

**TITLE OF CASE STUDY:** Dove “The Campaign For Real Beauty”

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The case study can not exceed 5 written pages in 11 point font. The case study should explain the business opportunity and objectives, the research story behind campaign development, a description of the campaign, and proof of business results (please see Entry Kit for more details). *Proprietary data can be disguised.*

*Winners are able to submit an alternate version of the case study excluding sensitive information for use in public communications.*

## **Business Situation and Campaign Objectives**

### **1. Business Situation**

Dove was launched in the USA in 1957 as a bar of soap. Over the next 40-odd years it grew steadily by expanding into other countries and other ‘personal care’ categories – including body wash, hair care, facial cleansing and moisturizing - until, by 2004, soap represented less than half its sales.

While the Dove product portfolio had fundamentally changed into that of a beauty brand, consumers still perceived Dove as a bar of soap. In addition, while Dove’s associations of simplicity, whiteness and gentleness were appealing, the brand lacked energy, and it represented a submissive femininity that seemed dated. This outdated perception of the brand was an obstacle to its future growth potential.

If Dove sales were to continue growing, the brand would need to catch up to its product portfolio. Dove would need to radically reinvent itself as a beauty brand. But this wouldn’t be easy – the beauty category was already overcrowded and highly competitive. In 2004, according to Mintel, there were 1,760 new product launches in facial skincare alone and most didn’t survive. Unilever decided that the best entry point would be through a beauty brand message, segueing into the hand & body lotions segment (HBL), with a new product: Dove Firming Lotion.

### **2. Campaign objectives**

The team set out to reinvent Dove as a beauty brand and established the following objectives for the campaign:

- To raise sales across the Dove product portfolio
- To increase salience and cultural relevance for the brand

### **3. Budget**

The media budget for the Dove launch was \$13 million for 2005. This budget was roughly one-fifth that of a typical ‘personal care’ product launch.

## **The Research Story**

### **Strategy Research**

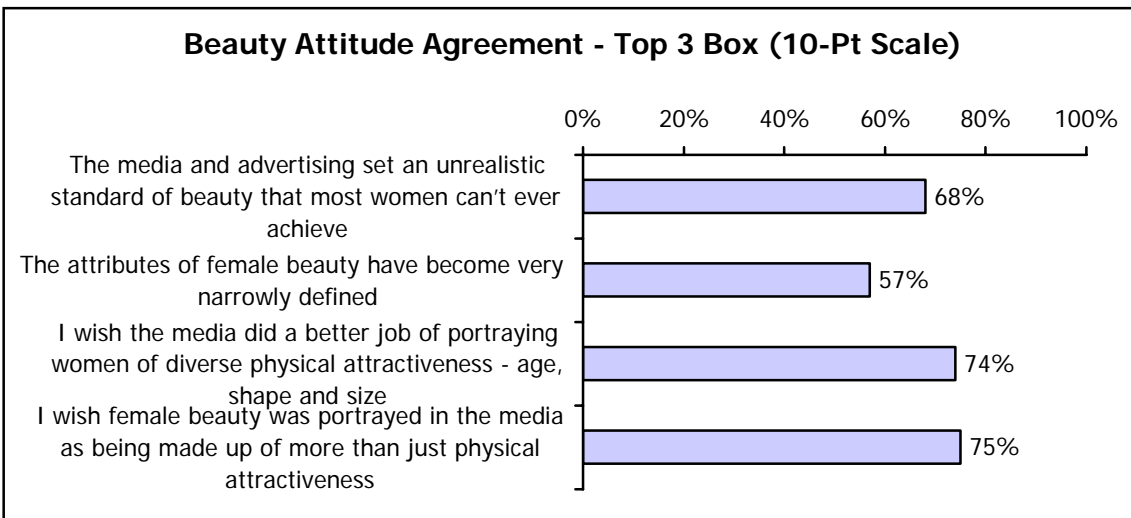
The challenge was to re-launch Dove as a beauty brand. The competitors in the beauty category didn’t really seem that differentiated from one another. They were offering up beauty in a very narrowly-defined way – size 2, blond, flawless, superbly toned, young

women – that the team suspected felt at best unattainable, and at worst deeply depressing, to most ‘real’ women.

In order to determine the optimal beauty strategy for Dove that would set the brand apart from its competitors, a global attitudinal consumer research study was conducted by StrategyOne in conjunction with Harvard Professor Nancy Etcoff and Dr. Susie Orbach at the London School of Economics. The research findings confirmed our hunch, and in fact, the findings were even worse than what the team suspected: only 2% of women believed themselves to be beautiful. Further, our competitors were clearly among the culprits: over two-thirds of women strongly agreed that the media and advertising set an unrealistic standard of beauty that most women can’t ever achieve, and over half felt that beauty had become very narrowly defined.

The research revealed that women hated this imagery. In fact, three-in-four women said they’d love to see more realistic depictions of beauty in ads – women of diverse physical attractiveness (age, shape and size) – and that beauty should even go beyond physical attractiveness.

### StrategyOne Results: May 2004



These research insights revealed Dove’s way into the beauty category. The creative idea for Dove – as executed in “The Campaign for Real Beauty” - was to challenge the narrowly defined beauty stereotypes promoted by the competition, by championing the idea that *real beauty comes in all shapes, sizes and ages*.

### Campaign Description

In order to personify the notion that real beauty comes in all shapes, sizes and ages, ordinary, real women were used in the advertising rather than models, as the living embodiment of Dove’s Beauty Theory. The campaign exhorted all women to love their own bodies by featuring gorgeous curvy girls in their underwear. The general target for “The Campaign for Real Beauty” is women age 27-67.

“The Campaign for Real Beauty” included two tiers. A brand tier referred to as the ‘Tickbox’ work, launched in October/November 2004, showcased a range of beauty stereotypes, designed to encourage participation and provoke a national debate. The brand tier was

followed by a product tier. The first product to be rolled-out under the campaign was Firming Lotion, which launched in January/February 2005. Other products that followed Firming Lotion in the campaign were the Cool Moisture product line and Nourishing HBL. Both the brand and product ads drove people to a campaignforrealbeauty.com website where they could have their say.

Beyond that, the intention was to create a 'referendum' on beauty. All of the advertising was designed to provoke debate. The idea was not necessarily to get people to agree with the advertising, but simply to get them to talk about it. To this end, the media strategy was as important as the message. It can be summed up simply: use minimal mass media to generate mass PR. In this innovative media plan, a small amount of TV followed the 'Tickbox' work, but the vast majority of the media spend was in print and outdoor due to the small budget. Spend was concentrated in the top ten cities where it would have the most immediate impact, and influence the rest of the country. New York City, as the world's media center, received a big upweight, with prime outdoor locations, such as Times Square, and plenty of bus sides.

### **Business Results**

"The Campaign for Real Beauty" is indisputably one of the most widely admired ad campaigns of 2005 and is responsible for a complete transformation of an icon brand. While this campaign is global, the results shown are for the US only.

#### **1. Tracking data shows significant increases in ad awareness and brand linkage.**

Results from the tracking study, conducted by Synovate, on the outdoor campaign for Dove Firming Lotion are illustrated below. In addition to the pre to post increases, the research shows that the campaign is well liked, generates high purchase consideration, differentiates the Dove brand, and redefines the types of women that are beautiful.

#### **Synovate Tracking Results: August 2005**

<u>Advertising scores</u>		<u>Brand Scores</u>	
Pre to post shift:		Post only:	
Total ad awareness	+22%	The women in the ad are beautiful	76%
Dove Brand Linkage	+14%	The brand is really different from others	72%
Dove Firming Brand Linkage	+27%	Made you think differently about the brand	68%
Post only:			
Overall Likeability	81%		
Purchase consideration	71%		

#### **2. The campaign resulted in a 20% sales increase in 2005 across the entire Dove brand, and a 7.3% increase in 2006.**

By changing the image of the entire brand, all the product lines have benefited including Personal Wash, Hair, Deodorant, and of course, Hand and Body Lotions. (Source: Unilever Sales)

#### **3. The campaign has radically changed the Dove brand image, giving it massive cultural relevance.**

- *Media Presence*: The campaign didn't just get noticed, it really got people talking about Dove and its refreshingly different point of view on beauty. It has generated unprecedented

amounts of PR coverage--over 650 million free media impressions in the US. Mindshare estimates this to be worth \$21.4 million in free media, or over 150% of the actual media budget. This came in the form of both national and local print – including a New York Times editorial, People, Allure, Chicago Sun Times etc. – as well as TV – including Today (where the curvy girls starred on the show), Ellen, Dr Phil, Access Hollywood and CNN. The highlight of the PR was a six minute segment on The Oprah Winfrey Show, in which Oprah said, "I'm gonna go get me a bar of Dove soap right now." The campaign continued to get media attention in 2006 with many end of year stories featuring the Dove campaign as best-in-class advertising. BusinessWeek described it as one of the 2006 ads we remembered; MediaPost showcased it as a brand that stays "on the leading edge of cultural trends" while staying "authentic to the brand." This PR helped to make the brand feel bigger and more famous than it had before.

- Expert Opinion: Apart from the consumer press, the campaign has been widely recognized by industry experts. Bob Garfield in Advertising Age remarked, "you can't but help applaud marketers selling beauty products without trotting out the standard, impossibly gorgeous skinny young models." Rob Walker in the New York Times' "Consumed" column called the campaign a "rare thing and pretty much a publicity bonanza for the Dove brand." The Wall Street Journal called it "groundbreaking."

- Awards: On top of this, the campaign has garnered countless awards around the world including four Clio Awards for print ads and a Cannes Lions Award for outdoor.

These results show that "The Campaign for Real Beauty" not only radically changed Dove's image and established it as a beauty brand, but also redefined consumers' perceptions of beauty to include more realistic depictions of women with diverse physical attractiveness. This transformation dramatically increased sales across the Dove product portfolio and gave the brand huge cultural relevance.