

Schick Hydro Wakes Up Shave Zombies and Boosts Brand Sales

Edelman and Schick Hydro (Energizer Personal Care), Jan 1, 2013

Summary: 2013 Silver Anvil Award Winner — Marketing Consumer Products —Packaged Goods

Charged with significantly boosting sales and awareness of Schick Hydro and the new Power Select innovation, Edelman turned a simple but intriguing razor into a major business driver through inventive, unexpected launch activities, effectively waking up “Shave Zombies” at the International Consumer Electronics Show in January 2012. Immediately following this campaign:

- Brand awareness skyrocketed 16 percentage points to a record 47 percent, driven exclusively by PR;
- Overall brand sales climbed 14 percent, beating targets by 140 percent;
- Household trial jumped to an unprecedented 7.2 percent, nearly twice Hydro year one trial and the largest year-over-year gain for the category.

Campaigns that are Marketing Consumer Products included programs designed to launch or introduce new products or promote existing products to a consumer audience. The Packaged Good subcategory refers to traditional consumer products sold in packages, such as food products, pet products, household goods, toiletries and cosmetics.

Full Text: **SITUATION ANALYSIS**

The problem was a simple one. As a senior Schick executive put it: “I can prove Schick Hydro shaves better than the leading competition, my prices are 30 percent lower and yet I still only gain a fraction of the market. Why aren’t we the market leaders?” Research found most men operated on autopilot in the grooming aisle, routinely selecting razors out of habit. And while Hydro laboratory research demonstrated a clear superiority to competitive razors, Gillette, with its 70 percent of the market share, remained the favorite.

Edelman considered the problem to be one of ambivalence, not just performance. Research painted most men as believing their razor was good enough, and they weren’t inclined to consider other options. We began calling these men “shave zombies,” mindlessly shaving each morning with an inferior razor. Our task then became simple: wake them up with the help of a new line innovation, the Schick Hydro Power Select.

RESEARCH

Key Insights:

Extensive research from Nielsen, BASES, Iconoculture and Mintel identified a clear opportunity to highlight technology with the launch of Schick Hydro Power Select. What’s more, data showed if we could insert the “tech” message into the Power Select conversation, the entire Hydro franchise would benefit from a halo sales boost, thus accomplishing our client’s broader business goals.

We knew the Hydro target customer cared about the latest and greatest technology, but he doesn't find out about this kind of advance from traditional "grooming" media outlets. To capture his attention, we had to legitimize the Power Select's innovations and style – and the Consumer Electronic Show (CES) presented a one-of-a-kind opportunity to do just that. It was the perfect convergence of influencers who could legitimize the product's quality with consumers, and media who – shocked to find the razor at CES – could try it and amplify its benefits with their (literal and figurative) microphones.

Audience Analysis:

The Hydro target is a young, independent man age 18-34 (core 22-24). In-depth analysis revealed these men believe powered products are inherently better, and they are attracted to customizable products meeting specific needs.

Despite shavers' affinity for powered products, research also uncovered what we termed "shave apathy," indicated by a general (if mild) distaste for shaving, a vague disinterest in the category and a general belief their current razor does a good enough job, making razor reconsideration unnecessary.

A bleak picture, yes, but one insight offered hope: Consumer research consistently showed once men try Schick Hydro, they are highly likely to buy, talk about and continue to use it. We knew we not only had to tell this target about Hydro Power Select, we had to show them how great it shaves.

PLANNING

Objectives:

Business objectives

- Grow top line sales by 10 percent
- Launch Power Select successfully, while maintaining base business

Marketing objectives

- Grow awareness to 46 percent from 31 percent
- Grow trial to 5.5 percent from 3 percent
- Exceed 300K sold within first two months of launch (January-February)

Public relations objections and metrics

- Media Coverage: 150 million+ impressions, with at least five signature stories and 80 percent or higher positive tonality
- Social media engagement (500K+ Facebook impressions, 150K+ Twitter impressions)
- Influencer engagement (10,000 booth visits, 1,000 business cards collected, 50 barbershop shaves)

Strategy: In brief, *wake up the shave zombies!*

More specifically:

- Position the innovative Schick Hydro as the best shave for your skin: emphasize technological (vs. grooming) innovation; target tech media that guys actively seek out when considering purchase decisions
- Leverage insight that a trial use of Hydro triggers clear gains in loyalty, likelihood to recommend and repeat purchase: create opportunity for gatekeepers to interact directly with the razor and experience its benefits first hand, and tell their friends (readers, followers, etc.) about it
- Convince the world, and major media and consumer gatekeepers, that Power Select – and all Hydro razors – provides "the best shave for your skin" by legitimizing its technology on the world's biggest stage for innovations, CES

- Position Hydro Power Select as a must-have gadget, not just a new razor
- Launch big and don't shy from the innovation
- Integrate media and social media activity
- Engage influencers in an unexpected way

EXECUTION

Every year, thousands of influential media, gatekeepers and technological movers and shakers gather at CES to test and learn about breakthrough products. We knew CES was the place to capitalize on our strategy of positioning Power Select as a technological marvel. The obstacle, of course, was clutter. With 3,319 exhibitors vying for similar attention – and most marketing products costing hundreds of times more than our \$9 razor – we had to do something bold to get gatekeepers to try it.

Our solution would prove unique in the 30-year-old trade show's history: erect a full-scale barbershop, staff it with celebrity barbers and create a visual spectacle amid the show floor to spark attention, and more importantly, attract our target media and influencers to try the product. **The idea was so novel, the *New York Times* referred to Hydro as a brand “drawn to [CES] not in spite of the fact that they will stick out but because of it,” in an exclusive opening day story.**

On site, media flocked to the booth, where they were invited to get a shave (many on camera), while social influencers tweeted about the experience and were targeted by onsite community managers.

EVALUATION

Schick Hydro Power Select generated a large sales increase commensurate with media coverage in highly influential (but traditionally uninterested) outlets. What's more, the entire Hydro franchise experienced a sales lift during that time period.

Business objectives:

- Contributed to FY growth of 14 percentage points, 140 percent above target.
- Fueled sales growth through incremental dollar share and halo Hydro franchise sales.

Marketing objectives:

- Post-CES, Hydro awareness grew to a record 47 percent, attributed directly to Edelman programming, accounting for 17 point increase from month prior to launch (December).
- Power Select trial exceeded 7 percent, “handily crushing” (client's) goal.

PR objectives:

- “Innovation” strategy results in 176 million earned launch media impressions; top placements in *New York Times*, *Wired.com*, *USAToday.com*, *MensHealth.com* and more
- 5.6 million+ Twitter impressions, exceeding goal by 97 percent
- 95 percent+ of Facebook comments positive – even Steve Martin tweeted about Power Select!
- Coverage highlights:
 - Live shave of KTLA reporter featured alongside high-tech new Sony camera.
 - Highlighted as “best shave of my life” by TechCrunch, driving considerable foot traffic.
 - Ranked one of Gear Patrol's best booths, alongside big spenders Samsung and Ford.
 - One of *Wired.com*'s “13 Gadgets We Love.”

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