

Cassies 2007 Cases

Brand/Case: Coors Light

Winner: Sustained Success—Silver

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Crossover Notes: All winning cases contain lessons that cross over from one case to another. David Rutherford has been identifying these as Crossover Notes since Cassies 1997. The full set for Cassies 2007 can be downloaded from the Case Library section at www.cassies.ca

- Crossover Note 1. What a Brand Stands For.
- Crossover Note 2. Brand Truths.
- Crossover Note 5. The Total Brand Experience.
- Crossover Note 10. Conventional Wisdom. Should it be challenged?
- Crossover Note 14. Refreshing a continuing campaign.
- Crossover Note 33. Changing the Target Audience.

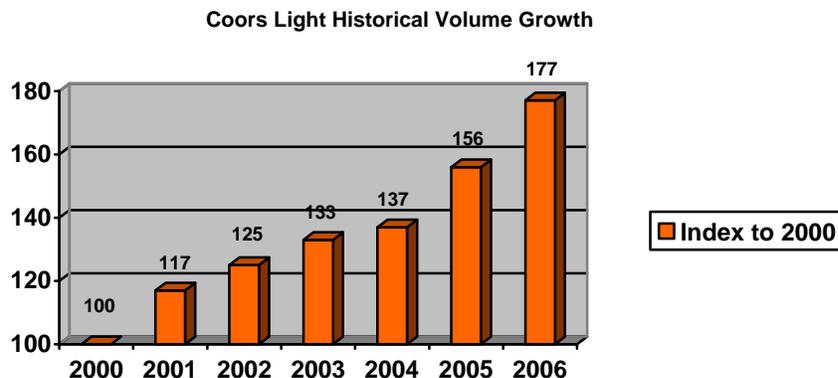
To see creative, go to the Case Library Index and click on the additional links beside the case.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business Results Period (consecutive months): January 2002 – December 2006
Start of Advertising/Communication Effort: January 2002
Base Period for Comparison: January 2000 – December 2001

In January 2002, Coors Light was a brand at a crossroads. Since its launch in 1984 it had become the best selling light beer in Canada. However this success had been built on a user base that was older, more female and drank less than the young male beer drinker. Coors Light had become synonymous with low volume occasions. This meant that continued growth was going to have to come from elsewhere. The team set itself a task; to take Coors Light from being the #1 light beer in Canada to becoming the #1 mainstream beer in Canada.

As a result of the campaign shown in this case, Coors Light found the answer. It has become the #2 beer in the country behind only Budweiser, and continues to grow.



(Source, Molson Coors)

SITUATION ANALYSIS

a) Overall Assessment

In 2002 a superficial analysis of Coors Light would reveal a strong brand. It was growing in share and volume and had carved out a strong position. This came from the brand's history. It had capitalized on lifestyle trends like health, fitness and lower caloric intake. Creatively, it had leveraged its Rocky Mountain heritage to communicate a healthy, active, fun lifestyle. Coors Light was seen as easier to drink because it didn't bloat you the way mainstream beers did. **Crossover Note 10.**

However, the Coors Light loyal drinkers were getting older and they were lighter drinkers. The concept of extended adolescence, whereby young men and women were putting off responsibility and adulthood meant that they were skipping over the need state that light beer, particularly as defined by Coors Light, had been created to fill. At one time a young man in a focus group said that he had tried the beer "once with an uncle at a funeral" – Ouch! Coors Light wasn't relevant to their lifestyle. Furthermore, the fact that it appealed to women made it inappropriate for young adult men. **Crossover Note 1.**

At the same time competition was heating up. Labatt Blue and Molson Canadian were riding the success of “Out of the Blue” and “I am Canadian.” Furthermore mainstream beers were feeling pressure on three fronts; (1) super-premiums such as Stella Artois and Heineken were growing in acceptance by young drinkers trading up for small luxuries, (2) value brands were becoming real players, particularly in Ontario, Quebec and Alberta, and (3) spirits, wine and alco-pops were trying to mimic or even replace the role of beer. Additionally young drinkers had grown up on sweet and sugary diets and were loath to change their taste palate as they reached an age of majority. Beer was becoming a less popular choice, in the face of alternatives like wine, spirits and alcopops.

However, men from legal drinking age (LDA) to age 29 still represented 45% of all beer drinkers and 55% of all category volume. For Coors Light to continue to grow it was going to have to find a way to appeal to them. **Crossover Note 33.**

It was apparent that Coors Light had to do something completely different. This represented a tremendous risk, both by potentially alienating the existing core drinkers, as well as by walking away from a successful formula for one with huge potential upside, matched with massive potential downside should the attempt fail.

b) Resulting Business Objectives

To become the #1 beer brand in Canada meant changing the positioning to reflect a new target, need state and mindset, without disrupting a loyal and valuable existing user base.

c) Range/Share of Voice

With the decision to focus effort towards a younger, more active male drinker, spend levels were increased to compete with the more prominent brands in the market.

SOV	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Coors Light	6.1	4.5	7.8	9.2	10.7	10.9	10.7
Canadian	13.1	9.3	9.9	10.6	12.0	12.4	8.1
Bud	9.5	8.8	7.8	9.8	7.9	8.4	9.5
Bud Light	5.3	3.8	3.2	3.9	3.9	7.6	7.2
Blue	13.7	10.8	11.0	11.9	8.3	9.5	7.6

Source, ACNielsen Advertising Tracking, 2000 - 2006

The predominant difficulty Coors Light faced was that even when it increased media spending to match that of its competitors it was severely outspent in the sponsorship arena. Molson Canadian was known for significant sponsorship of hockey and music, Budweiser had a huge commitment and visibility through the NFL, and Labatt Blue had just spent over \$100 million securing the rights to Hockey Night in Canada. The result was that in non-measured spend the competition had achieved high levels of visibility and relevance to young male beer drinkers before they had even run an ad.

STRATEGY & INSIGHT

a) Analysis and Insight

Five themes highlighted a path to a positioning that could provide lasting relevance in a shifting marketplace:

1. Changing taste profiles – A 19 year old guy had grown up on pop, candy and pre-sweetened foods. What was bemoaned in health circles was also resulting in a push away from beer, which was seen as bitter and unpalatable by young adults. This was not only leading to a shift within beer to lighter tasting liquids; it was leading to a flat to declining category overall.
2. Learning from U.S – Due to an anomaly in legislation light beer had been marketed in the U.S. completely differently. While here it was a choice for lesser alcohol, in the U.S. it had been positioned as less filling. As a result, light beer in the U.S. had been adopted on college campuses as the best option for high octane occasions. In Canada the recent acceptance of diet colas indicated that properly positioned lighter offerings had room in the market.
3. Presence of a parent brand – The majority of light beers have been marketed as the light version of an established brand. This resulted in the consumer seeing it as a lesser version of the parent. Coors Light wasn't saddled with this baggage in the eyes of young drinkers.
4. The frenetic energy of young adults – Extended adolescence meant not letting the trappings of adulthood stifle what could be the best time in a young guy's life. The money from a job was freedom; responsibility shouldn't get in the way.
5. Beer had become serious – Under the threat of brands like Heineken and Stella Artois the beer industry was trumpeting heritage, brewing tradition and rational benefits at the expense of beer's historic strength – fun. Young guys were still turning to beer to play a role in the fun parts of their lives, and they weren't seeing that reflected in the offerings of mainstream beer.

Each of these insights would influence aspects of the brand as it developed. However it was when we looked at them en masse that we were able to develop an idea of what Coors Light could uniquely offer young active drinkers. A beer for when they were doing more than just drinking.

b) Business Strategy

Overcoming 17 years of history was going to be a monumental task. Once a new positioning was in market it was going to require significant street level activity to open the minds of young drinkers to what Coors Light had to offer. Strategically, the new brand personality drove all elements of marketing and business strategy. Packaging would evolve over time to reflect a young and vibrant image, sales teams would focus on youth accounts in order to drive awareness and proximity, and sponsorships would shift from rodeo and slow pitch to moto-cross and wakeboarding.

It was also decided that it would be necessary to demonstrate a commitment to things that young guys thought were important. This meant taking an active role in smaller regional and local events; the type that the big national breweries traditionally ignored. **Crossover Note 5.**

c) **Communication Strategy:**

For a brand to become a leader it couldn't merely ape the attitude and personality of its target drinkers. It needed to develop a personality and a voice that earned a right to be a part of the party.

Young adult oriented brands generally fell into two camps. There were "skateboarding monkey" brands which inserted themselves into a scenario and tried to earn consumer affinity through proximity; these brands usually ended up looking as if they were wearing their younger brother's clothes, and young adults were able to see through this approach. Then there were brands that became a part of the culture they were looking to infiltrate. They weren't just using the words. They understood their meaning and believed in the core values of the target group. These brands earned lasting and enduring affinity from this most fickle of target groups.

With this learning we decided that there were only two things that Coors Light cared about – brewing an ice cold easy drinking beer, and having a great time all the time. As long as we remained true to these principles, young adult males would make us a part of their good times. **Crossover Notes 1 and 2.**

CREATIVE EXECUTION

The creative idea was the "Coors Light Brewing Company" (CLBC), a mythical organization whose mission was to ensure that our drinkers had a good time all the time.



The strength of the CLBC was that it personified the brand. While a consumer would dismiss the notion that a bottle of beer wanted to be a part of the action, the idea that the people behind the brand used their jobs as a flimsy excuse to be a part of the party could ring true. Dimension was added through casting John O'Hurley (J. Peterman on Seinfeld) as the voice of the CLBC. His voice-over nailed the self-effacing wit that said that the CLBC didn't take itself too seriously; it was here for the good times, just like you.

The CLBC launched on January 15, 2002 with three spots that ran in succession through the year. “Learning,” “Fieldwork” and “Being There” communicated the mission of the CLBC—to have a good time all the time and brew Coors Light with an ice cold easy drinking taste. The spots laid the groundwork for the continuation of the campaign and clearly communicated that while the CLBC said that they were there for the consumer, the end message was that they *were* the consumer. Sure, they wanted to get their beer in your hands, but they were going to have as much fun as they could along the way.

In the spots the CLBC guys (dressed in red shirts) appear at various social locations; bars, clubs, the beach, patios. The CLBC became a part of the action while O’Hurley waxed on in an over-the-top manner about the seriousness of our mission, establishing the voice of the brand that would endure until today.



“Learning”



“Field Work”



“Being There”

Radio ran is support, creating even more ridiculous ways the organization is out there helping their drinkers.

Beginning in June 2002, out of home ran for the first time. It used humour that young male drinkers could identify with.



As the campaign evolved, it found new ways to break through. **Crossover Note 14.** In 2003 “Trucker” told the story of how the CLBC will stop at nothing to deliver that ice-cold, easy-drinking taste to our consumers. The driver stops for a women’s ski team whose bus has broken down. Apart from signalling the brand as just regular guys who think regular thoughts, the truck icon allowed us to romance the brand, product and some of its rocky mountain provenance, while the continued voice of the brand with its self deprecating tone. This spot proved to be the first of many “truck-themed” ideas that have delivered strong brand link and critical quality scores.



"Trucker"



"Cold Truck"

In the spring of 2003 the CLBC dialed it up a notch with the introduction of the Coors Light Maxim Golf Experience. While the majority of the category relied on in-case giveaways and money-off promotions to move volume the Coors Light Maxim Golf Experience gave the CLBC the best opportunity to prove to the drinker that they are committed to having as much fun as they said in their advertising.

Partnering with Maxim, the clear leader in young adult male culture, demonstrated to the drinker that this was a brand committed to good times. Corporately the commitment was to treating the event, and others that followed, as myth-making opportunities whereby the lucky guys who were a part of it were left to spread the word. This was done with the knowledge that coming from the drinker the word would be much more authentic, and carry much more weight, than would a 30 second back-sell ad bragging about how awesome the event was.



"Diggers"



"POS"

Overall, five years of CLBC continuity has built an enduring voice for Coors Light. The strength has come from the fact that consumers don't see the CLBC as an invented entity used to market a brand of beer, but as the personification of a brand and the people behind it; people that are as committed to having a great time as they are, and brew an ice cold easy drinking taste to ensure that this will always be so.

MEDIA EXECUTION

The brand's media philosophy had three elements that were unique in the beer industry. The first was a "shoulder strategy," using television in the spring and fall, when there was less competition for SOV, and OOH to cover the summer months, when young active males are out doing stuff.

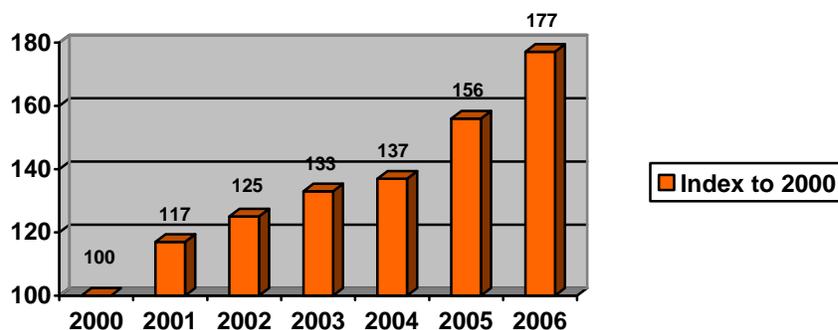
At the time OOH was underused by the beer category and so this was a huge opportunity to dominate a medium relatively efficiently. (Since the time of our launch OOH has become an element of nearly every big beer brand's media plan.) Finally, radio expanded the voice of the brand on a regional and local level at launch, and tactically after that. The combination of these strategies made the brand feel larger in the market than its media spend would indicate.

There were also two elements specific to promotions which were considered unique in the beer industry. The first was making them the only message in market when they were supported. The second was to run the Coors Light Maxim Golf Experience during the NHL playoffs. This pre-empted the other brands' large summer promos, delivering a taste of what guys watching hockey at home were all looking forward to—getting outside and getting active, in this case on the golf course.

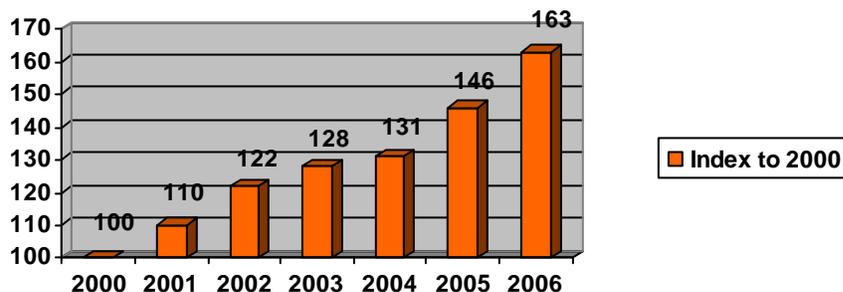
BUSINESS RESULTS

Coors Light turned its image around against an entirely new target without missing a beat. In the first few years, growth was on par with previous years. However, in 2005, momentum started to build, with double-digit volume (+12.7% in 2005, +14.0% in 2006) and share (+11% in 2005 & 2006) growth. Share growth of +3.4 points over the life of the campaign represents massive success given a share point in the Canadian market represents roughly \$39 million.

Coors Light Historical Volume Growth



Coors Light Historical Share Growth



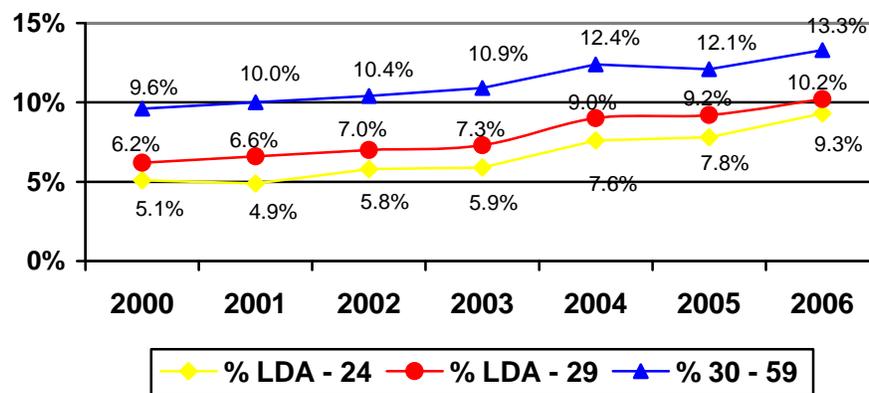
(Source, Molson Coors)

CAUSE & EFFECT BETWEEN ADVERTISING AND RESULTS

Beer is a badge product. The success of the strategic shift would be measured primarily by how many guys in our new target made Coors Light part of their repertoire. Franchise data (franchise represents the percentage of the population of beer drinkers who claim Coors Light as their primary brand) highlights our success in achieving exactly that.

At the same time we were able not only to hang on to our historical base, but to grow with both older drinkers and women. We believe that older drinkers treat the brand as a cue to when they lived a life free of responsibilities. As for female drinkers, share grew from 12.6% to 15.5% from 2001 to 2006, and they enjoyed the humour of the spots, particularly because most of it is at the guy's expense.

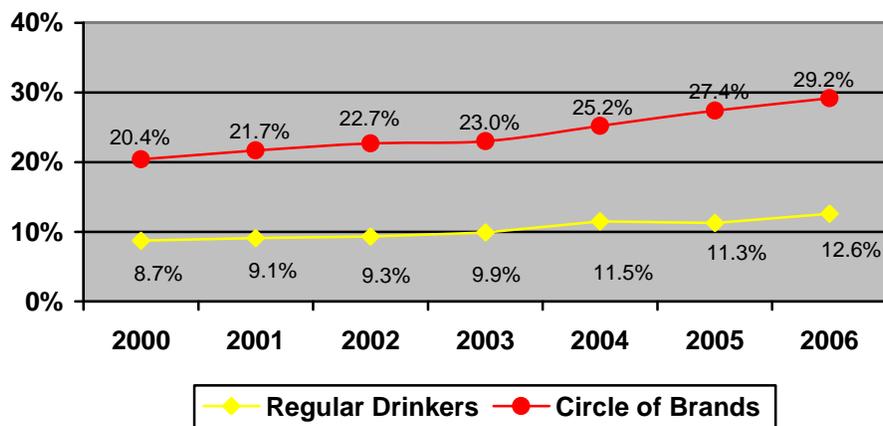
Coors Light Historical Franchise Growth



(Source, IPSOS ASI Franchise Report)

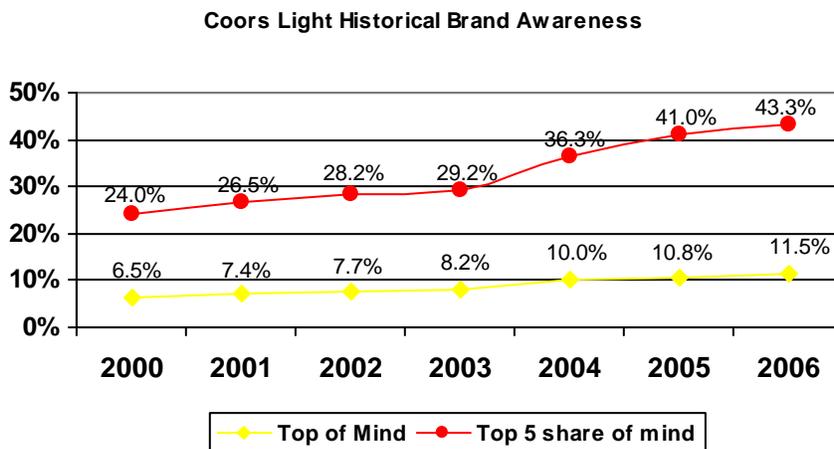
Similar trends occurred for claimed regular usage, and “circle of brands.”

Coors Light Historical COB & Regular Brand

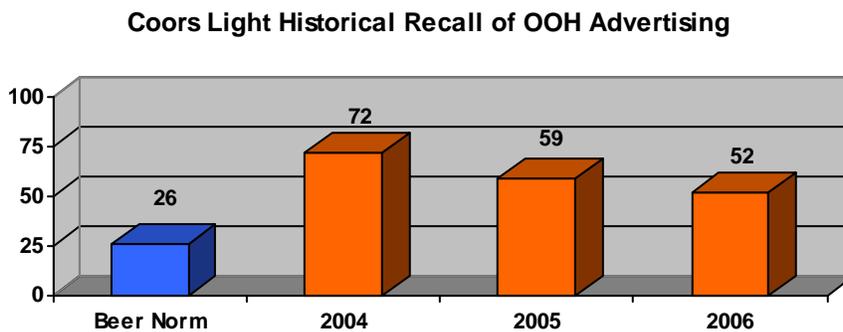


(Source, IPSOS ASI Franchise Report)

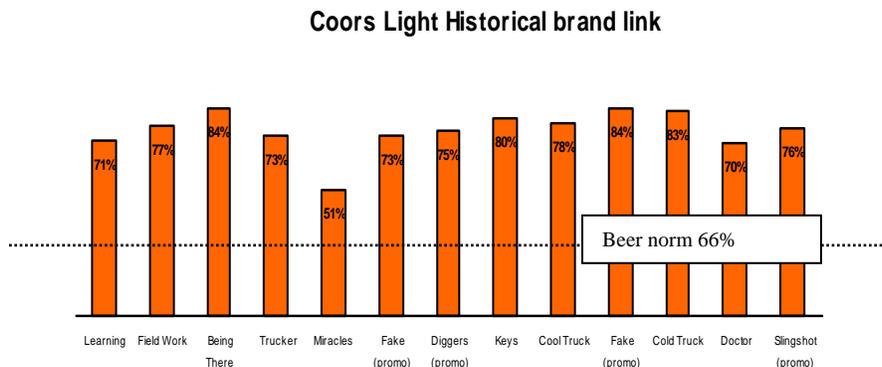
Consistent messaging became a tool, with top of mind awareness rising by 77% and the top five brand score up 80%. (Sources on this page are IPSOS ASI AdTrack.)



Out-of-home also had a tremendous impact. While the power of the campaign has slowed slightly in recent years, reflecting copycat beer brands who followed Coors Light’s lead into the medium, the recall scores continue to far exceed any beer campaign norms with recall peaking in 2004 at 72% (+176% versus norm).

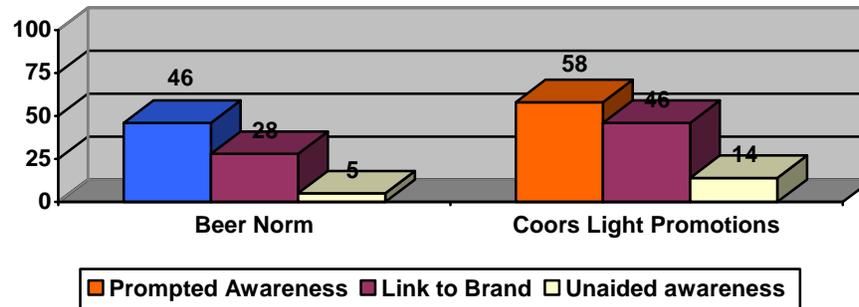


Brand link is another critical gauge. Coors Light has consistently exceeded norms.



As for the promotions, advertising helped to create a true presence that delivered, once again, well beyond norms.

Coors Light Historical Promotional Recall



(Source, IPSOS ASI AdTrack)

Qualitatively, consumers have helped us understand what has led to our success. In their eyes, the brand doesn't take itself too seriously. They recognize that this is beer and it's supposed to be fun. They are also a much savvier consumer than in generations past. They know how to filter out "marketing-speak." Coors Light, to them, comes across as a brand that isn't forcing its message down anyone's throat

Perhaps the greatest testament to the strength of the campaign is to be found in the fact that while in 2002 Coors Light was charting unknown territory, in attitude, strategy, tone, and even media selection, today many direct competitors have attempted to mirror these decisions. While flattery is the greatest of compliments, true success is on the horizon as Coors Light continues along its path towards becoming the #1 beer brand in Canada.

INTRODUCTION TO CROSSOVER NOTES — CASSIES 2007

[For Coors Light]

Each year I update these Crossover Notes. If you've read this cover note before, you can skip it. If not, it's worth a quick read.

My career started with a seven year sentence in brand management at Procter & Gamble. Then I clambered up the ladder at O&M, becoming President and later Vice Chairman, all of this in Toronto. Then I set up as a consultant.

P&G and O&M were passionate about "lessons learned" from advertising effort, and so was I. All the Cassies cases have great lessons in them, though at the pace we work today these lessons are not necessarily easy to find.

I was thinking about this as I was editing Cassies 1997, and I had the idea for Crossover Notes. They started as bite-sized footnotes pointing out lessons that "cross over" from one case to another. Then, as time had gone by, they've evolved to what we have today.

You can use Crossover Notes in two ways. Although they weren't designed 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 close to 200 published cases. And I hope I've helped pass some of the learning on.

David Rutherford

Toronto: January 2008.

For more on brand-building see *Excellence in Brand Communication*—by leading Canadians from across the marketing and advertising spectrum. See also *Vulcans. Earthlings and Marketing ROI*, commissioned by the ICA, and published by Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

See www.ica.adbeast.com.

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The Notes for this case are marked ✓ and come next.

Note: Cassies uses “advertising” in its broad sense. It not only stands for advertising through the main media of broadcast, print, out of home etc. Where appropriate, it also stands for Direct Marketing, PR, Interactive Marketing, Buzz Marketing, Event Marketing, Product Placement etc.

COORS LIGHT CROSSOVER NOTES FOR CASSIES 2007

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 the *essence* of this, or the *brand truth* of that.

That said, 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 of 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 people 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, the brand has to stand for something relevant and different in the consumer's mind. See also *Crossover Note 26*.

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? See *Excellence in Brand Communication*: www.ica.adbeast.com

- 2. Brand Truths.** Successful advertising (in fact all successful communication) resonates with its audience. As a marketer, you may want people to believe that you have the best-tasting coffee, but simply saying, “I have the best-tasting coffee” will not usually get the resonance you need. One school of thought believes in saying the obvious as loudly and even as crassly as you can. We could call it the Bad Boy syndrome. Another has led to the idea of Brand Truths. These operate on a deeper level than simple claims. One of the top UK agencies described the process as “we interrogate the product until it confesses its strength.”

I was once the Brand Manager on Tide, and when we were asked, “What does Tide stand for” we said, “Superior cleaning. Not whitening. Not Brightening. Not Fabric Care. Superior *cleaning*.”³

Superior cleaning was the religion on Tide, and Tide delivered, despite the cliché that all detergents are alike. But this was only a glimmer of the Brand Truth. If you “interrogated” Tide the most startling truth was the *intense belief* of Tide users. This came to life in the immensely successful “Two for One Swap” campaign. Hidden cameras watched as women who had just bought Tide were offered two boxes of another good detergent in exchange. They adamantly refused, delivering off-the-cuff endorsements that no copywriter could ever have written. The campaign ran for years, and only came to an end because of its success—women knew it so well that the “candid camera” interview became impossible. Many Brand Truths are also insights, and for a list see [11. The Eureka Insight](#) and [12. Changing the Goalposts](#).

- 5. The Total Brand Experience.** Brands have always been built at “every point of contact” with the consumer, but this turn of phrase is relatively new. It arrived partly because the explosion of media choice has shifted marketers away from a “mass” mentality, and partly because of the growth of services. The way we are treated by a retailer, restaurant, bank or telco has more effect than an advertisement. So all the “points of contact” have to be managed skilfully.

Cassies cases have historically been about advertising in its traditional sense, but they are evolving to include “every point of contact.” At its highest level ([Crossover Note 4](#)) this is more than communication, but most of the time “every point of contact” is part of Integrated Marketing Communication. This itself is more profound than making sure everything has the same “look and feel” — for the obvious reason that what works in one medium doesn’t necessarily work in another.

One of the agencies tries to capture the overall “experience” under the umbrella of an “organizing idea.” All the disciplines then work to achieve their goals in the way that works best in their medium. Of course, if certain words, pictures, icons, slogans etc. work in more than one medium, they will be used. The point is not to force fit. Various cases have referred to the total brand experience. They include:

- Cassies III: Richmond Savings.
- Cassies 99: AGF Funds.
- Cassies 2001: Clarica, Clearnet, i-wireless.
- Cassies 2004: Zumanity, Desjardins, Fam Channel, Gaz Metro, Réno Dépôt.
- Cassies 2006. WestJet.
- Cassies 2007: Cashmere, SickKids, Coors

³ P&G defined “what the brand stands for” by a document they called the Creative Strategy. In those days, if anyone dreamt that the Tide Creative Strategy should include whitening, brightening etc. it was seen as an offence against all that was holy. Since then, P&G has changed its views, and now takes a broader view—as recent Tide advertising for fabric care and Tide-with-Febreze attest.

- Cassies 2002: Bank of Montreal, ED, Light, WestJet, TDCanada Trust, Lipton Sidekicks, Scotiabank, Sloche.
- Cassies 2003: Bubba, Dodge SX 2.0, Irving's Coffee, Manitoba Telecom, MINI, United Way, Univ. de Montréal.

10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged? Conventional wisdom will sometimes be right. But it can also be a roadblock. When US Pepsi executives first saw the Pepsi Challenge, they apparently said, "that's not Pepsi." Dove Litmus (*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:

From Cassies I, III, 99, 2001:

- Crispy Crunch, making a virtue of greed. Richmond Savings, poking fun at the Humungous banks.
- Sunlight, saying it's OK to get dirty. Fido and Clearnet, using dogs and frogs.
- Various financial accounts—so many that humour has almost become the new conventional wisdom: AGF, Clarica, BMO Quebec (and Scotiabank in 2002).

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 Coffee, making a virtue of the caffeine hit.
- Toyota Matrix, breaking the Toyota "rules." Sola Nero, debunking wine snobbery.
- Super 7, revelling in the excesses of the super-rich.
- Université de Montréal, with no smiling students and ivy covered buildings.

From Cassies 2004:

- Cirque du Soleil, breaking convention as a corporate philosophy.
- Elections Ontario, resisting the temptation to use social responsibility.
- The 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.

From Cassies 2005:

- Baileys, breaking out of the liqueur cabinet.
- Crescendo, moving away from "delivery/takeout" as the high ground.
- Cruisin' to Win, thinking small. Energizer Lithium, ignoring the conventions of battery advertising.
- Familiprix, selling health products hilariously.
- Hubba Bubba, using brand thinking in a merchandizing category.
- Moores, redefining the way to look at men shoppers.
- "Stupid.ca" anti-smoking, being hilarious in how it talked to teenagers.

From Cassies 2006:

- Bloody Zit – need we say more? Chocolate Milk, torturing cute chocolate animals.
- Eterna, choosing an emotional (rather than technical) story to sell film.
- Holiday Inn, moving away from “comfort.”
- Listerine, breaking away from “kills the germs that cause bad breath.”
- MINI and Yaris, breaking car conventions.
- VanCity, challenging the unwritten rules of financial marketing.

From Cassies 2007:

- Dove, with its campaign for real beauty.
- Reversa, by targeting Cougars
- Cashmere, finding an analogy between fashion and toilet tissue.
- Prairie Milk, appealing to teens in a decidedly un-commercial way.
- The Capital G Bank in Bermuda, with its “We’re Gifferent” campaign.
- Benylin, with “Take a Benylin Day.”
- Coors Light, walking away from the approach that had made it the #1 light beer.
- La Parisienne detergent, with advertising that threw aside the “rules” of the category.

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

In those days, a campaign was usually defined by television. There would be one commercial, or a pool, refreshed over time. Nowadays, 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.⁴

Recently, the idea of “the brand relationship” has taken hold. This is the notion that we treat brands like friends.

Relationships can be very different, but for most people, the good ones are based on things like trust and consistency. This has led to the idea that brands should present a consistent – though not dull and predictable -- face over time (assuming, of course, that they are standing for the right thing.)

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 don’t have to be so formatted. The following list doesn’t pretend to be exhaustive (some types of campaigns are hard to categorize) but it starts at rigid end of the spectrum, and extends to the holistic. All versions have their successes and failures, and I hope this listing will help free up some of the rigid thinking:

- **Strict Pool-Out.** Campaigns like “Who wants Gum? I do. I do.” They have a repeated format, often with a USP demo or slogan. Some people think this type of advertising is passé. Others remember it fondly.

⁴ A young creative friend once said to me, “where does the belief in campaigns come from? Young people want constant change. What’s wrong with a stream of one-off ideas?” This would have been heresy at one time, and perhaps still is. But it’s food for thought.

- **Hall of Fame Pool-Out.** Some think pool outs are dull, predictable and clichéd. Not necessarily. The 20-odd year campaign for Hamlet cigars in the UK is rigidly formatted, but spectacularly creative and effective. Familiprix is the same.
- **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. Huggies "Happy Baby" is one of the longest-running. Clearnet/Telus is in this camp too.

This category also includes campaigns based on 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 type of example, where the "break" continues, and the challenge is to keep it up to date.

- **Icons.** These can anchor a campaign (Maytag Man, Marlboro Cowboy) or be a property (Tony the Tiger, Pillsbury Doughboy). Some see icons as yesterday's idea, but I think that's a mis-call. Absolut Vodka uses its bottle as an icon, and it's brilliant. The Familiprix pharmacist is hilariously effective.
- **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 a long-running example. 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. Perhaps the most impressive was Volkswagen in the 60s. Individual executions were different (serious, comical, ironic, dramatic) but they all had the Volkswagen voice and attitude. Brands like Nike are in this category. Benneton is an extreme example.
- **Same core message. Customized execution.** To people with a strict "pool-out" mindset, this hardly qualifies as a campaign at all. But the overall effect can be powerful. The best Cassies example is the 4-year Dove Case from Cassies III.⁵

The campaign started in late 91 with "Litmus," a strikingly simple demonstration, with no people or voice over—just haunting music, and some supers. Then came a raucous candid-camera commercial of focus group women doing the litmus test. Then a talking-head commercial with the scientist who invented Dove. Then another demonstration, similar to "Litmus," with the haunting music again.

The first three executions are so different that some people would not have approved them. Given the subsequent results, that would have been a pity. What holds it all together? The continuing promise of mildness. A scrupulously honest

⁵ Another example is Budweiser in Quebec. Its 10-year campaign has always been centred on rock 'n roll, but it has always evolved.

and consistent brand character. And an element of surprise in each execution. Note that there are no continuing slogans or visual icons.

More generally, It's an open question whether today's obsessively short-term attitude is causing us to lose the drive we once had for great campaigns. I hope not.

33. Changing the Target Audience. The most famous example of this is Marlboro, originally positioned against women, complete with red filter tip so that lipstick didn't show. The Leo Burnett people changed all that with the Marlboro cowboy. This looks so easy with hindsight, but when decisions like this have to be made it can be tough. There's usually a fair amount of angst about losing current users, leading to the sort of creative brief that says "appeal to X without alienating Y."

I recall two spectacular IPA examples that were prepared to alienate previous users: Batchelor's SuperNoodles and Peperami (chewy, sausagey sticks) advertising had been aimed at Moms for years. They decided to go after young men. Batchelor's came up with "men behaving badly" ads. Peperami had a riotously sadistic cartoon campaign. This was anything but "Mom" advertising, but both businesses took off. That's not to say we should always crash around in the china shop, alienating longstanding audiences. But there may be less risk than we think.

Cassies winners who risked alienation include CFL and 5 Alive in 2002; Family Channel in 2004; Crescendo, Eggo, Moores, Harvey's, and Juicy Fruit in 2005; Yaris, Holiday Inn, and Couche Tard (to some extent) in 2006. Coors Light in 2007.