

# Cassies 2007 Cases

**Brand/Case: Énergie Drink**

**Winner: Best Integrated Campaign—Gold  
Best Launch—Silver**

## **Client Credits: Alimentation Couche-Tard**

Michel Bernard  
Daniel Valiquette  
Chantale Sajo  
Éric Fortin  
Jean-Marie Bourque  
Jacinthe Harnois  
Sophie Therrien  
Official Partner: Cott Beverages  
Gus Prokos  
Richard Kadlec

## **Client Credits: Astral Media Radio**

Charles Benoit  
Evelyne Ouellet  
Sylvia Côté  
Chloé Boissonneault  
Sylvain Légaré  
Sylvain Simard

**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](http://www.cassies.ca)

**Crossover Note 1.** What a Brand Stands For.  
**Crossover Note 12.** Changing the Goalposts.  
**Crossover Note 31.** Transcending Advertsing.

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

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Business Results Period (Consecutive Months):</b>	<b>May 2006 to April 2007</b>
<b>Start of Advertising/Communication Effort:</b>	<b>February 2006 - ongoing</b>
<b>Base Period for Comparison:</b>	<b>12 months ending March or April 2006</b>

Astral Media Radio and Couche-Tard are pillars of business success.

Astral Media Radio owns the *Énergie* network. Its 10 stations throughout Québec draw 1,663,200 listeners. That's one out of every four Quebecers over 12 years old.

Alimentation Couche-Tard, for its part, has 560 outlets, and toils in the trenches of the convenience-store industry. The search to increase store traffic is never-ending, but exclusive products to attract clients are hard to come by.

Astral and Couche Tard were both looking for a way to promote their business.

This came together in a remarkable piece of integration—*boisson énergie*—a house brand for Couche Tard with Astral's network name. **Crossover Note 31.**

*Boisson énergie* launched in February 2006. The result? 52,370 cases in the first year, against an objective (itself aggressive) of 25,000. This meant that consumers bought 1.4 million cans with Astral's *Énergie* name on them.

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

### a) Overall Assessment

By September 2005 in Québec, the energy drink industry generated about \$2 million a year, and the sales at Couche-Tard were growing steadily. Despite the resounding success of Red Bull in Québec, however, no other brand had secured second position in the market. What's more, no other player had supported their product in the media, making for an opportunity to be quickly seized.

*Boisson énergie*, available exclusively at Couche-Tard, leveraged the opportunity in this market. **Crossover Note 1.** For Astral, it would astronomically increase the visibility of their brand (Couche-Tard stores get nearly 210 million visits a year). For Couche-Tard, the exclusive radio coverage was a dream come true.



## b) Resulting Business Objectives

For Couche-Tard and Astral Media Radio.

- Sales volume of 25,000 cases of 24x250ml over the first year (600,000 units)

For Astral Media Radio

- Put the *Énergie* brand literally into the hands of *Énergie* radio listeners
- Increase the visual recognition of the radio brand
- Give the *Énergie* brand life through a spinoff product

For Couche-Tard

- With the *Énergie* brand, secure second position after Red Bull
- Grow the energy drink category in its 560-store network
- Generate in-store traffic

## c) Budget Range/Share of Voice

Media budget for this case is a real puzzler. The media value in radio was high: between \$1-2 million a year in Québec. However, as Astral Media Radio is the owner of the *Énergie* network, its media costs were minimal.

Actually, this is the crux of the excellent return on investment for the project, not only for advertising time, but also for program integration. What is it worth that the number one morning man for 18 to 34-year-olds peppers his conversation with positive references to *boisson énergie*? The anecdotes are innumerable and varied. The value: incalculable.

## STRATEGY & INSIGHT

In marketing, a product normally looks for a distribution network and media support. In this case, a distribution leader and a media stalwart got together to develop and market a consumer product in an expanding category. **Crossover Note 12.**

This strategic alliance pushed the limits of conventional marketing's ability to economically create and market a product. The enthusiasm of Québec consumers for *boisson énergie* proves how perfectly targeted the strategy was. The success rests on three main supports:

1. A quality product linked to a strong brand whose values are the perfect match for an energy drink.
2. An extensive media and promotional plan with longevity.
3. An exceptionally well executed distribution and marketing campaign.

**The product.** A drink called *Énergie* was bound to attract the attention of Quebeckers. By drinking the product, consumers would drink in the values that the brand represents: pleasure, intensity, being ahead of the wave, audacity and social pride. Cott Beverages developed and bottled the drink. The flavour was good and not overly sweet.

Draft FCB took care of packaging, delivering an uncluttered visual using the *Énergie* brand colours. Together, Couche-Tard, Astral Media and Draft FCB ensured the synergy of the entire POP visual, including individual and four-pack formats, fridge-door and shelving signage.



**Media and Promotional Planning.** The media strategy was simple and comprehensive. As radio was obviously going to be the main medium, it required traditional usage for media weight and creativity to increase impact.



The Web was the natural complementary medium, since 450,000 listeners a month already visited radioenergie.com, and approximately 200,000 of them had agreed to receive our e-newsletters. Press relations for print were looked after by Edelman, targeting Toronto journalists for the business angle, and Montréal journalists for the business, arts and entertainment potential.

**Distribution and Marketing.** *Boisson énergie* was (and still is) distributed exclusively from the Couche-Tard Distribution Centre to each of its 560 points of sale in Québec (100% distribution rate), with a reprovisioning possibility of twice-weekly. This was part of a tri-partite internal launch plan:

- In-store preparation for the launch (we had to make room for 4 facings).
- Training sessions about the category (product types, product-benefit explanations, ingredients, category-sales and margin value).
- A sales incentive plan launched during two major launch parties in Montréal and Québec City's *Énergie* studios. All store managers were invited to find out about a contest, and enjoy the concerts given by well-known music groups and introduced by popular radio hosts. This new idea of staging events to get managers involved was a key element in the success of the product launch.

The results: in store, the POP was installed, the lay-outs respected, the shelves full, and store clerks were recommending the products to clients at the cash.



By October 2007, the early success inspired us to launch *énergie 7* (only 7 calories) to meet demand for energy without the calories. *Énergie 7*, in turn, exceeded our expectations for sales volume, and now represents nearly 40% of the *Énergie* brand's sales.

As for communication strategy, it was based on two parameters:

- **A precise target**  
We were looking to get to 18 to 34-year-old adults who listened to *Énergie* anywhere in Québec; a target market that often found itself in Couche-Tard stores. The most significant advantage was we knew how to contact them – on the air at *Énergie*
- **A surrounded target**  
At all points of contact the target was surrounded. First, the employees of Astral Media Radio and Couche-Tard, hosts and clerks, became spokespeople for *boisson énergie*. (An internal communications plan was set up to ensure they all understood and were enthusiastic about the adventure.) Second, radio advertising, viral marketing, POP signage and the radioenergie.com site were all planned down to the last detail.

## CREATIVE EXECUTION

This is what we used to reach our consumers:

- Radio
- Promotion (themes and pricing)
- POP
- Public Relations
- Direct e-Marketing
- Sampling
- Events with Couche-Tard and Astral Media Radio teams



Perusing the regulations governing advertising for health products, and the media strategies of Red Bull, we found an opportunity: *Radio-Énergie* – through our team of radio hosts – could educate Québec consumers about the benefits of energy drinks. This became the creative platform of the advertising campaign.

## MEDIA EXECUTION

The following dates are milestones in the history of *boisson énergie*:

- February 2006 – Product launch
- July 2006 – Annual objective attained - 600,000 cans sold
- October 2006 – Launch of *énergie 7 calories*
- November 2007 – 1,000,000 cans sold
- January 2007 – Viral marketing
- February 2007 – Promotion: *Buy a 4-pack and get 4 free downloads at [Palmares.ca](http://Palmares.ca)*

On the air at *Énergie* a media pre-launch comprised 30-second messages, jingles, direct mentions and sponsorships, all alluding to an upcoming great new event.

The official launch in February 2006, went off with great pomp during the *Grandes Gueules* radio show, with 1.6 million 18 to 34-year-olds listening. Over the next three days all the radio hosts (and even listeners phoning in) were talking about *boisson énergie*. This continued for 60 days with 30-second messages, direct mentions and sponsorships supporting the product.

We also had a Web front with banners on the [radioenergie.com](http://radioenergie.com) site and information letters to 200,000 site-members. Viral videos were made and launched, and PR reaped numerous articles in the Canadian press, especially the business pages.

And since the launch, of course, *boisson énergie* has had constant radio support: brand messages, thematic promotions, and prizes—all to generate continuous sales.



## BUSINESS RESULTS

Relative to our objectives:

- *Generate 25,000 cases of 24x250ml over the first year.* For the 12 months through March 2007 we sold 52,370 cases of *boisson énergie*—more than double the objective. (For comparison, the previous #2 to Red Bull – Monster – sold 15,400 cases in its first year.)
- *Put the Énergie brand into the hands of the Énergie radio target, and increase the visual recognition of the radio brand consumers.* Considering sales volumes, mission undoubtedly accomplished.
- *Give the Énergie brand life through a spinoff product.* Sales results confirm that the brand values are more top of mind than ever. And since people paid \$2.69 of their own money per can, they were generating revenue for the station.
- *Secure second position in the energy drink category in Couche-Tard.* This was attained by April, 2006. Furthermore, *boisson énergie* is the third best seller in all Québec convenience stores, just behind Monster, which is distributed in all of them. (AC Nielsen.)
- *Grow the energy drink category in Couche-Tard and generate in-store traffic.* Media support generated extra traffic from customers who didn't know the energy drink category before we marketed *Énergie*, and also contributed to overall category growth at Couche-Tard. [For this and the following section, data were supplied].

## CAUSE & EFFECT BETWEEN ADVERTISING AND RESULTS

We strongly believe that it traces to the quality of product marketing at point of sale, and the strong and continuous advertising support—made unique because of the partnership. And an internationally known specialist in media concurs:

The screenshot shows the Pollack Media Group website. The main content area features an article titled "Charting The New Media Landscape" with a sub-headline "Pollack Media Group is an international media consultancy that specializes in connecting content and distribution companies with consumers. With experience in radio, television, print, music, and digital media, no consultancy is better positioned to help navigate the new media landscape, from traditional media to bleeding edge technologies. Our clients are a veritable who's who of media companies today, including MTV, National Geographic, Electronic Arts, Control Room, CBS Radio, and many others." Below this is another article titled "The Lost Art of Radio Brand Extension" which discusses brand absorption and extension in the context of radio and pop culture. The website also includes a "MediaFlash" section for media headlines and analysis, and a "Pollack Media CONFIDENTIAL" section with a link to a newsletter sign-up.

*“A current instance from Canada provides the perfect example as to why brand extension is still a relevant concept for radio companies. The result of the Energie brand extension and retail partnership were extraordinary.”*

Tommy Hages, President of Pollack Media group, Los Angeles, CA.

## INTRODUCTION TO CROSSOVER NOTES — CASSIES 2007

[For *Énergie* Drink]

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](http://www.ica.adbeast.com).

## INDEX OF CROSSOVER NOTES FOR CASSIES 2007

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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.

## ÉNERGIE DRINK 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.*<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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*.

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

<sup>2</sup> How do you do this? See *Excellence in Brand Communication*: [www.ica.adbeast.com](http://www.ica.adbeast.com)

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

- Cow Brand Baking Soda's extended usage.
- Johnson's Baby Shampoo's re-positioning against adults.
- Cereals trying to get eaten as a late night snack.
- Baileys (2005 and 2006) going against wines and beer occasions.

Insights can also spring from what is *not* being said. Eggs in Cassies 99 is an example. Word-association tests played back benefits, but did *not* identify that eggs are natural. Somehow, this absence caught the agency's eye. They made "natural" into a powerful campaign using real farmers, and 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 these back as the important benefits, reinforcing conventional wisdom. The team at Scali/Purina then 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.

This also points up the need look beyond Canada. PAL in the UK had earlier arrived at similar thinking, leading to their famous "prolongs active life" campaign.

**31. Transcending Advertising.** A number of Cassies campaigns have moved into popular culture—at least for a while. Generally, advertisers and agencies are pleased when this happens, though there are always nay-sayers asking "Is it on strategy? Is it relevant? Is it building the business?"

"Where's the Beef?" had a lot more than 15 minutes of fame. But did it build the Wendy's business? I've seen arguments on both sides. Budweiser's "Whassup" faced similar questions, and the last comment I saw was a thumbs down. Cassies cases that mention the effect—and they all do it 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); Crescendo Pizza, Familiprix, Pepsi – Quebec and Quebec Milk (Cassies 2005); Chocolate Milk (Cassies 2006); Dove, Reversa, Energie and Benylin (Cassies 2007).

Viral marketing is the latest incarnation of effort that transcends advertising as we used to think of it. It was a major factor in the Dove case in Cassies 2007.