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Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

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THINK TIGHTER TARGETING

Did you ever wonder why you never see Coca-Cola ads in, say, that ultra-upscale Town & Country magazine? Or, for that matter, in Gourmet magazine? What's wrong with those Coke marketers—don't they realize that many readers of those magazines also drink Coke, at least sometimes? The reason you don't see Brand Coke advertising in publications like these is the same reason you don't see a Tiffany's display in Target stores (even though there are undoubtedly many Target shoppers who also buy gifts at Tiffany's from time to time). And that reason is simply this: a brand's Positioning Target is not the same thing as a brand's Volume Base (i.e., all consumers of a brand's volume). The latter is always bigger, broader than the former.

Winning marketers have always known and appreciated that where you get the biggest bang for your positioning investments (promotion, packaging, advertising, merchandising, detailing, etc) is in directing them as precisely as possible against your brand's loyal users—or, in some cases, against those you hope to make your loyal users. And, since no brand—even one as big as Coca-Cola—has limitless positioning investment resources, this means some publications, some TV shows, some venues will be used and some will not. Some consumers of the brand will be directly “hit” with the brand's positioning stimuli, and some will not.

There's probably no better example of this in action than Gatorade. More than half of all “sports beverage” volume (including Gatorade's) is annually consumed by people who are clearly not athletes, nor ever will be: they are, in fact, typically males 18-45 who work outdoors, sweat profusely, tire out a lot and therefore need a good thirst-quenching replenisher—many times a day. (For “heavy-user” guys like these, the 64-ounce bottle is a single-serve!). Yet, if you examine Gatorade's historic packaging developments (the first sports-cap), line extensions (Fierce, Frost), and advertising campaigns (“Deep Down Body Thirst,” “Is it in you?”), you'll quickly conclude that the brand's Positioning Target is someone altogether different...someone like, “Active athletes of all ages and performance levels but who love to compete, regardless of their performance level; they use sports beverages, water, and other liquids to fuel their activities and to replenish them during and after their activities; they need a beverage that works and that helps them feel more like they can be “winners.” Nothing in this target either overt or implied about brick-layers, gardeners, or road crews. But still, the brand's volume moves—and grows!

Let's assume we're reasonably accurate in our inferred Positioning Target for Gatorade, and let's take a closer look at it to see how a tighter target than the total volume base works so well:

1. For starters, this “active athletes of all ages and performance levels” target definition is really quite an inclusive one, isn't it? Unlike many brand Positioning Targets, this one is

not constrained by demographic boundaries (e.g., women 25-45, with kids). Plus, it includes athletes from hopeful beginners to serious amateurs.

2. Even more helpful, the Gatorade target specifies a meaningful psychographic element: “they love to compete, regardless of their performance level.” This is key for a couple of reasons. First, it ropes in so many potential drinkers with diverse demographic, socio-economic, even cultural backgrounds; whether the 30-handicapper or the scratch player, they all share in common their love of competition. Second, this powerful psychograph ensures that the heavy-using outdoor-workers are not alienated—they may not engage in sports at all, but they can still appreciate (even admire) successful competitors.
3. Finally, the needs that the Gatorade Brand intends to deliver on are ones that are pointedly meaningful to the athlete target and to the non-athletic heavy-users: effective thirst-quenching and replenishment; feeling like a winner. It doesn’t matter what your endeavor, avocation, or job, who doesn’t want to aspire to being a winner?

So there it is, a Positioning Target that is consciously smaller in size than the brand’s Volume Base Target. It holds together. It makes sense. It enables the Gatorade Brand marketing team to direct its brand positioning resources in a focused, impactful way; it also enables consumers everywhere to easily grasp what the Gatorade Brand stands for—in the absolute and versus the competition. With all these advantages for a tighter Positioning Target, then, why is it we so often hear senior managers directing their marketers (especially when getting ready to launch a new product/brand) to “make the target bigger/broader?” The answer’s pretty simple—they don’t understand the difference between the brand’s Positioning Target and its ultimate Volume Base. It’s up to us marketers to set these managers straight: a Positioning Target aims at a brand’s “most likely prospects,” those consumers or customers whom we expect to be loyal ones. In this way, all the brand-building investments are much more incisively directed and the returns much more likely to be big ones.

BOATS & HELICOPTERS:

1. Let’s face it, there are all kinds of target groups: Total Volume Targets; Brand Positioning Targets; Advertising Strategy Targets; Media Targets, and so on. It’s awfully important that we reach some kind of understanding and agreement with our Management and with our Functional/Supplier Teams about what each target means. It’s even a better idea to articulate on paper the “who” each of these targets comprises.
2. A Tight Positioning Target—like the inferred one for Gatorade—includes a number of essential components if it is to be truly actionable: meaningful psychographic indicators/driving attitudes about the product category; current products, brands, practices being used by the target; and the specific rational and/or emotional needs the target wants satisfied most.
3. Keep in mind, too, that in making the Positioning Target tighter, we never want to

thereby exclude brand users who do not neatly fit into the tighter definition.

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