



Resolving the Bedtime Reading Debate - The #1 Problem for Couples in Bed Isn't What You Think

Fleishman-Hillard and Barnes & Noble, Inc., Jan 1,2013

Summary: 2013 Silver Anvil Award of Excellence Winner — Marketing Consumer Products — Technology

Devised to solve E Ink (electrophoretic ink) readers #1 request, Barnes & Noble created NOOK Simple Touch with GlowLight – the world's first E Ink device with built-in illumination for reading in the dark. To unveil this industry-first technology, B&N and Fleishman-Hillard designed a problem/solution scenario positioning the device as the relationship harmony hero for bedtime readers. Through a multi-faceted launch event featuring experiential “poolside to bedside” briefings, B&N engaged media on an emotional level and exposed the competition's weaknesses, which resulted in 555+MM impressions; more Bests, Editor's Choice Awards and accolades than any other NOOK in B&N's history; and enormous consumer demand.

Marketing consumer products includes programs designed to introduce new products or promote existing products to a consumer audience.

Full Text: **SITUATION ANALYSIS**

In fewer than three years, Barnes & Noble (B&N) has established itself as a formidable competitor in the highly saturated eReader and tablet segment, having successfully launched a family of NOOK devices and winning 27+% of the US eBook market against technology giant competitors. In spring 2011, B&N introduced NOOK Simple Touch, which one year later, was still widely considered the best eReader on the market. But it didn't stop there.

Armed with an aggressive strategy and backed by an engineering coup that would solve E Ink readers' #1 complaint, B&N was set to unleash the brightest innovation in digital reading yet ... a breakthrough so revolutionary even its fiercest rival Amazon couldn't keep up. NOOK Simple Touch with GlowLight – the world's first E Ink device with built-in illumination for reading in the dark – was ready for its shining moment. B&N charged agency partner Fleishman-Hillard (FH) to amplify this unique feature and stake a new claim in the industry.

RESEARCH

For as long as there have been beds, and books, there's been a common clash among couples at bedtime. Lights on, to read? Or off, to sleep? So, it's not surprising the #1 request among B&N E Ink customers was a built-in reading light. Nielsen research also showed 61% of eReader owners use the device in bed and 37% of all reading is done in bed.

To officially validate the couple's bedtime reading dilemma, FH developed and fielded the “Bedtime Reading Debate” among a national sample of US adults to shed light on this age-old issue. Results provided compelling data to frame the problem and lend credibility to B&N's solution.

Among the most newsworthy and provocative:

- Approximately two-thirds of people polled read in bed. · A partner using a light to read in

bed was deemed most disruptive by respondents – even more so than a frisky partner’s “midnight moves.”

- 50% say either they or their partner would read more in bed if it didn’t affect the other person’s sleep.
- Nearly half of respondents have gone to sleep annoyed because their partner was reading with a light on.

PLANNING

Objectives

- Stage a compelling launch event that demonstrates the device’s unique lifestyle proposition as the world’s first E Ink reader that’s as good in bed as it is on the beach – all for an incredible value.
- Amplify B&N’s leadership in digital for pioneering the breakthrough GlowLight technology, as well as innovation in creating the best reading experience available – better than Kindle.
- Heighten awareness and drive demand for NOOK Simple Touch with GlowLight during the critical window of exclusivity in the market, plus B&N’s vast digital content catalog and full NOOK portfolio.
- Reinforce B&N’s unique position as a tech company that listens to what customers say they want and need.

Target/Audience Analysis

B&N knows its customers are avid readers. And for people who love to read, E Ink’s paper-like readability, no-glare screen and long battery life made it a favorite and nearly perfect device, with one exception: reading in bed or other low-light environments. NOOK Simple Touch with GlowLight represented an enormous opportunity for B&N to not only further satisfy current customers, but also break into a much larger reading-centric audience by becoming the first company in the industry to successfully create a true “everywhere” reader. Previously, digital readers were forced to switch between E Ink and LCD products and used heavy, bright tablets at bedtime, but preferred portable eReaders while on the go and for reading outdoors. As first to market, the company aimed to capture the attention of avid readers everywhere.

Strategy

As first to market with a revolutionary lighting technology that was added to a year-old product, it was vital to divert from the usual press conference and create an experiential, multi-faceted program that would show media 2 about the new device, engage them on an emotional level and illustrate the competition’s weaknesses.

To reach a wide variety of technology, lifestyle, business and consumer media types during B&N’s fleeting window of market exclusivity, FH used the following strategies:

- Announce new product and preview with media early on, to capitalize on B&N’s first-to-market innovation ahead of Amazon.
- Create a rich problem/solution scenario positioning NOOK Simple Touch with GlowLight as the relationship harmony hero for bedtime readers.
- Leverage “Bedtime Reading Debate” survey results to lend credibility and build texture for lifestyle claims.
- Communicate innovative technology through a lifestyle story that B&N customers will relate to.
- Bring to life the product’s “poolside to bedside” benefits and breakthrough technology in a real-world environment (in both bright sunlight and a dark bedroom) with side-by-side competitive comparisons.

EXECUTION

- Conducted more than 60 in-person embargoed briefings with key analysts and priority media over two days in NYC and San Francisco.
- Developed briefing script and backdrop for poolside “outdoor reading test” to showcase glare-free reading E Ink devices offer in bright sunlight compared to that of tablet devices, and bedside “indoor reading test” to reveal device and demonstrate competitive superiority.
- Developed key messages and accompanying press materials juxtaposing device features alongside contextual lifestyle benefits. Utilized survey results to create visual infographic and fact sheet containing market-specific data for lifestyle and local media outreach.
- Managed embargoed media materials distribution and follow up to prevent leaks.
- Prioritized targets for device reviews, determined embargo timing for greatest impact and managed loan program with top tech media to shape messaging and generate positive coverage.

EVALUTION

Objective 1: Stage a compelling launch event that demonstrates the device’s unique lifestyle proposition as the world’s first E Ink reader that’s as good in bed as it is on the beach – all for an incredible value.

- Nearly every major media outlet named NOOK Simple Touch with GlowLight the best eReader available and the majority of coverage mirrored event messaging and de-positioned the competition. **Gizmodo** proclaimed it “**the new king of the eReaders,**” while **Business Insider’s** headline stated, “**Simply Put, You Should Buy Barnes & Noble’s New Nook Instead Of a Kindle.**”

Objective 2: Amplify B&N’s leadership in digital for pioneering the breakthrough GlowLight technology, as well as innovation in creating the best reading experience available – better than Kindle.

- Overwhelmingly positive editorial sentiment with **555+ million impressions** and more Bests, Editor’s Choice Awards and accolades than any other NOOK product in B&N’s history, including the #1 ranked eReader from Consumer Reports and received the prestigious **Editor’s Choice award** from **CNET, PCMag, PC World**.
 - ***The New York Times***’leading technology columnist wrote, “**Bottom line: There’s no better E Ink model than this new glowing NOOK. For the first time in eReader history, you can have spectacular, crisp pages to read in any light, from beach sunshine to sleeping-spouse darkness.**”

Objective 3: Heighten awareness and drive demand for NOOK Simple Touch with GlowLight during the critical window of exclusivity in the market, plus B&N’s vast digital content catalog and full NOOK portfolio.

- The launch also drove enormous consumer demand– sold out for Mother’s Day, far exceeded company’s pre-orders expectation

Objective 4: Reinforce Barnes & Noble’s unique position as a technology company that truly listens to what consumers say they want and need.

- Rave reviews and majority 5-star ratings from NOOK customers
- With the new device as the latest example of B&N’s market leadership – the company secured a \$300MM Microsoft investment, forming a strategic partnership to capitalize on both companies’ strong innovation in digital content and reading technologies.

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