

Bulmers Original Cider

All in its own good time.

INTRODUCTION

In 1996 Bulmers Cider was awarded gold in the IAPI Advertising Effectiveness Awards, for a long-term campaign. Four years later we felt it was felt appropriate to re-enter Bulmers, given the continued long-term commercial success of the brand. This case study reflects the brand advertising strategy from 1997 to June 2000.

MARKETING STRATEGY

Building on a successful formula can sometimes be more difficult than re-inventing or launching a brand. We knew that the advertising communication was working but we could not become complacent. Qualitative research undertaken by the Research Center in early 1997 identified the following points:

- Bulmers appears to be in a good state of health; all vital organs are functioning well.
- Perception of product values, brand imagery and user profile are all moving in the right direction.
- Advertising is seen by consumers to have played a major part and they are prepared to go along with it.
- The key now is to push harder rather than stand back.
- A shift in the direction or standing still would not be advisable.
- Consumers are demanding more from the brand - not less.

Other factors also had to be considered, such as the competitive forces at work in the market place.

Alco-pops were creating all the

headlines and capturing the younger consumers. Guinness had just launched Hudson Blue Cider as a direct competitor with a significant advertising budget.

These developments together with on-going competition from stout, lager and ale meant that the strategic position adopted must protect current market share, whilst seeking to grow the brand over the coming four years.

CREATIVE STRATEGY

The previous six years had successfully created 'Orchard' and 'Vats' as icons for the brand. Were we to abandon them or retain them in some form? Both agency and the client were aware that the brand had to move on and a reworking of existing themes would not suffice. Exhaustive creative exploration was undertaken which led to the development of a new parallel strategy, which would communicate the core brand values in an innovative way.

Parallel 1: Television / cinema would depict non Orchard/Vat images and add another significant layer to the brand.

Parallel 2: Outdoor, press, and radio would retain the icon images but convey them in a new creative sphere.

CREATIVE PLATFORM

1. To give one's whole interest or work to a particular cause or belief; single minded; determined; devoted.'
2. To the established key Bulmers brand values - Craft, Heritage, Tradition, Naturalness, Dedication will be added.



Client:
Showerings
(Ireland) Ltd.

Agency:
Young
Advertising

Team:
Brian Hayes
Shane Whelan
Mike Mesbur
Ger Roe
Garrett Murphy
Georgina Carraher



History has thrown up many individuals who have pursued a dream, and fulfilled it. To succeed they have shown an attention to detail, a passionate dedication and an ambition to be the first to be the Original. It is a similar level of dedication that sets Bulmers apart from other drinks: expertise; patience; diligence, these are necessary strengths of the master Cider maker, as he strives to produce 'The Original Vintage Cider.' The television / cinema commercials depicted 'Jules Leotard' the worlds first flying trapeze artist, and his belief in an original idea. The campaign moved the brand forward with a re-interpretation of the existing values, while at the same time establishing a new platform based on dedication, endeavour and skill in the pursuit of the original.

The second part of the parallel strategy retained the unique brand values from the Bulmers World. A campaign on outdoor, radio and press depicted the orchard through the seasons. Again the concepts were true to the Bulmers brand and retained what had become Bulmers unique property.

So did this parallel strategy work?

By the end of 1997 Bulmers share of the Cider market had grown to 84%, whilst its share of the overall drinks market had grown to 6%, representing 140% increase since the early '90s. This was in spite of ever increasing competition from brands such as Hudson Blue.

Qualitative research conducted by the Research Center further endorsed the new direction.

MAIN FINDINGS

- 'Dedication' moved Bulmers on from where it was, whilst retaining brand values.
- It has brand leader style that pulls Bulmers away from other Ciders.
- Respondents recognise the link between the Trapeze and Bulmers.

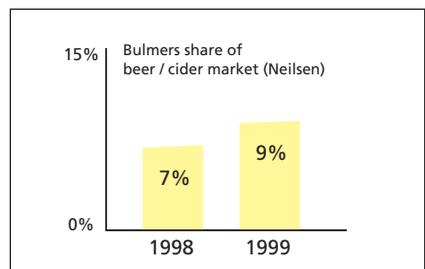
Spontaneously they equate the determination of the main character in the commercial with the dedication associated with producing Bulmers.

- Recall of other Bulmers advertising, (vats, apples, orchards) remains strong.
- So the new creative platform had worked and continued the upward spiral for the brand in both image and sales terms.

THE NEXT STAGE

It was agreed to keep with the strategy and theme and in 1998 the second dedication commercial was created entitled 'Ski jump'- featuring Sondre Nordheim, the first person to 'fly' through the air. This was supported by the other main media as per the parallel strategy. A further dimension was added to the mix, an advertising campaign to exclusively promote the Bulmers Pint Bottle. This tactical campaign on television and outdoor centred on the unique aspects of the pint bottle through a campaign entitled 'Euro Guide'. The advertising reflected the brand's mood and style but successfully added another aspect to the brand character.

Results from both campaigns were extremely encouraging as per the following chart.



Qualitative research undertaken by the Research Center further endorsed the campaign.

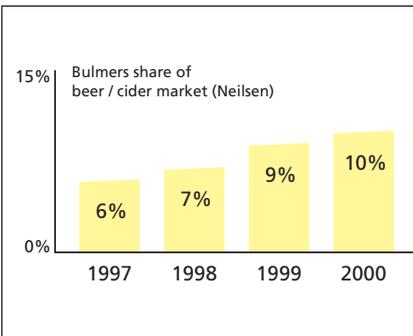
- There is an overall feeling of attention to detail, perfection and quality in all brand advertising.

- Respondents accept what the brand says.
- Bulmers has distanced itself from other ciders - it is now compared with Guinness, Heineken, and Budweiser.
- The main aims of the Bulmers strategy embarked upon in the early 90s have been achieved.

1999 saw another re-evaluation of the advertising strategy. Whilst all the trade figures and research results showed consistent upward movement in sales and image terms, we knew that the consumer needed to be constantly challenged and stimulated in order to keep the brand fresh and relevant. Our strategy has always been for the long-term - no quick fixes. The parallel strategy adopted had worked but needed to move on. Again television / cinema were chosen as the lead media to add another layer to the brand character, whilst outdoor, press, and radio would retain our icons.

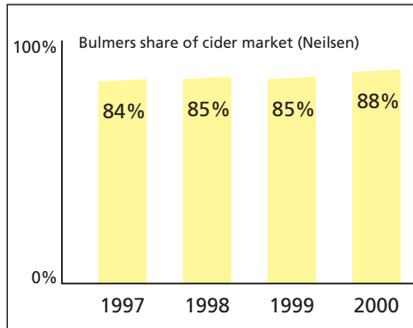
Creatively the word 'Respect' was appended to the other brand descriptors such as Naturalness, Craft Tradition, Heritage and Dedication. The concept depicted the respect that certain individuals have for past masters, thus implying that at Bulmers we too have learnt from the genius / guidance of others who have taken the time to produce great results. All the individuals were at the forefront of their own disciplines.

Together with Respect, Orchards / Vats and tactical execution for Pint



bottle / Draught, Bulmers continued to grow in a static market. The following charts indicate the rate of this growth.

MEDIA STRATEGY



The aim with the Bulmers brand has always been to create presence throughout the year. This was borne from a two-fold objective:

- the first to eliminate historical seasonality in brand sales,
- but more importantly to have continuous brand presence in the market, so that the consumers be assailed by "Bulmers", with the consequence that the brand gain a natural acceptance, without the need to discount or promote in-trade.

Aligned to the objective of 12 month presence has been the desire to use as many media vehicles as possible, again in order to assail the senses and create omni- presence, but bearing in mind:

- the need to use media conducive to the audiences
- the need to ensure that any medium chosen fits with the brand strategy
- the need to ensure that any medium chosen be used at meaningful levels
- that any media selected be judged against sound media criteria.

The consequence of the above is that the media mix for Bulmers is



varied and multi faceted. Each of the main media play a role in the Bulmers schedule. How each medium is utilised is then discussed and analysed in detail with the client with regard to the following:

- budget allocation
- each medium being judged in terms of its importance in our brand communication targets from a creative and media viewpoint
- each medium is then assessed in terms of audience delivery.

Against each medium a full and detailed strategy is then prepared, covering the following:

- budget allocation,
- role within overall plan,
- how the medium will be used, e.g. advertising/sponsorship/combination etc.
- particular elements of medium to be used
- primary target audience for which that particular medium is being utilised
- buying strategy to be adopted
- targets.

TELEVISION

A number of commercial lengths and creative executions were run on TV and these were allocated very specifically in terms of proportions and indeed programme placement.

Television is the main focus of brand activity for Bulmers both in terms of budget allocation and in terms of total audience delivery. We believe it has been central to brand success in terms of growth and development and this is directly attributable to deliberate, very focused buying on behalf of the brand.

The targets set for the brand are ambitious in sales terms but also in media delivery terms.

OUTDOOR

It has emerged as a medium where the brand can branch out creatively, using complimentary but different messages to those on TV. The brand schedules numerous executions across the year and our use of numerous sizes with one outdoor message allows us to create the big brand, omni-present feel.

The medium whilst having national presence and a national audience has also proved to be very effective at achieving coverage and awareness for the brand among the key 18-34 yr. old audience, thus providing us with a strong secondary medium where we can cost effectively address the area of recruitment. This strong performance has been consistently borne out by our strong performance in awareness terms in the PML Poster Awareness tracking studies.

Press is used at a number of levels for the brand, from advertising placement in national titles, to miscellaneous and varied magazine placement, as well as a number of key identified sponsorships and associations relevant to the brand.

The initial decision to incorporate press into the Bulmers media mix, was taken on the basis of targeting an audience who may not necessarily drink the brand on a regular basis, but who may influence opinions about the brand, i.e. ABC1's.

The desire was to reach them in an unexpected manner and in an environment that both they and the brand sat comfortably within.

PRESS

Hence the decision to use national press, which has ABC1 penetration and to run on sports pages where very little other colour advertising was running at the time and where ABC1 males have a high propensity to read.

RADIO

Advertising has run on RTE Radio 1 and the local stations, with creative executions developed to compliment Outdoor, - thus adding momentum to Outdoor and vice versa.

In buying terms the policy is primarily to "spot buy", to run ads around more male oriented programmes with particular emphasis on weekends sports.

The area of radio sponsorship for Bulmers was also identified as an area that held potential for the brand. The brief was clear, in terms of targeting areas of interest to the brand and target, e.g. sport or music, and only considering sponsorships that were unique and could be seen as potential long-term additions to the brand plan.

CINEMA

The medium of cinema although relatively small in overall budget terms is core to the media selection process in terms of brand strategy. Cinema offers us a medium of the moment, it is multi-sensual, young, a "choice" medium and one where creative executions can impact with audiences who appreciate and will hopefully remember the ad.

Longer length commercials were used on the medium for impact purposes and they buying strategy has centred around packages, but within top screens, thus securing presence in first run movies.

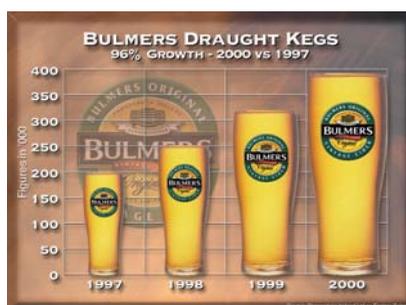
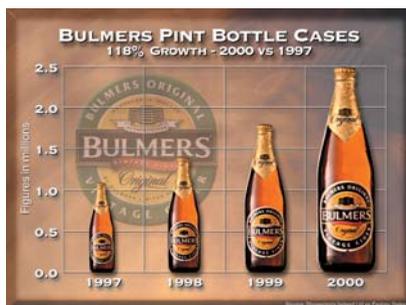
CONCLUSION

Today after ten years of committed and consistent advertising, Bulmers has grown from 2.8% to 10% of the beer / cider market. It owns the cider market and has made the category a serious sector in the drinks trade.

A clearly defined advertising strategy has been adhered to and has

evolved through the years. It has a distinctive and relevant brand character that no other brand can touch. All done without gimmicks or giveaways. In the past three years the brand has picked up advertising awards from Mobius (USA), Poster campaign (Ad of the century - Marketing Magazine), TDI bus-side, and numerous Poster Of The Month, in Marketing Magazine.

Essentially creative, effective advertising that rewards those who stick to a particular advertising strategy.



CLIENT ENDORSEMENT

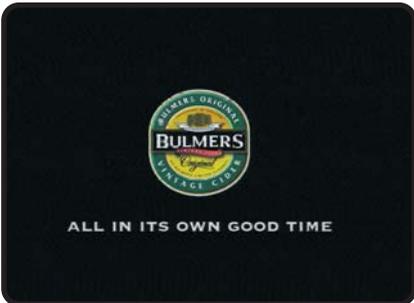
Patrick Kierans, Marketing Manager, Bulmers.

"We know from our ongoing qualitative research that our advertising has been by far the most potent element of our marketing mix and as such is mainly responsible for the positive sales trends."

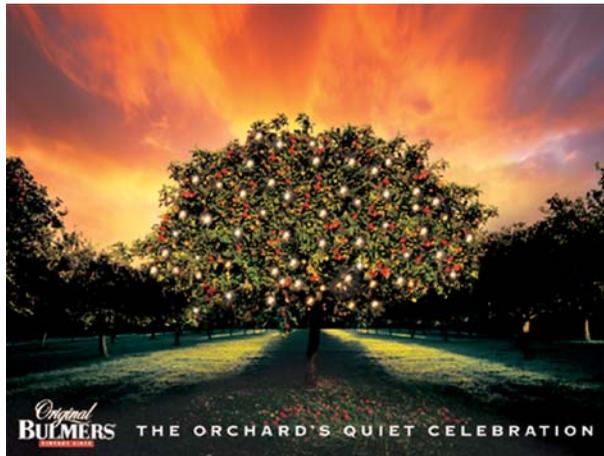
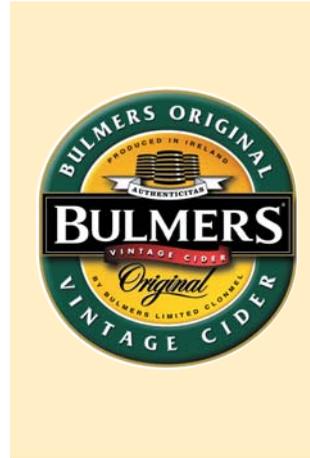


Television

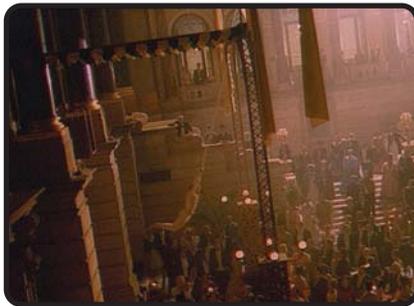
Television



Television



Outdoor



Television

Television

Office work
is not in our
nature



Sometimes people
can be harder
to handle

We'll take a
holiday when the
orchard does

Outdoor

