

Certificate For Packaged Goods – Food

Certificate for Most Innovative Communications Program

Mr. Big

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Executive Summary

This case shows the power of advertising when the budget is cut in half.

Mr. Big, as the name suggests, is a big chewy candy bar, with a longstanding positioning against teens. It has often had to compete for funds with the bigger brands in the Cadbury stable: Crispy Crunch and Caramilk. In 1995, the axe fell. Mr. Big had an advertising budget of \$660M, down from \$1,133M the year before.

It was tempting to pull in our horns – but we thought big, literally, and found a way to use Shaq O’Neal. On the surface it might not seem a big leap to come up with Shaq. The leap was making the idea work within budget, by designing a plan that appealed to Shaq’s interests and ours. The breakthrough was a Mall Tour basketball event, featuring images of Shaq and Mr. Big – in effect, a creative and media idea in one. It was supported by bus murals, print, radio, interior transit, with a spectacular laser display on the CN tower timed for when Shaq was in town.

Results were well above target. Given the budget, the objective was to hold business. But despite only a 2% share of voice, we saw a jump in top-of-mind awareness and purchase intent – vital in this high-impulse market. Share grew by about 0.4 points; the biggest gain for any brand in 1995. And in volume, in a market down 7%, Mr. Big was up 1%; the only brand in A.C. Nielsen to grow.

Crossover notes

1. Breaking conventions. Handling a much-reduced budget.
2. Anchoring an event to the brand’s point-of-difference
3. Digging for Insight. Finding the key to persuading Shaq.
4. Noteworthy media. Creating “environmental branding.”

Situation Analysis

Mr. Big has been one of Canada’s biggest selling chocolate bars for almost 20 years. Until 1995, it had relatively solid advertising support in television and outdoor. It is a big eat, and the positioning has always been bigness, aimed at teens. After all, “When you’re this big, they call you Mister.”

In 1995, Cadbury’s cut its overall spending. Mr. Big’s budget dropped to \$660M, from \$1,133M the year before. This meant that by July 1995, Mr. Big had been out of advertising for eleven months; not good in a category driven by top-of-mind awareness and impulse purchase. Compounding the problem, the market was heating up with line extensions and new product launches. We had to make our “smaller” dollars work much harder, and hold market share.

Mr. Big—Mall Poster

Are you **big enough to be the next **Shaq**?**

Compete in the free throw contest. Get your picture taken with a life-size cut-out of basketball superstar Shaq O'Neal. Win great Mr. Big prizes.

When you're this **big, they call you **mister**.**

Shaq
Mr. Big
shootout

No purchase required • Offer good only at participating retailers. Excludes Mr. Big bars • Offer of varying amounts on number of successful free throws • Value of prizes varies from \$10 to \$50.

Strategy

With half the historical budget, a conventional TV/Outdoor plan would be too thin. How could we make our budget seem bigger than it really was? From past experience, we knew that our message – the BIG bar – was media-flexible. This was the opportunity:

***A “BIG” idea.
Neither media nor creative, but both.^{1,2}***

What was big, literally? What would appeal to teens? What would have impact? What would fit the brand? We considered various options, and then we had a Shaq attack!

To put this in context, it was just before the launch of the Raptors and Grizzlies. The hype for basketball was huge. Basketball is a “street game” with a persona of rebellion and breaking rules – an ideal fit with teens. PMB 95 reported 65% of teens were interested in the NBA, and this was *before* the hype.

It may not seem such a big leap to come up with Shaq O’Neal. He’s over 7 feet tall, and wears a size 22 shoe. He was the leading scorer with the Orlando Magic. He was a BIG man playing a BIG game with BIG attitude. The leap was believing we could make the Shaq idea work with our budget.³

Execution

The key to getting Shaq on board for a reasonable fee was for him to see the fit with Mr. Big, and for us to make it easy for him. We used ready but unused materials, to give him good exposure, with minimal involvement.

We created the “Shaq Shootout” as a Mall Tour. With a proof of purchase, teens shot hoops to win prizes. This was “environmental branding,” reinforcing Mr. Big’s cool image, and tied to volume.⁴ It was supported by:

- Radio, print and mall posters for the Shaq Shootout.
- Magazine ads offering a “photo with Shaq” and a “Mr. Big basketball.”
- Huge branded Bus Murals.
- Interior transit highlighting Shaq and Mr. Big as “Shaq and Snaq.”
- A laser display on the CN Tower, timed for when Shaq was in town, showing Shaq with a Mr. Big; a dunk shot; and the Mr. Big bar itself.

Crossover notes:

¹ Breaking conventions. Handling a much-reduced budget.

² Anchoring the event to the brand’s point-of-difference.

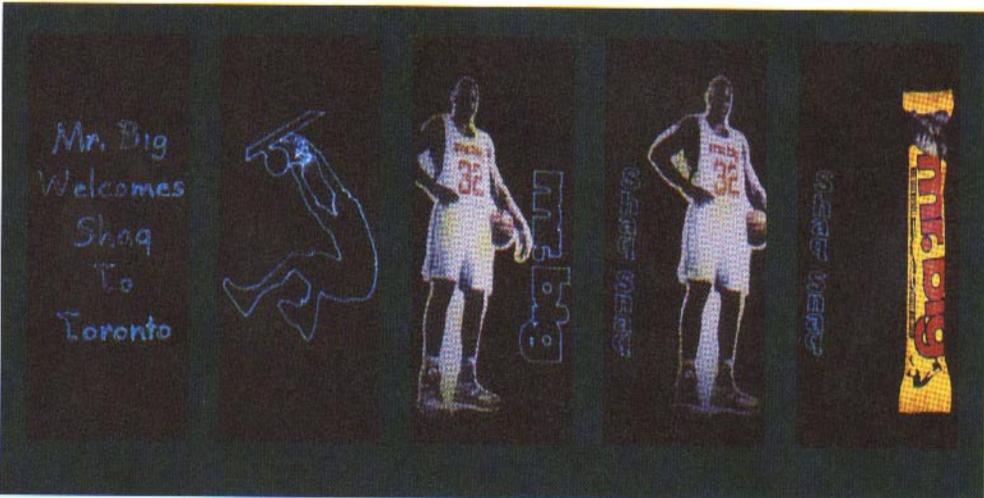
³ Digging for Insight. Finding the key to persuading Shaq.

⁴ Noteworthy media. Creating “environmental branding.”

Mr. Big—Mall Tour



CN Tower Laser Show



Results

The campaign more than achieved its goals. Share was up from 3.7% in 1994 to 4.1% in 1995. Category volume declined 7.4%, but Mr. Big grew 1.2%. The share growth was the biggest of any brand in the highly fragmented category, and Mr. Big was the only brand to grow in Nielsen volume:

	Share & Volume – 12 months to ND 95 vs ND 94					
	12 mo to ND 94		2 mo to ND 95		Change	
	Volume	Share	Volume	Share	Volume	Share
Total Single Bars	11959	63.5%	11079	61.2%	-7.4%	-2.3 pts
Mr. Big	445	3.7	450	4.1	+1.2	+0.4 pts
Oh Henry	745	6.2	680	6.1	-8.8	-0.1 pts
Mars	734	6.1	555	5.0	-24.3	-1.1 pts
Caramilk Regular	675	5.6	618	5.6	-8.4	n/chge
Caramilk Fudge	--	--	211	1.9	n/a	+1.9 pts
Coffee Crisp	643	5.4	627	5.6	-3.2	+0.2 pts
Crispy Crunch	644	5.4	528	4.8	-18.0	-0.6 pts
Kit Kat	633	5.3	566	5.1	-10.5	-0.2 pts
Smarties	522	4.4	515	4.6	-1.3	+0.2 pts
Reese's PNB	504	4.2	491	4.4	-2.7	+0.2 pts

Source: A.C. Nielsen. Note: all the brands smaller than Reese's also declined in share and volume

In tracking, results were up, and were strongest with the primary teen group:

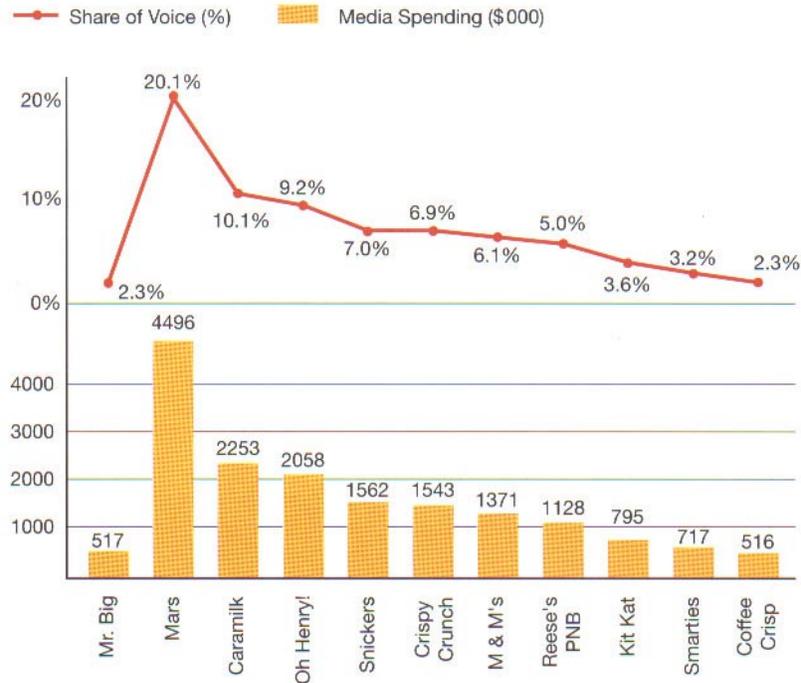
Usage and Attitude Tracking – Teens

	May 95	January 96	Change
Unaided Brand Awareness	21	30	+9 pts
Purchase Intent	31	39	+8 pts
Past 3 Mo. Usage	37	53	+16 pts

Source: Green Barbour Consultancy Tracking Study

All this happened with half the previous budget, and (in a category spending well over \$20 million), a meager SOV of 2.3%

Share of Voice and Media Spending—12 months to ND 95



Isolating Advertising as the Variable

There were no extraordinary product or pricing changes for Mr. Big during 1995, and trade and consumer promotion was within “normal” ranges. Given the reduced budget, the tracking evidence, and the fact that Mr. Big was the only brand to grow in a declining market, we conclude that the “environmental branding” effort was the factor delivering results.

Conclusion

What impressed the judges, in addition to the innovation and results, was the *attitude*. It must have been very tempting to accept the budget cut and think small. But everyone thought big – a perfect fit with Mr. Big’s positioning.