

# Cassies 2005 Cases

**Brand: McCain Crescendo Rising Crust Pizza**

**Winner: Off to A Good Start—Gold**

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**Crossover Notes:** All winning cases contain lessons that cross over from one case to another. 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](http://www.cassies.ca)

- Crossover Note 1. What a Brand Stand For.
- Crossover Note 2. Brand Truths.
- Crossover Note 6. Should the product be improved?
- Crossover Note 7. Fighting for the Same High Ground.
- Crossover Note 9. Turnarounds.
- Crossover Note 10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged?
- Crossover Note 11. The Eureka Insight.
- Crossover Note 12. Changing the Goalposts.
- Crossover Note 25. Brand Linkage (when should the brand name appear).
- Crossover Note 31. Transcending Advertising.
- 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):** December 2004 – May 2005.

**Start of Advertising/Communication Effort:** 05 December 2004.

**Base Period for Comparison:** December 2003 – May 2004.

*The essence of positioning is sacrifice. You must be willing to give up something in order to establish that unique position.*

Al Ries & Jack Trout

Crescendo Rising Crust Pizza had been the first rising crust brand in the market, but it was now running second to Kraft's Delissio, and by a 4:1 ratio. Crescendo needed to do something, but what?

The case turns on a crucial insight about positioning, and the target audience. Was there a new way to attack the high ground? Should the audience be teens, or Moms? The answers led to spectacular results.

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

### a) Overall Assessment

In the past, great pizza meant ringing up the nearest pizza joint and waiting for delivery. Now, more and more consumers are looking to their grocer's freezer. Gone are the days of the cardboard crust. Today's brands are fresher, thicker, and better—offering pizzeria quality for a fraction of the price, time, and hassle.

This has led to explosive growth. Frozen pizza sales have more than doubled in the past three years, to \$400 million. We now eat almost 80 million frozen pizzas a year—more than 30 slices a year for every Canadian. **Crossover Note 6.**

The rising crust pizza is one of the main reasons. The crust rises up fresh in the oven, with freshness and taste comparable to takeout.

McCain introduced *Rising Crust Pizza* in 1998. Months later, though, Kraft launched Delissio, and private label soon followed. With heavy retail and advertising support, Delissio quickly became brand leader. So, despite being first to the market, Rising Crust Pizza under-performed. By 2004, McCain's share of market was a quarter of Kraft's.

One problem was lack of differentiation. From 1999 to 2004 McCain and Kraft had similar campaigns, designed to convince Moms that their product was as good as takeout. McCain's advertising asked, "Who can tell it from takeout?" while Kraft's declared, "It's not delivery – It's Delissio." In 2004, McCain research showed that consumers couldn't differentiate McCain ads from Kraft. Worse, it seemed that McCain ads were doing more for Kraft sales than for McCain. Delissio owned "better than takeout." **Crossover Note 7.**

Renaming the brand Crescendo Rising Crust Pizza in early 2004, with new advertising, didn't work. A fundamental shift was needed to halt the loss of sales and market share.

#### b) Resulting Objectives

- ▶ To differentiate Crescendo from Delissio.
- ▶ To increase ex-factory sales by +15% during the first six months of the campaign.
- ▶ To increase Crescendo's market share by 8 points by the end of 2005.

### STRATEGY & INSIGHT

We ran in-depth research, and the resulting insights allowed us to radically alter the direction of Crescendo:

- First: Frozen pizza is a party in a box. It's fun, easy, and you can eat with your hands. For all these reasons, it's a big hit with teens.
- Second: While most frozen pizza brands target Moms, teens are the principal end-user – and hugely influential over Mom's choice. Though she wants them to eat well, she wants to make them happy. And, pizza makes them *really* happy.
- Third: Most brands were singing the delivery/takeout tune, particularly Crescendo and Delissio. **Crossover Note 10**. And then, staring us in the face, was the insight we were looking for: **Crossover Notes 11 and 12**.

**No brand owned “rising crust,” even though nothing says pizzeria-quality like a crust that rises up in your own oven!**

We decided to seize the “rising crust” position. And, we decided to speak directly to teens. But teens are a tough audience. They're intelligent, brand conscious, media-savvy, and cynical about advertising. Furthermore, McCain had a 47-year history of market leadership, from fries to juice, which meant it absolutely could not alienate Moms. So the “gross-out” humour that has worked for so many teen campaigns would not be right. **Crossover Note 33**.

To reach and influence teens, McCain needed to up the cool factor. It wouldn't be easy. McCain was the neighbor with the nice house, the minivan and the three kids. In short, your Mom's brand. We had to change perceptions, and have teenagers see McCain in a whole new light. **Crossover Notes 1 and 2**.

## EXECUTION

### a) Creative

The result? The Tan Lines campaign. It features young people oblivious to what happens when they are a little too captivated by Crescendo—watching the crust rise up fresh in the oven for the first time.

The creative doesn't talk down. It doesn't try too hard to be cool. And, to tap into teens' media-savviness, it is designed to be a discovery by them, not a proclamation by the advertiser. Unlike the tell-and-sell approach of most ads, Tan Lines rewards the audience, making them feel smart when they get it. **Crossover Note 25.**

The tag line, "Nothing rises like a Crescendo," encapsulates the Rising Crust position. At the same time, through implied superiority, it makes a statement about quality, freshness, and taste. And the play on words again rewards the audience's intelligence.

### b) Media

Television was the anchor medium, with two English and two French spots. They ran on ten conventional stations and five specialty/digital stations, in all major markets across Canada. The launch flight ran from 05 December 2004 to 06 March 2005, with a sustaining flight from 07 March onward.



For the first time, McCain also added outdoor and guerrilla marketing, for a fully-integrated campaign. Billboards, featuring young people with the oven window tan, had headlines like ‘Stare at your own risk,’ ‘Viewer discretion advised,’ and ‘Please watch responsibly.’ The ads were in high traffic areas in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver, for 11 weeks beginning on 10 January 2005.



To create street-level buzz, we did guerrilla marketing during peak pedestrian traffic hours in Toronto’s downtown core. This ran for two days over March break, reaching vacationing teens and families. Seventy young had their faces made up with oven window tan lines. They walked the streets, rode transit, and visited public buildings. When consumers came up to them, they gave away Crescendo coupons and Tan Lines buttons.



## BUSINESS RESULTS

Apparently, pizza really does go best with a tan. [Crossover Note 9](#).

Since the December 2004 launch, the campaign has produced overwhelming consumer response, incredible media buzz, and extremely positive sales results.

a) **Ex-Factory Sales & Shipments**

For the first six months of the launch (December 2004 to May 2005), McCain more than doubled its sales objective of +15%, posting a +34% year-over-year increase in ex-factory sales.

<b>Crescendo Ex-Factory Sales &amp; Shipments</b>		
<b>Year-over-Year Change: 2004/05 vs. 2003/04</b>		
<b>Month</b>	<b>Year-over-Year Sales Change (Dollars)</b>	<b>Year-over-Year Shipments Change (Cases)</b>
Month 1: December 04	-46%*	-50%*
Month 2: January 05	+30%	+43%
Month 3: February 05	+92%	+86%
Month 4: March 05	+29%	+17%
Month 5: April 05	+43%	+46%
Month 6: May 05	+82%	+79%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>+34%</b>	<b>+34%</b>

\* December 2004 results can be attributed in part to deep discounting by Kraft in Ontario with its Delissio 2-pack.

b) **Market Share**

Just six months into the campaign, Crescendo is well on its way to increasing market share by +8 points by the end of 2005. The May 2005 volume share is up 11.5 percentage points compared to December 04, and the dollar share is up 6.3 percentage points. Even more compelling, Delissio's share has fallen by double digits on both measures. [Details were supplied.]

It is also worth noting that these substantial increases were achieved despite the fact that sales in the previous year were inflated due to an aggressive price promotion by McCain<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Based on 'Wow' Deal at No Frills that sold substantial Crescendo volume at an aggressive retail price of \$3.97 per unit.

### c) Other Success Measures

#### *Pop Culture Crossover*

The campaign crossed over to the mecca of destinations – pop culture – creating the type of buzz that was only a pipe dream for McCain just months earlier. It has appeared in *Aislin* (see below), Canada’s premier political cartoon in the *Montréal Gazette*. It has been parodied on *Air Farce* and *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. And a tongue-in-cheek newspaper article on “Rising Crust Sunburn” even asked scientists whether it was possible to get a tan through the oven door. **Crossover Note 31.**



#### *Brand Awareness & Recognition*

Research in Toronto after the guerrilla effort showed that the campaign was resonating with consumers<sup>2</sup>. A quarter of respondents recalled seeing people with “funny-looking tan lines on their face.” Of these, 90% knew what the promotion was for; a compelling indication of success, considering that the guerrilla event used subtle branding—and that the Tan Lines characters did not speak to consumers unless they were approached. Even more encouraging, half of those who had seen the Tan Lines characters acknowledged mentioning it to others, demonstrating positive word-of-mouth.

### **CAUSE & EFFECT BETWEEN ADVERTISING & RESULTS**

The relationship between advertising and sales is clear-cut. In particular, the year-over-year sales increases directly mirror the timing of the campaign.

In addition, other elements of the marketing mix could not have caused such dramatic results:

<sup>2</sup> Based on a sample of 1,750 consumers in downtown Toronto.

- ▶ *Product.* The product did not change.
- ▶ *Distribution.* This did not change. If anything, there were distribution challenges. Delissio gets greater retail support than Crescendo, in the form of co-op ads and facings, a result of Kraft's deeper pockets and wider retail presence. In fact, at Loblaw's, Canada's biggest retailer, McCain gets no co-op advertising support for Crescendo, and only about a fifth of Delissio's shelf facings.
- ▶ *Pricing.* The pricing strategy did not change. While normal price discounting occurred, increases can't be attributed to this because Crescendo and Delissio both sold a comparable proportion of volume at a reduced price during the six-month campaign. And, except for one month, Delissio had larger year-over-year reductions in average retail unit price than did Crescendo.
- ▶ *Promotion.* Except for a limited time Superbowl promotion, there were no other advertising or promotional efforts for Crescendo during the Tan Lines campaign.
- ▶ *Market growth.* This was not a discriminating factor in that it was also present during the long period when Rising Crust Pizza was in difficulties.

Finally, there were a number of obstacles that worked against us.

- ▶ Crescendo continued to face intense competition from the flood of frozen pizza brands in the category.
- ▶ Delissio had much higher brand awareness and recognition, banked from its more successful marketing and advertising efforts over 1999-2004.
- ▶ Delissio continued to advertise through the period of the Tan Lines campaign, even introducing new creative.
- ▶ When Tan Lines launched, McCain still faced significant sales and distribution challenges, attributed to the brand's declining performance during the previous years.
- ▶ For the first time, McCain spoke directly to the teenage market. It's no secret that teens are a tough market to reach and influence.
- ▶ McCain wasn't a 'cool' brand. Tan Lines had to change existing perceptions in order to resonate with teens, and it had to do this without alienating Moms.
- ▶ With Tan Lines, McCain aimed to establish a new "Rising Crust" brand position, shifting away from the delivery/takeout position that it had focused on since 1998.

Despite these challenges, Tan Lines not only made the cash register sing, it changed brand perceptions and created significant consumer and media buzz—allowing a whole new audience to connect with the brand.

End of Case. Crossover Notes follow.

## INTRODUCTION TO CROSSOVER NOTES — CASSIES 2005

[For Crescendo Rising Crust Pizza]

Crossover Notes have been going for several years, and now run to 28 pages.

We used to attach a full set to all cases, but to save a few trees, we now include only the Notes particular to any case.

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

I was a consultant by then. Before that I had reached the category manager level at P&G (what they quaintly called the Associate Advertising Manager). I had then clambered up the ladder at O&M, eventually becoming President and later Vice Chairman—both in Toronto. P&G and O&M were both passionate about “lessons learned,” and so was I. In those days (it seems hard to believe now) we felt rushed off our feet. But we did have 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 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 150 published cases. They’re a growing body of experience. I hope I’ve helped pass some of the learning on.

*David Rutherford*

Toronto: December 2005.

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

## INDEX OF CROSSOVER NOTES FOR CASSIES 2005

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3. Core Equity versus Price & Promotion.	
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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?	✓
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The Notes for this case are marked ✓ and come next.

## CRESCENDO. CROSSOVER NOTES. CASSIES 2005.

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.<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 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, "what the brand stands for" is critical.

<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, and evolve? See *Excellence in Brand Communication*: [www.ica.adbeast.com](http://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 is to say the obvious as loudly and 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 it 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*.”<sup>3</sup>

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 detergent in exchange. They adamantly refused, delivering off-the-cuff endorsements that no copywriter could ever have come up with. 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](#).

- 6. Should the product be improved?** Some years ago it was an axiom that your product, functionally, had to have an advantage over competitors. In packaged goods, 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 desirable benefit.<sup>4</sup>

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 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.

<sup>3</sup> P&G defined “what the brand stands for” by a document they called The Creative Strategy. In those days, if anyone even dreamt that the Tide Creative Strategy should include whitening, brightening etc. it was seen as an offence against all that was holy.

<sup>4</sup> 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

There's no question that the cost to upgrade can be daunting. Nevertheless, many 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.
- Coricidin II in Cassies 2005 (Re-launching a new version, after the original brand had been withdrawn)
- Penaten, Hubba Bubba, Stouffer's Bistro, and Juicy Fruit, all launching line extensions in Cassies 2005.

Still others achieve their gains with no change—though the existing product is in all cases good, and sometimes better than the competition. These cases include:

- Crispy Crunch and Pepsi 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.
- Crescendo, Jergens Ultra Care, Whiskas, Twix, Energizer Lithium, Moores, Familiprix in Cassies 2005.

Technology cases usually have improvements. Services (e.g. Desjardins, Gaz Metro, Réno Dépôt in 2004) usually improve as part of the "total brand experience." Some cases (e.g. Clearnet in 2001 and Lipton Sidekicks in Cassies 2002) say that if your functional advantage is going to be matched, you'd 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.** Some people feel that a brand 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 P&G’s Oil of Olay bar from the US, and decided to kick-start Dove sales via new advertising. They had a spectacular product demonstration. Dove is not a soap, and when it is subjected to litmus paper, the colour does not change. With soaps—including Ivory—the paper turns an ugly blue. But this is essentially a mildness demonstration, and Ivory owned mildness.

Some heavy hitters in international management (at the client and agency) predicted disaster if Dove took on Ivory. But Dove attacked anyway. At the start of the case, Dove and Ivory had the same dollar share. Four years later Dove’s dollar sales were up 73%, and Ivory had dropped to half of Dove’s dollar share.

And how do you decide whether to attack or not? On winnability. Yes, 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 does *not* have to come from positioning. Consider Duracell and Energizer. Duracell was the first brand to stake out “lasts longer,” and Energizer (believing they could not attack this high ground) 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 variation on this theme. Sunlight wanted to attack Tide on cleaning, but decided that a frontal assault on such a powerful brand would fail. They still attacked, however, but they re-defined “clean” as the joy of getting dirty. This brilliant insight helped them win the Grand Prix in Cassies 99.

I’m not saying you should always attack a competitor on the high ground. There are many Cassies successes based on side-stepping or re-defining the high ground. Cottonelle, Desjardins, Gaz Metro and Réno Dépôt did this in Cassies 2004. Cruisin’ to Win, Crescendo, Whiskas, Twix, Moores and Lotto 6/49 did this in Cassies 2005. Even so, I think the high ground is still one of the first places you should look.

**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 II**

- Dove. "Litmus."
- Molson Canadian. "I AM."
- Philadelphia Cream Cheese.

**Cassies 99**

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

**Cassies 2001**

- Kraft Dinner.
- Lipton Chicken Noodle.

**Cassies 2002**

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

**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.

**Cassies 2005**

- Crescendo.
- Energizer Lithium.
- Toyota Tacoma.
- Eggo French Toast Stix.
- Twix.
- Coricidin II.
- Hubba Bubba.
- Moores and Harvey's.
- Quebec Lotto 6/49.
- Juicy Fruit.
- Pepsi – Quebec and Quebec Milk.

**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," 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:

***From Cassies I, III, 99, 2001:***

- Crispy Crunch, making a virtue of greed—a taboo in confectionery.
- 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 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, 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:***

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

**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*.) 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. 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 in Cassies 2002. They found a way to be youthful without being too young in the "forever young" campaign.
- 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.
- Irving's Cruisin' to Win. Saw the power of *small* prizes. Cassies 2005.
- Crescendo. Like Oh Henry! saw unoccupied high ground. Cassies 2005.
- Butter. Saw a way to use "natural" to connote taste and health. Cassies 2005.
- Anti-Smoking. Saw the power of "Stupid." Cassies 2005.
- Jergens Ultra Care. Saw a way to reposition skin. Cassies 2005.
- Whiskas saw things from the *cat's* point of view. Cassies 2005.
- Moores used the fact that their target audience hates shopping. Cassies 2005.
- Harvey's realized the significance of The Grill.
- Quebec Lotto 6/49. If 6/49 winners are so generous, be nice to them.
- United Way saw power in the Hand icon.
- Leucan realized that there is still hope, despite childhood cancer.
- CIBC Run for the Cure saw the power in the Pinnie idea.
- Juicy Fruit saw how to build a new image by (almost literally) destroying the old one.
- Quebec Milk saw power in the obvious—if one glass is good, two are better.
- Plus virtually all the cases in *Crossover Note 10*.

**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) 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 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 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 another way to get insights—to look beyond Canada. PAL dogfood in the UK had earlier arrived at similar thinking, and produced the famous "prolongs active life" campaign.

**25. Brand Linkage (when should the brand name appear).** How often do we hear, "I saw this great ad last night...but I can't remember what it was for." This is a brand linkage problem, and it's two-edged. Highly engaging advertising can drown out the brand identity (we used to call it "video vampire"). But advertising that sells crudely runs the risk of being physically or mentally zapped.

When you assess advertising, your mental model will affect your attitude to brand linkage. But there are no simple answers. Some executions with seemingly bullet-proof linkage don't work. Some with seemingly minimal i.d. hook the brand into the consumer's mind. The challenge is to be relevant *and* different at the same time. Relevant, by the way, is *not* the same as familiar. Something can be relevant, but be expressed in a totally new way. If "familiar" is part of your mental model (knowingly or not) you run the risk of only approving advertising that has been seen before.

One of the (supposed) ways to ensure brand linkage is to say/show the brand name "early and often." This idea seems to have taken hold in the 60s.<sup>5</sup> A great many Cassies winners do *not* reflect this, e.g. Chrysler NS Minivan, Dove, Imperial Margarine, Molson Canadian, Budweiser, Claritin, Pontiac Sunfire, Richmond Savings, Metro Toronto Zoo, Goodwill, Sunlight, becel, St-Hubert, Clearnet, Clarica, Manitoba Telecom, Lipton Chicken Noodle, i-wireless, Pro•Line, Pine-Sol, Bank of Montreal, Scotiabank, Aero, Cottonelle, Prairie Milk, Réno Dépôt, Crescendo, Harvey's, K&G Stores, Energizer Lithium, Quebec Lotto 6/49, United Way, Moores, Familiprix.

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<sup>5</sup> This belief came out of Day-After-Recall testing. The technique has since been largely discredited, but debates continue about the role of recall, recognition, and the like. See *Crossover Note 13*.

Some very successful advertising puts the brand name front and centre, but it's possible in today's over-hyped world that "early and often" is a turn-off to consumers. Each situation has to be assessed on its merits. But an unthinking belief in "early and often" should come to an end.

- 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 and "Whassup" faced similar questions. 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).

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.

- 33. Changing the Target Audience.** The most famous example is Marlboro, originally positioned against women, with red filter tip so that lipstick didn't show. The Leo Burnett people changed all that with the Marlboro cowboy. This looks easy with hindsight, but when the decision has 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. Batchelors came up with "men behaving badly" ads. Peperami had a riotously sadistic cartoon campaign. This was anything but "Mom" advertising, but i 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, Juicy Fruit in 2005.

End of Crescendo Crossover Notes.