



Taking the pain out of positioning Advil

Positioning can be a real headache. That's fine. No pain, no gain. But for many brands, positioning on purely functional benefits can cause heartache too. This was the case for Advil, the number two brand in the highly competitive and commoditised US analgesics category.

Pharmaceutical giant, Wyeth, were concerned that Advil might be lacking an emotional connection with consumers. Private Label was hammering away at the market. And the opportunity was open for something new. For a brand to offer value beyond what was generic to the category.

Advil's "Every Pain Reliever" positioning was fine, but it was too focused on functional benefits. We offered our own form of pain relief by understanding the nature and intensity of consumers' existing emotional connection to Advil. And did the same for their two nearest competitors and Private Label.

We sought to understand the characters, ideal profiles, equities and strengths of each brand. Our proprietary Emotional Brand Connections (EBC) quantitative test revealed that Advil and its competition had not formed any strong or positive emotional connections. They didn't have distinctive brand or company profiles. And there were clearly unique emotional spaces to be occupied.

We set out to uncover what consumers might want to feel when choosing an analgesic. We looked at the category positioning and communications and discovered why the EBC showed little to no differentiation between brands. Virtually all of them emphasized pain.

So we chose to turn the category on its head and investigate, via semiotic and consumer insight work, the meaning of 'not pain'. After all, who wants to feel in pain, or to be reminded of it through advertising, pack-shots and other communications?

A range of concepts were developed and tested with consumers. Each provided an executional and strategic direction for the brand as well as a look, a feel, and a voice. We used the EBC methodology to test three new concepts as well as a control concept based on their existing campaign. All of the test concepts surpassed the control on all significant measures. But one, the clear winner, supported all the Advil business objectives.

How did we Add Value?

We used a specialised quantitative tool to examine the emotional triggers of the category. We used semiotics to map the meaning of pain and pain relief. And we defined a category busting emotional territory that Advil could really own.