

# DISPATCHES™

Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

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## REASON WHY RECONSIDERED

So much attention has been paid to Dove's "Real Beauty" marketing campaign over the past few years that we've almost forgotten about one of the most well-known (and best leveraged) Positioning Reasons Why anywhere: "1/4 moisturizing cream." This simple ingredient—that no one else owns—has enabled the Dove Brand to expand successfully with *differentiation* into so many skincare and related categories, like deodorant and shampoo. We think this one example serves as a good reminder of the power of Reason Why, and it has caused us to reconsider some of the fundamental RW principles.

Before we review those, however, let's first recall that Reason Why is a critical part of a brand's positioning because it serves to make the brand's Benefits believable. Whether in the classic form of an ingredient (per Dove), a design element, a mode of action/operation, or in the form of research/clinical data and expert-body endorsements, each reason why must link directly to at least one of the brand's benefits. Reason Why is not about *why* someone should buy your brand, though if differentiated and well-linked to a meaningful benefit, it might well cause someone to choose your brand over another. In general, a good rule-of-thumb most marketers subscribe to is that for each benefit there should be at least one reason why. It makes for tighter credibility.

**RW Principle #1—A reason why works hardest when its mention—on packaging, in communications, in merchandising materials--immediately suggests or implies the benefit it supports (even when the RW stands alone).** Dove's "1/4 moisturizing cream" immediately suggests a nourishing mildness for skin that will leave it soft, looking natural. The "breathable sole" in every Geox shoe indicates drier, more comfortable feet for the wearer. Evian water is purer and tastes better because it comes from, well, Evian. And, as many allergists know, Singulair reduces allergy symptoms in their patients because it works differently than other allergy meds—others block histamines, but Singulair blocks leukotrienes. Regardless of the type, these various reasons why are already so well-marketed that they tend to elicit the benefits each supports at first mention.

**RW Principle #2—A reason why works hardest when it is not merely another benefit. Benefits make promises; reasons why support those promises.** Benefits promise one of three things: what the product does (product benefit), what that translates to for the customer (functional benefit), and/or how that all makes the customer feel (emotional benefit). Real reasons why do none of these things; rather, they stipulate something *tangible* that will support each of these things. Quite literally, a real, productive reason why is something that a customer could actually see and touch—an ingredient, a design element, a research study, a signed endorsement. As we often remind our clients, should a judge in a courtroom bang his gavel and

demand of a Brand Manager making a claim, “Prove it,” the reason why should be admissible as tangible evidence.

**RW Principle #3—A reason why works hardest when it provides the brand with a differentiation that the benefit cannot.** So often in our marketing efforts to have our brand perceived as a better choice, we overlook the “suggestive power” of a compelling reason why. When the Schick Quattro razor was introduced a few years ago it had no legally supportable promise of benefit to make to male consumers, such as a “closer shave,” or a “smoother shave.” But it did have one thing that, at the time, Gillette did not have: an extra blade (4 versus Gillette’s 3). And because razor marketers have trained American consumers so well that “more blades are better,” the perceived differentiation for the Quattro occurred. True, it was not a permanent differentiation because Gillette eventually followed with the 5-bladed Fusion—but the suggestive power of an added blade did help Quattro to a successful launch. Sometimes, though, the perception of “having more of some feature” does last, as in the case of the Volvo Brand. No matter where you go in the world, people immediately cite Volvo’s dominant benefit as safety; and although Volvo has no more air bags than other leading sedans these days, many perceive that it does. Yet another tangible reason why at work with suggestive power.

**RW Principle # 4—A reason why works hardest when value can be added to it over time.** In recent months the V-8 Brand has done this very thing. Long known as a “better-for-you” beverage because of its real vegetable juice content, the brand has always been free of cholesterol and saturated fats. But these absence-of-negatives reasons why didn’t bring much to the party until the brand’s recent acquiring of an American Heart Association endorsement. In the words of one of their current print ads, “Something good just got better.” This endorsement value, added to the already healthy V-8 ingredients, makes the brand’s better-for-you benefit stronger. And did you see just a few weeks ago that Wrigley’s has secured the American Dental Association endorsement for the sugarless gum brands (a first in the gum category)? Again, everyone knows the cavity-preventing benefit of sugarless gum; but now there is an even better reason to believe in its efficacy with the value-added ADA endorsement.

**RW Principle #5—A reason why works hardest when it is not COE (cost-of-entry).** We already noted that the ADA is now endorsing sugarless gum—a first for that category. But the same cannot be said for the toothpaste category, where an ADA endorsement is a cost-of-entry reason why and has been for many years. Another often cited endorsement is “dermatologist recommended.” The Neutrogena Brand might claim that they own this endorsement, but if other brands can also use it (or something very similar), it is really more COE than ownable. The truth is that virtually every reason why that is now a cost-of-entry (like the fluoride ingredient in toothpaste to prevent cavities) was once a differentiating reason why. But, as they say, all good things must come to an end; so it is always a good idea to be prepared for the day when your brand’s differentiating reason why becomes a COE. We like to see our clients’ brands pursue an on-going effort to find new and improved reasons why—in partnership with their R&D teams. There IS a creative way to completely avoid the “COE effect”: develop your own reason why endorsement—such as Jeep has done with its “Trail Rated” system and seal. No other SUV can possibly be “Trail Rated” because Jeep has trademarked the nomenclature.

## **BOATS & HELICOPTERS:**

We hope this quick review of some Reason Why fundamentals is helpful — if nothing else in

reminding you and your brand-building teams to stop and take a hard look at the state of your brand's Reasons Why. Here's a summary checklist you might want to run through as part of that look:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ There is at least one RW to support each of the brand's benefits.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Each RW used is tangible; it could be seen or touched if need be.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The brand's RW's are differentiated versus competitors, not cost-of-entry.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The RW's have evolved over time—value has been added to them.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The entire RW "bundle" for the brand consists of both features and attributes within the product and of data or endorsements outside the brand.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ The Brand has an on-going, joint effort with R&D to explore new RW possibilities.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ At least some of the brand's RW's are trademarked.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Each RW is **not** a Benefit!

Richard Czerniawski & Mike Maloney

**Richard Czerniawski**

.....  
430 Abbotsford Road  
Kenilworth, Illinois 60043  
tel 847.256.8820  
fax 847.256.8847  
.....

Reply to Richard:

[rdczerniawski@cs.com](mailto:rdczerniawski@cs.com) or  
[richardcz@bdn-intl.com](mailto:richardcz@bdn-intl.com)

**Mike Maloney**

.....  
1506 West 13th Street, #17  
Austin, Texas 78703  
tel 512.236.0971  
fax 512.236.0972  
.....

reply to Mike:

[mikewmaloney@cs.com](mailto:mikewmaloney@cs.com) or  
[mikemaloney@bdn-intl.com](mailto:mikemaloney@bdn-intl.com)



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