec Milk campaign had established an unprecedented emotional connection with consumers, elevating Milk from a commodity to a valued brand. **Crossover Note 1**. However, after initial growth with this campaign, consumption had stagnated. In the base period for this case it was declining at approximately 1%.

The benefits of Milk are well known [see also the Prairies Milk case]. So was there any point in re-telling people what they already knew? What if we simply challenged them to drink more milk by saying, “One glass of milk is good, but two is better (*Un verre de lait c’est bien, mais deux c’est mieux*).”

It worked. Consumption increased 3% during the first nine months of the campaign—a major turnaround. **Crossover Note 9**. It is the first significant increase in over ten years, and comes at a time when consumption in Ontario and the Maritimes has continued to go down. In addition, the campaign outperformed previous tracking scores, and the slogan has become part of day-to-day Quebec culture.

Situation Analysis

a) Overall Assessment

Of any food or beverage, Milk is unique. From a baby’s first sip through to that perfect glass with chocolate cake, Milk has always been an integral part of people’s lives. Despite Milk’s positive perceptions, however, consumption was declining (Exhibit 1).

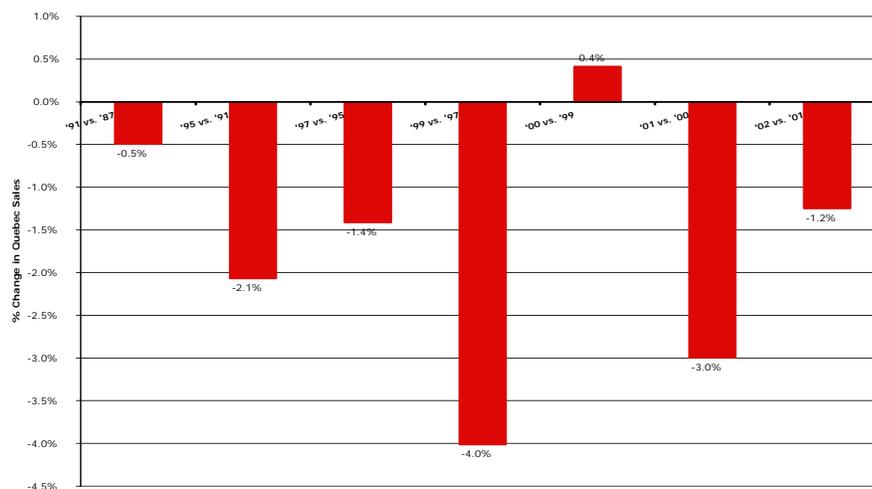


Exhibit 1 – Percentage Change in Annual Quebec Sales Volumes, 1987-2002

Source: Canadian Dairy Council, 2002.

While there was increased awareness of the need for healthy eating, the consumption of less healthy beverages had never been greater. There had been a quantum leap in the breadth and depth of beverage competition (Exhibit 2), and a proliferation of calcium alternatives. Also, while Milk had always been a staple for young children, its relevance to older people was decreasing—a critical problem when baby boomers are aging at a significant rate.

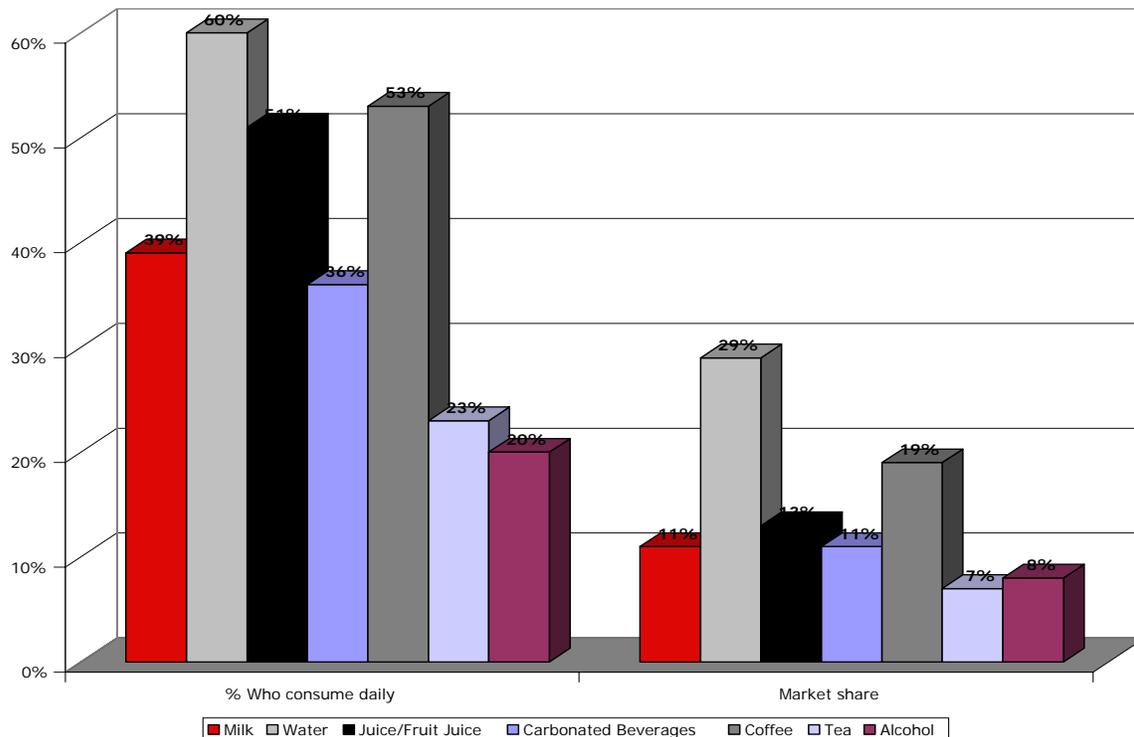


Exhibit 2 – Key Competitors in the Beverage Market

Source: Angus Reid, 2002.

In 1988 we set out to elevate Milk from a commodity to a brand—to re-establish the emotional connection and make it once again *the* chosen beverage. Leveraging Milk's brand essence, the creative was kept pure, white and natural, highlighting nostalgia, wholesomeness and comfort. Music from the past stirred emotions which—when combined with the visuals—provided a modern texture (see Exhibit 3). With this platform established, we then used print for product benefit messages.



Exhibit 3 – Sample 1998-2003 Television and Print Milk Creative

Did this 1998 – 2003 campaign work? It created an unprecedented emotional bond with consumers (see Exhibit 4).¹ In addition, it generated such momentum that a compilation of the campaign songs reached number one on the Quebec music charts.

¹ The Performance Measure is proprietary to Descarie & Complices. It is a composite based on recall, brand ID, appreciation, and understanding.

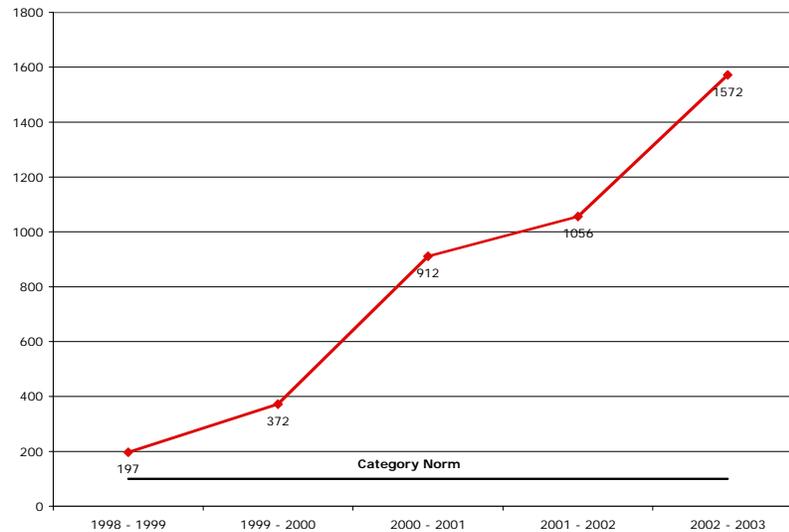


Exhibit 4 – Campaign Performance, Indexed to Category Norms (where 100 is the average).

Source: Descarie & Complices, Advertising Post Test, 2003.

b) Objectives for 2003 - 2004

Despite the undeniable emotional bond, consumption was not keeping pace. So for 2003-2004 the objective was to turn the decline around, and increase consumption.

Strategy & Insight

The strategy hinged on three insights:

1. “Leave on a high note”

Had the previous campaign reached its peak after five years? We weren’t about to find out. We wanted to breathe new life into the advertising before the emotional relevance and appreciation began to slip. We needed a new campaign that would signal change, while also bridging the gap with the past. [Crossover Notes 16 and 14.](#)

2. “You should drink at least six 8-ounce glasses of water each day”

Where did this statistic come from? We found inconsistent answers. Yet somehow it had become common knowledge. And what of Milk? The consensus was that Milk should be part of a daily diet, but how much? Current consumption hovered at 0.7 of a glass a day, well below water’s 1.8 glasses.²

The benefits of milk are well known, so we wondered *what would happen if we just reminded people that they can have two glasses instead of one?* [Crossover Note 11.](#) [Crossover Note 18.](#)

² Source: Angus Reid, 2002

3. “If it’s good for you, it must taste bad”

People are preoccupied with diet crazes (e.g. Atkins) and a desire for healthier lifestyles. While “good for you” foods often meant sacrifices, Milk did not. It was good, and good for you. We could gain additional momentum with this message.

Execution

Fall 2003

We decided to make a clean break, but come out fighting. The past campaign had a light-hearted attitude, and this became the launch pad for new creative. TV featured characters in the most unusual situations: a boyfriend trying on his girlfriend’s shoes; a Fortune 500 President playing with dolls; a wife caught in bed with another man. But what was most astonishing? They were drinking their second glass of Milk that day. “One glass of milk is good, but two is better (*Un verre de lait c’est bien, mais deux c’est mieux*).”



FPLQ_TV Campaign

Exhibit 5 – *M. le Président*. Fall 2003 Milk Television Creative

Print was rejuvenated with bold colours. Limited by regulations in the health claims that could be made, we implied performance by analogy, using batteries (flashlight), teeth (rabbit) and calcium-strong bone (robot). “One glass of milk is good, but two is better” was the only copy.



Exhibit 6 – Fall 2003 Sample Milk Print Creative

Maintaining emotions was key, so television was the primary medium. Functional health benefits ran in a variety of print media (OOH, on-site posters) selected in line with target potential and message.

Print focused on Montreal and Québec City to ensure the highest ROI. Spending was concentrated in Fall (September-November) and Spring (February-April), ensuring a consistent presence. Both flights benefited from media efficiencies: Fall from high reach and frequency, and Spring from cost per thousand reductions.

Spring 2004

The Fall effort was successful, with consumption on the rise [see numbers later]. For the Spring, we seized the opportunity to address product benefits more literally—but always in a light-hearted, familiar and approachable way:



Exhibit 7 – Spring 2004 Sample Milk Print Creative

Business Results

Driven by “Two is better,” milk sales for 2003-2004 increased by 3% during the Results Period, compared to year ago. This reversed the long-term decline in annual consumption [numbers were supplied]. On a monthly basis, virtually every month was ahead of year ago, and significantly so:

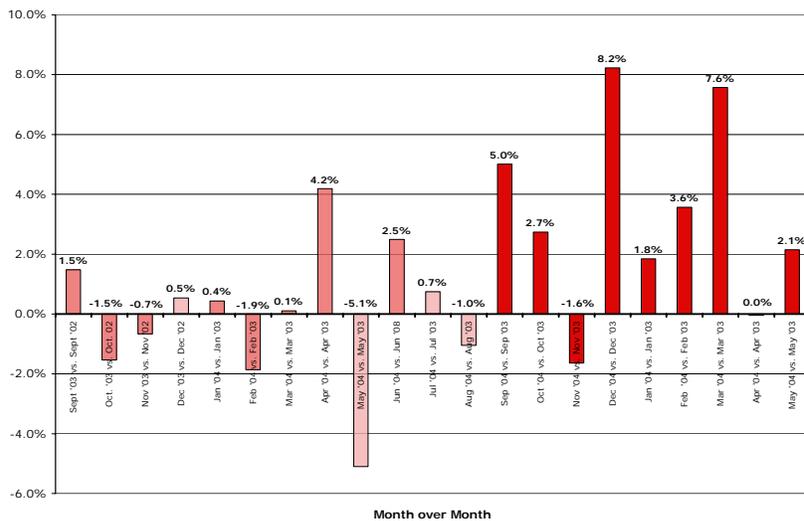


Exhibit 8 – Change in Year-Over-Year Monthly Quebec Milk Sales

Source : Canadian Dairy Council, 2004

Additionally, the campaign captured the hearts of Quebecois, with overall Performance Measures³ over-indexing category norms by as much as 1,285. Meanwhile, “*Un verre de lait c’est bien, mais deux c’est mieux*” found its way into the vernacular, becoming a common expression for anything from French award shows (“One award is good, but two is better”) to everyday life. (“One garage sale is good, but two is better” – posted on a lamppost in downtown Montreal.) **Crossover Note 31.**



Exhibit 9 – Sample Use of ‘Deux c’est mieux’ Signature in Everyday Quebec Culture.

Source : La Presse, February 14, 2004.

While the focus of the campaign is the end consumer, we were also happy that the campaign was nominated at Cannes in 2004.

Showing Cause and Effect between Advertising and Results

Four variables link the “Two is better” campaign to sales increases:

1. Volume increases coincide directly with campaign timing. As demonstrated above, September to May, in their entirety or broken down monthly, were the only periods in the past four years to see volume increases over the previous year.

³ Descarie & Complices, Advertising Post Test, March 2004. See also Footnote 1.

2. Media strategy remained unchanged. Charged with representing its 15,000 members across 9,600 farms, Les producteurs laitiers du Canada (The PLC) is limited in its media options. Mass coverage is paramount and funds are tightly controlled. Consequently in 2003-2004, there were no significant changes in media planning with the new campaign.

3. Quebec outpaced surrounding regions. The red bars show that Quebec was significantly ahead of Ontario + Maritimes, represented by the grey bars:⁴

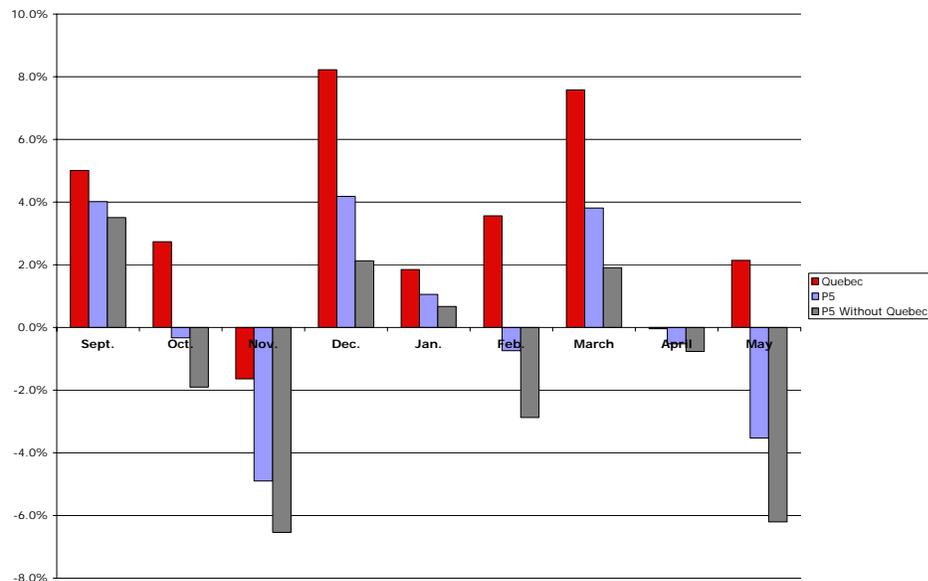


Exhibit 10 – Change in Year-Over-Year Monthly Milk Sales

Source : Canadian Dairy Council, 2004

4. The “Two is better” campaign enjoyed a superior emotional appeal that created momentum for the related increases in sales volumes. With awareness over-indexing norms at 164 and credibility and understanding at 136, it is no surprise that claimed consumption over-indexed norms at 164.⁵

End of Case. Crossover Notes follow.

⁴ P5 = Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

⁵ Descarie & Complices, Advertising Post Test, March 2004.

INTRODUCTION TO CROSSOVER NOTES — CASSIES 2004

[Quebec Milk Version]

Crossover Notes have been going for several years, and now run to 30 pages.

We used to attach the full set to each case, but to save a few trees, we are now customizing each attachment. It can still be quite long, but not 30 pages.

The idea of Crossover Notes occurred to me while I was editing Cassies 1997.

I was a consultant by then. But before that I had clambered up to the group product manager level at P&G, and been President and Vice Chairman at O&M—both in Toronto. These companies were passionate about “lessons learned,” and so was I. It’s hard to believe now, but we felt rushed off our feet even then. Compared to today, though, we had time to study if campaigns were working or not, and come to conclusions about why.

There are lessons, like gold dust, in all the Cassies cases. So in 1997 I decided to extract them. This started with bite-sized footnotes about lessons that “cross over” from one case to another. And the idea kept growing. It is still anchored to the winning cases, but I also draw on other thinking for more complex issues.

You can use Crossover Notes in two ways. Although they didn’t start out as a crash course in advertising, they are worth reading as a whole. You can also dip into them selectively. The headings on the next page will help you choose.

I’ve tried to be even-handed on controversial issues, but here and there you will sense my point of view. For this I thank the Cassies for not editing their Editor.

We now have over 120 published cases. They’re an immense and growing body of experience. I hope I’ve helped pass some of this on.

David Rutherford

Toronto: November 2004.

For comprehensive advice on brand-building, see *Excellence in Brand Communication*—authored by leading Canadians from across the marketing and advertising spectrum.

It is published by the ICA. See www.ica.adbeast.com.

INDEX OF CROSSOVER NOTES FOR CASSIES 2004

All Cases	Quebec Milk
1. What a Brand Stands For.	✓
2. Brand Truths.	
3. Core Equity versus Price & Promotion.	
4. Business Strategy dictated by the Brand Positioning.	
5. The Total Brand Experience.	
6. Should the product be improved?	(✓)
7. Fighting for the Same High Ground.	(✓)
8. Classic Rivalries.	
9. Turnarounds.	✓
10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged?	(✓)
11. The Eureka Insight.	✓
12. Changing the Goalposts.	(✓)
13. Immediate vs. Long-Term Effect.	
14. Refreshing a continuing campaign.	✓
15. Baby with the Bathwater.	(✓)
16. When a campaign stumbles.	✓
17. Turning a liability into a strength.	
18. Keeping it Simple.	✓
19. Great minds think alike.	
20. Emotional versus Rational.	
21. Likeability.	
22. Humour in a Serious Category.	
23. Problem versus Solution.	
24. Tough Topics.	
25. Brand Linkage (when should the brand name appear).	
26. Awareness Alone.	
27. Share of Mind, Share of Voice, Spending.	
28. Media Learning.	
29. Pre-emptive Media.	
30. Reach and Frequency versus Large-Space Impact.	
31. Transcending Advertising.	✓
32. Internal Marketing.	
33. Changing the Target Audience.	
34. Longer and Broader Effects, and A Closing Thought.	

The Notes for this case are marked ✓ and are attached. Some of these refer to others—marked (✓) and also attached. This then starts a chain reaction—because some of the (✓) Notes *themselves* refer to others—but we decided to stop at this point. The full set can be downloaded from the Case Library section of www.cassies.ca

QUEBEC MILK. CROSSOVER NOTES. CASSIES 2004.

1. **What a Brand Stands For.** People in real life hardly give the deeper meaning of brands a second thought. They know that some appeal more than others. They may have a sense that brands jostle for their attention. But that's about it. They certainly don't agonize over what is the *essence* of this, or the *abiding truth* of that.

But branding goes deeper than we in marketing may realize. Before marketing was even thought of, branding was part of life. Everything from national flags, to coinage, to the uniforms on soldiers, boy scouts and Supreme Court judges, to the plumage on peacocks (human and otherwise), is a form of branding. Business had an early example in the 1800s when Harley Procter of P&G heard a pastor quote a biblical text about ivory palaces. Goodbye Procter & Gamble White Soap. Hello Ivory. More recently, Tom Peters published *A Brand Called You*. And Tony Blair tried to re-brand the UK as "Cool Britannia."

A brand, in the fullest sense, is hard to define. Dictionary definitions tend to focus on the trademark aspect, and yes, branding does involve some sort of identifying mark. But this misses the point. What makes a brand *valuable*?

The answer is The Advantage of Belief.¹ Charles Revson of Revlon famously said, "In the factory we make cosmetics. In the store we sell hope." In other words, a brand is not a product; it's what people *believe* about a product. These beliefs can be immensely powerful. The most astonishing is the placebo effect. In clinical trials, many patients respond to the "sugar pill," even when they have serious diseases. We see the same thing with blind and identified product tests. With a strong brand, the preference jumps. (See *What's in a Name* by John Philip Jones.) And when the Advantage of Belief takes hold, it leads to a long list of benefits:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| a) Customer loyalty | e) Facilitating brand extensions |
| b) Higher price | f) Withstanding competitive attack |
| c) Higher cash flows | g) Motivating staff and attracting new talent |
| d) Higher long-term profitability | h) Potentially augmenting the stock price |

This doesn't, of course, answer the question, "how do you build these beliefs?" There are widely varying notions, but most agree on the basic principles: (1) stake out what the brand can and should stand for (2) stick with this over time (3) evolve to account for lessons learned and market changes.²

This can't be done by empty promises. We have to assess what consumers want against what the product delivers—and tell the story better than competitors do. We have a melting pot of perceptions and reality to work with. All the "brand" ideas are there to help—Brand Image, Equity, Personality, Character, Essence, Relationship, Footprint, Truth, Soul, Identity, and so on—along with old faithfuls like Positioning, Focus of Sale, USP, Features, Attributes, Benefits and Values. Whatever the terminology, though, "what the brand stands for" is critical.

¹ This is a phrase of mine, though the idea that a brand is "more" has been described by many authors.

² How do you do this, and evolve? See *Excellence in Brand Communication* : www.ica.adbeast.com

9. Turnarounds. There are a number of these in the Cassies:

Cassies I

- Crispy Crunch.
- Molson Canadian.
- Pepsi. Quebec.

Cassies II

- Listerine. Quebec.
- Oh Hungry? Oh Henry.
- Cassies III
- Dove. "Litmus."
- Molson Canadian. "I AM."
- Philadelphia Cream Cheese.

Cassies 99

- becel. "Young at Heart"
- Eggs.
- Sunlight. "Go Ahead. Get Dirty."
- Wonder Bread

Cassies 2001

- Kraft Dinner.
- Lipton Chicken Noodle.

Cassies 2002

- BMO Quebec.
- Campbell's Soup.
- CFL.
- Easter Seals Relay.
- Sleeman Quebec.
- Listerine.
- Pro•Line.

Cassies 2003

- Aero.
- Bait Cars.
- Crown Diamond Paint
- Dodge SX 2.0.
- Motrin.
- Pro•Line.
- Super 7.
- Université de Montréal.
- VodKice.

Cassies 2004

- Cottonelle.
- Gaz Metro.
- Kit Kat.
- Milk (Quebec and Prairies).
- Toyota Sienna.

11. The Eureka Insight. These feature in many cases. Some examples:

- Oh Henry! None of the gut-fillers had tried to own hunger, even though it was the high ground for the category. Cassies II. See also *Crossover Note 7*.
- Buckley's. Rather than side-step their bad taste, Buckley's relished it. Cassies III.
- Chrysler. Minivans were "my most expensive household appliance." Even so, *emotion* was the key to an immensely successful launch. Cassies III.
- Philadelphia Cream Cheese. In research, people often do not own up to what they really want, which in this case was "permission to indulge." Cassies III.
- Richmond Savings. Almost everyone hated banks, but it still took insight to turn this into the "Humungous Bank." Cassies III.
- Eggs are natural, but in word-association tests, consumers did not say so. (See *12. Changing the Goalposts* next.) The farmer campaign brought "natural" to life.
- Sunlight. Getting dirty is fun. This is diametrically opposed to the conventional wisdom, dominated by Tide, that clean is good and dirt is bad. Cassies 99.
- Fido in Cassies 99. Competitors were fighting on promotion/price. In an echo of Apple vs. IBM, Fido saw that consumers needed the human touch. See also Clearnet and "the future is friendly" in Cassies 2001.
- Diet Pepsi found a way to be youthful without being too young in the "forever young" campaign. Cassies 2002.
- Listerine in Cassies 2002: healthy gums, after a century talking about bad breath.
- Pro•Line in Cassies 2002: Appealed to non-experts with "Anyone can win."
- Aero. Saw the power of "melting" in Cassies 2003.
- Crown Diamond. Used the fact that men hate to paint in Cassies 2003.
- Super 7. Ignored the political correctness of being tasteful. Cassies 2003.
- Cottonelle. Talked to women as women, not as "family." Cassies 2004.
- Quebec Milk. Saw the blindingly obvious. That just asking people to drink more milk might cause it. Cassies 2004.
- Toyota Sienna. Realized that the answer lay not in what minivan buyers do, but in what SUV buyers do. Cassies 2004.
- Virtually all the cases in *Crossover Note 10*.

14. Refreshing a continuing campaign. When I was at P&G, and later at O&M, all the big advertisers and their agencies thought in terms of campaigns. If we were developing new advertising, the comment “that’s just a one-off” was a kiss of death.

In those days, a campaign was usually defined by what a brand did on television. There would be one commercial, or a pool, and they would be refreshed over time. Nowadays, influenced by the ideas of “media neutrality” and “every point of contact,” a campaign is more complicated. But it’s fair to say that we (clients and agencies) still believe that campaigns are the right/best way to build a brand.³

The belief in campaigns evolved intuitively. But more recently, the idea of “the brand relationship” has taken hold. This is the notion that (in a way) we treat brands like friends. Brand Truths can come out of this type of thinking, as can other insights. I know of one researcher who says, “I want to know what you think of the brand, but I also want to know what the brand thinks of you.”

Relationships themselves can be very different, but for most people, they are based on things like trust and consistency, without being boring or predictable. This has led to the idea that brands should present a consistent face over time (assuming, of course, that they are standing for the right thing in the first place.)

So the intuitive belief is in line with the “relationship” view. There is still the question, though, of what is a campaign? At one time, packaged goods advertisers (and some agencies) believed in strict pool-outs. But campaigns do not have to be this tightly formatted. The following list starts at the most rigid and extends to the most holistic. All the examples have successes and failures, and the list is not a comprehensive one because some campaigns don’t lend themselves to being categorized. It will give an idea of the possibilities, however and (I hope) free up what can be rigid thinking:

- **Strict Pool-Out.** Campaigns like “Who wants Gum? I do. I do.” A similar situation is pooled out time after time, in a repeated format, often with a USP demo or slogan. Some people think this type of advertising is passé. Others remember it fondly, and wonder what happened to the way it used to be.
- **Hall of Fame Pool-Out.** Some think pool outs are dull, boring, predictable and clichéd. Not necessarily. The 20-odd year campaign for Hamlet cigars in the UK is rigidly formatted, but is spectacularly creative and effective.
- **Situational Pool-Out.** These don’t have the format of the strict pool out but still have a clear connection between executions. Diet Pepsi’s “forever young” and Pro•Line’s “anyone can win” are examples. So are Fido (dogs) and Clearnet/Telus (flora and fauna). Huggies “Happy Baby” is one of the longest-running.

This category includes spectacular executions like “Manhattan Landing” and “Face” for British Airways, though it can be hard to keep coming up with ideas this big. Kit Kat is a different example, where the idea of “break” continues, and the challenge is to keep it up to date.

³ A 30-something creative friend said to me, “where does this belief in campaigns come from? Young people today want constant change. What’s so wrong with a stream of one-off ideas?” This would have been seen as heresy at one time, and perhaps still is. But it’s food for thought.

- **Icons.** These can anchor a campaign (Maytag Man, Marlboro Cowboy) or be a property (Tony the Tiger, Pillsbury Doughboy). As I write this Michelin is trying to make more of the Michelin Man. Some see icons as a yesterday idea, but I think that's a mis-call—it depends how it's done. Absolut Vodka uses its bottle as an icon, and it's brilliant. The Familiprix pharmacist is hilariously effective, and could become an icon (the creative is in the case history section at www.cassies.ca)
- **Spokes-people, and Spokes-animals.** Dave Thomas and Colonel Sanders, god rest their souls, are examples, as is Morty the Bison for Manitoba Telecom.
- **Storytelling with continuing character(s).** The Oxo family in the UK is one of the longest-running examples. Bartles and Jaymes was a wonderful success story in the US. Personalities have been very successful in Quebec e.g. the Pepsi and Listerine Grand Prix winners in Cassies I and II.
- **Music-Based.** Music sometimes goes beyond a supporting role, and becomes part of the brand character. Soft Drinks, Cars, Fast Food, and Beer have all built campaigns this way. In packaged goods, becel's "young at heart" campaign would be an example.
- **Consistent "Voice and Attitude."** These campaigns are held together by something more subtle than anthems, slogans, structure, and icons. Perhaps the most impressive was Volkswagen in the 60s. Individual executions were very different (some serious, some comical, some ironic, some dramatic) but they all had the Volkswagen voice and attitude. Brands like Nike are in this category. Benneton is an extreme example. As I write this, I'm remembering some Fedex ads that would fit this category ("I have an MBA" and "You're a heck of a man doing a heck of a job, Lewis.")
- **Same core message. Customized execution.** To people with a "pool-out" mindset, this hardly qualifies as a campaign at all, because individual executions are totally different. But the overall effect can be very powerful.

The best Cassies example is the 4-year Dove case, which has been used to illustrate a number of points in these notes. The campaign started in late 91 with "Litmus," a scrupulously simple demonstration, with a haunting music track, no voice over, no people, and the story in supers. Then came the exact opposite: a raucous candid-camera commercial of women in a focus group doing the litmus test for themselves. Then another shift—to a talking-head message from the scientist who invented Dove. Finally, back to another demonstration—this one like "Litmus" in tonality, repeating the haunting music.

Someone with a strict pool-out mental model What held the campaign together was a continuing promise (mildness), an element of surprise, and a straightforward & honest brand character. The format varied completely, with no continuing slogans or visual icons.

Note: It is usually not a good idea to pre-set the type of campaign you need. Best practice is (1) define the issue (2) create the best solution (3) let the type of campaign fall out of this.

It's an open question whether today's obsessively short-term attitude is causing us to lose the drive we once had for creating great campaigns. I hope it isn't.

16. When a campaign stumbles. This might be a momentary stutter and (if we were clairvoyant) we would make a minor fix, and keep a long-running campaign going. But it might be the first clue that something is going dangerously off the rails. There's no crystal ball, and the pressure of the situation can lead to snap (and wrong) judgments. The best answer usually comes from applying a blend of experience, judgment, intuition, vision, and research. Here are some pointers.

1. **Dig deep into trends and tastes.** You could be on the wrong side of a tectonic shift: a remorseless re-shaping that transforms everything. Tectonic shifts can be massive. "Made in Japan" used to mean a cheap, shlocky, knock-off, and North American business took years to see what was coming. *Crossover Note 6*. The entire geography of marketing and communication is a tectonic shift, with the added thrill that the tectonic plates are moving fast. In terms of brands, consider Listerine. "Always a bridesmaid, but never a bride" started life in a Listerine advertisement, reflecting a bad breath positioning that had been in place for as long as anyone can remember. But a shift was happening, towards the idea of a healthy mouth. (See Cassies 1995 and 2002). Something similar has happened in toothpaste. At one time, Pepsodent ("you'll wonder where the yellow went...") was the leader, and whitening was the high ground. Crest came along with fluoride (and dental association endorsement). This transformed the market, and Pepsodent slid into history. Over the next generation, though, cavities stopped being the problem they once were.⁴ The market started to shift towards "mouth health" and Colgate got there first with Colgate Total, knocking Crest off its #1 perch. Crest responded with Crest Complete—and now the whole market has come full circle with a furious battle for whitening again.
2. **Look at the goalposts.** If they really haven't changed, then it's likely that you just have a short-term stutter to fix. But if they have, try to envisage the new game. See *11. The Eureka Insight*, and *12. Changing the Goalposts*.
3. **Think through the change needed.** See *6. Should the product be improved?* and *14. Refreshing a Continuing Campaign*.
4. **Make change for the right reasons.** It's broadly true that long-running campaigns—kept fresh and relevant—are great brand-builders. And it's sadly true that new people, wanting to make their mark, make change for change's sake. But once in a while, wholesale change is right.

Molson Canadian (Cassies I) was a niche player when it launched "What Beer's all About" in the late 80s. This put Canadian in the mainstream, and it took over from Labatt Blue as market leader. You'd think they'd want to keep going with "What Beer's all About." And they did for a few years. But they realized tastes and trends were shifting. To stay ahead of this, they launched "I AM" in the mid 90s (Cassies III). This was successful but eventually it too ran out of steam, and Canadian re-incarnated again with "Joe's Rant," as described in Cassies 2001. See also *15. Baby With The Bathwater*.

Note: Many "turnaround" cases have faced issues of this sort. In Cassies 2004, Desjardins, Quebec Milk, Kit Kat and Sienna would be examples.

⁴ Ironically, Crest had helped make this happen, by driving the whole market in this direction.

18. Keeping it Simple. We know that complicated things go over our heads. But when it comes time to approve a creative strategy there's an urge to cram things in. This has to be resisted. Procter & Gamble called it "the pain of leaving things out."

Scott Bedbury ("the client" at Nike and Starbucks) blames clients for wanting too much in. Given what's at stake, it's easy to see why a client doesn't want to leave things out. But Bedbury has a point. It's hard for an agency to say no when the client says, "why not leave it in."

There's a sub-set of this when a brand has an emotional benefit *and* a rational claim. Examples would be (1) Philly in Cassies III with "permission to indulge" and "60% less fat." (2) Scotiabank in Cassies 2002, selling individual services and creating an overall image (3) Campbell's Soup in Cassies 2002, wanting to modernize its image, and get nutrition facts across. Something has to give i.e. the more points you want to make, the lower the impact of each. Agencies may try to point this out, or may stay silent. This is where experienced research companies can help. They have evidence-based answers as to the trade-offs involved.

The points so far have been at the strategic level, but the execution should also be simple—or, said better, *simple for the audience to take in.*⁵ Here, we have to watch for the fact that we know what we are trying to say, and so an ad may not be as simple or clear as we think it is. A director can also complicate or simplify a commercial in ways that evolve after a script is approved.

Overall, though, it's noticeable that virtually all Cassies advertising is simple.

31. Transcending Advertising. A number of Cassies campaigns have transcended advertising in the sense that they have moved into popular culture—at least for a while. Generally, advertisers and agencies are pleased when this happens, though there are usually some nay-sayers asking questions like "Is it on strategy? Is it relevant? Is it building the business?"

This happened with Wendy's. "Where's the Beef?" had a lot more than 15 minutes of pop-culture fame. But did it help the business? I've seen arguments on both sides. Budweiser and "Whassup" faced similar questions, though I think the consensus is that it was good for the brand. Cassies cases that mention this effect—always positively—include Richmond Savings (Cassies III); Molson Canadian, Tourism New Brunswick, Manitoba Telecom (Cassies 2001); Bank of Montreal and ED (Cassies 2002); Familiprix, Irving Mainway Coffee and Motrin (Cassies 2003); Desjardins and Quebec Milk (Cassies 2004).

Viral marketing is the latest incarnation of effort that transcends advertising. There has not yet been a Cassies winner based on this, but it would be good to see one.

⁵ This is an "eye of the beholder" issue. My kids have no problem processing ads that I find very busy. They don't "get" some ads that I understand perfectly—and so on.

ADDITIONAL (✓) CROSSOVER NOTES

- 6. Should the product be improved?** Some years ago it was an axiom of marketing that your product, at a functional level, must have an advantage over its competitors. In packaged goods, for example, it was considered foolish to launch a new brand unless it was a blind test winner over its major competitor—ideally overall, and at least for a highly desirable benefit.⁶

That thinking has shifted, and it's commonly said today that it's impossible to sustain a functional advantage; that competition can match you in a matter of weeks or months, or even days with some technological products. This has had a paradoxical effect. Some people are almost frenzied in their desire to keep their product (or service) improving—fearing that if they don't, they will be left behind. Others go into a slipstream mode—letting others face the headwinds, then matching what they do.

John Philip Jones (the much published Professor of Communication at Syracuse University) is vocal on this, saying that we do *not* live in a parity world—that imitators may try to match the innovators, but they often don't quite succeed. His view (and I share it) is that it is dangerously complacent to assume that functional parity is the way of the world.

Another danger is the belief that “marketing” can compensate for a weak product. This led to the debacle a decade or two ago when North America systematically under-invested in product. The Japanese, and later the Europeans and others, did exactly the opposite—and carved out the market shares we see today.

There's no question that the cost to upgrade a product can be daunting, especially with the financial pressure to deliver short-term returns. Nevertheless, many Cassies cases reflect the investment. For example:

- Listerine in Quebec in Cassies II, with an improved taste.
- Chrysler in Cassies III, with the NS Minivan.
- Pontiac Sunfire in Cassies III.
- St Hubert in Cassies 99, upgrading their entire operation.
- Sunlight in Cassies 99, with improved cleaning.
- Home Furnace in Cassies 2002.
- Lipton Sidekicks in Cassies 2002.
- Irving Mainway Coffee and Source Yogurt in Cassies 2003.
- MINI in Cassies 2003.
- Motrin in Cassies 2003, adding stronger skus.
- VodKice in Cassies 2003, remodelling the Boomerang portfolio.
- Cirque du Soleil in Cassies 2004, by adding Zumanity to their portfolio.
- Kit Kat in Cassies 2004, keeping Original the same, but launching Chunky.
- Toyota Sienna in Cassies 2004, with multiple upgrades.

⁶ There was still the “pre-emptive” possibility i.e. staking out a convincing claim for a parity benefit before anyone else did. But, in general, having a product edge was seen as important

6. Should the product be improved? (cont'd). Still others achieve their gains with no change in product—though the existing product is in all cases good, and sometimes better than the competition. These cases would include:

- Crispy Crunch in Cassies I.
- Pepsi in Quebec in Cassies I.
- Oh Henry! in Cassies II.
- Buckley's, Dove, and Philadelphia Cream Cheese in Cassies III.
- Eggs, becel, and Wonderbread in Cassies 99.
- Kraft Dinner and Lipton Chicken Noodle in Cassies 2001.
- Campbell's, Diet Pepsi, Listerine, and Pro•Line in Cassies 2002.
- All the major beer winners over the years.
- Aero, Dodge SX 2.0, Familiprix, Super 7, in Cassies 2003.
- Cottonelle and Milk in Cassies 2004.

Technology cases are harder to categorize, but usually have improvements. Service companies (e.g. Desjardins, Gaz Metro, Réno Dépôt in Cassies 2004) may not have radical surgery, but often make improvements as part of the “total brand experience.” Some cases make the point (e.g. Clearnet in Cassies 2001 and Lipton Sidekicks in Cassies 2002) that if your functional advantage is going to be matched, you had better develop an advantage through brand personality/character/equity. There is no cookie-cutter answer. Each situation has to be assessed on its merits.

7. Fighting for the Same High Ground. A brand has to be distinctive. Some take this to mean that you should not fight for high ground already held by a competitor. It comes out as “our positioning has to be unique.” This sounds so right, how can it be wrong? Consider Cassies III. Lever wanted to pre-empt the arrival of Oil of Olay bar from the US, and decided to kick-start Dove sales via new advertising. They had a spectacular demonstration of mildness. When Dove is subjected to a litmus test, the paper does not change. With soaps—including Ivory—the paper turns an ugly blue. But Ivory owned mildness. Those against fighting for the same high ground predicted disaster. But Dove attacked anyway. Four years later Dove was up 73% in dollar sales, and Ivory had dropped to half of Dove's dollar share. And how do you decide whether to attack or not? On winnability. Ivory held the mildness position, but with “litmus” Dove had a superb claim on that territory.

The key is how you think about distinctiveness. It is certainly essential, *but it does not have to come from positioning*. Consider Duracell and Energizer. Duracell staked out “lasts longer,” and Energizer languished in other territory for years. Eventually they decided to attack, and the Energizer Bunny has been going and going ever since. Both brands have the high ground positioning. They get their distinctiveness from *execution*. One last case. Sunlight wanted to attack Tide on cleaning, but decided that a frontal assault would almost certainly fail. So they re-defined “clean” as the joy of getting dirty, and won the Grand Prix in Cassies 99.

[I'm not saying you should *always* attack occupied high-ground—just debunking the idea that it has to be a mistake. In Cassies 2004, Cottonelle, Desjardins, Gaz Metro and Réno Dépôt were all successful by sidestepping or redefining the high ground. Even so, the high ground is still one of the first places I look.]

10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged? Conventional wisdom will sometimes be right. But it can also be a roadblock. When US Pepsi executives saw the Pepsi Challenge, they apparently said, "that's not Pepsi," and rejected it. The Dove Litmus campaign (*Crossover Note 7*) ran into a fusillade of disapproval at client/agency global head offices—and only survived because the Canadian team stuck to their guns. Here are others that went against the tried and true:

- Crispy Crunch in Cassies I, making a virtue of greed—a taboo in confectionery.
- Richmond Savings in Cassies III, poking fun at the Humungous banks.
- Sunlight in Cassies 99, saying it's OK to get dirty.
- Fido and Clearnet, using dogs and frogs. Cassies 99 and 2001.
- Various financial accounts—so many that humour, wit and charm have almost become the new conventional wisdom for the category: AGF in Cassies 99, Clarica in Cassies 2001. BMO Quebec and Scotiabank in Cassies 2002.

Others from Cassies 2002:

- Bud Light, not going after the young, legal-age, male heavy drinker.
- CFL, against younger viewers, accepting they might alienate the core franchise.
- ED, going high-profile with a taboo topic.
- Five Alive, switching from Moms to young males.
- Irving Home Furnaces, using age as a plus for attracting attention.
- Labatt Bleue, breaking the Christmas “Happy Holidays” tradition.
- Pine-Sol, breaking the conventions of household cleaner advertising.
- Sleeman in Quebec, embracing the English heritage with “honest frenglish.”
- Sloche, rejoicing in being politically and nutritionally incorrect.

From Cassies 2003:

- Bait Cars, talking directly to criminals.
- Crown Diamond Paint, advertising that men hate painting.
- Familiprix, using humour to sell health products.
- Irving Mainway Coffee, making a virtue of the caffeine hit.
- Toyota Matrix, breaking all the Toyota “rules.”
- Sola Nero, could not be further away from wine snobbery.
- Super 7, reveling in the excesses of the super-rich.
- Université de Montréal, with no smiling students and ivy covered buildings.

From Cassies 2004:

- Cirque du Soleil—as a corporate philosophy.
- Elections Ontario, resisting the temptation to use social responsibility.
- Miller campaign, throwing out the conventions of political advertising.
- Réno Dépôt, investing in the brand, rather than “price and item.”
- Toyota Sienna, with their “cool minivan” thinking.

12. Changing the Goalposts. Some insights come from suddenly seeing what was always there to be seen. (Sunlight's Cassies 99 joy of getting dirty would be an example.) Others re-frame the problem, such as:

- Cow Brand Baking Soda's extended usage.
- Johnson's Baby Shampoo's adult re-positioning.
- Cereals trying to get eaten as a late night snack.

Insights can also spring from what is *not* being said. The Eggs case in Cassies 99 is an example. Word-association tests played back any number of benefits, but did *not* identify that eggs are natural. Somehow, this omission caught the agency's eye, and they turned "natural" into a powerful campaign using real farmers. This turned around a 17-year decline.

Purina is another example. At one time, everyone sold dog-food on taste and nutrition. Not surprisingly, consumers played back that these were important, reinforcing the conventional wisdom. Suddenly, the team at Scali/Purina saw the significance of the unspoken (and deeper) truth—that a dog is part of the family. This led to the immensely effective "helping dogs lead longer lives" campaign.

Purina also points up another way to get insights—by looking beyond Canada. Similar thinking had produced the famous "prolongs active life" campaign for PAL dogfood in the UK.

15. Baby with the Bathwater. Campaigns can run out of steam, and it may be right to throw everything out (*Crossover Notes 14 and 33*). But it's worth checking to see if anything should be kept. "I am Canadian" from the "I AM" campaign in Cassies III was discarded when the campaign later faltered. It came back with "Joe's Rant," with a twist. The Campbell's Kids re-appeared in Cassies 2002 after years in oblivion. It will be interesting to see how this plays out. Cottonelle in Cassies 2004 knew that they had properties in the cottony soft jingle etc. But these were also dating the brand. So they found a way to use the jingle in a tongue in cheek way.

Quite often, long-running properties get discarded because the people who believe in them move off the brand. On Smarties, this happened with "Red Ones Last," though I see that it has come back, in a back-handed way. (I'm referring to the ad with two nerdish guys in the office who—in their own minds at least—get the girl.) Sometimes they are discarded for a good reason. Dove's "pour shot" had appeared in every commercial since launch. For Litmus (Cassies III) the Canadian team decided to drop it—to help consumers see Dove in a new way. Despite this logic, the international powers-that-be (at client and agency) reacted as if Dove was at risk of imminent death, and said so in no uncertain terms. Their sense of bereavement turned to horror when their advice was ignored. The "Litmus" commercial ran without the pour shot, and was immensely successful. Interestingly enough, when people were asked if the commercial had the pour shot in it, a goodly number said yes.

This is an important point about long-running properties. Many people believe they should be used in every piece of communication—and in the normal run of things, this is a good idea. But if you have reason to drop a property for a while⁷ consumers will not forget it. These images have a grip on long-term memory. Think about it this way. Imagine you want to *erase* an image that has got its hooks into the consumer's mind. Could you do it? I watched Lever try for years to erase Wisk's "ring around the collar" image. It wouldn't budge. That said, my view is that (in general) we are too quick to change things—probably because we want to leave our imprint on the brands we are entrusted with.

One of the main reasons brands are valuable, as covered in *Crossover Note 1*, is that they accumulate added values over time. There is no formula for doing this, but the evidence says it does not happen if a brand keeps changing the face it presents.

I need to stress that I am *not* advocating no change, but something closer to Paul Feldwick's "exercise" model in *Crossover Note 13*. Let the effort on the brand be part of a coherent program, evolving as needed over time, all building brand muscle.

A CLOSING THOUGHT

Throughout my career the unspoken assumption is that advertising has to help make things *grow*—brands, businesses or both. And what could be wrong with that?

But the engines on an airliner not only help it climb, they save it from falling out of the sky. There is inescapable evidence that if a brand is unsupported, it may glide for a while, but eventually it will fall. Or, to use another analogy, a successful brand is like a goose laying golden eggs. If it didn't lay as many eggs as you wanted it to, would you starve it? I don't think so. But that is what we seem to do with brands.

David Rutherford

⁷ On Prairie Milk in Cassies 2004 they dropped the classic pour shot because it is a cliché to teenagers.