



Presented by the Advertising Research Foundation

Beverages Silver Winner *got milk?* – White Gold and the Calcium Twins

The Business Situation and Campaign Objectives

For over a dozen years the *got milk?* campaign relied on a deprivation and food-pairing strategy to remind California's consumers of the importance of an oft-overlooked commodity. Amidst a profusion of competitive assaults, the popular and much loved advertising helped reverse a twenty-year decline in the state's per capita milk consumption – and also went on to create a prominent brand in the most unlikely of places.

Yet more than halfway through the '00s the landscape around *got milk?* had changed – requiring a creative reevaluation of our messaging strategy, our approach to media and even our primary 'mom' target who we had courted for well over a decade:

- Fresh competition emerged to challenge milk's established good-for-you status. In came the bottled waters, vitamin waters, energy drinks, sports drinks, juices, anti-oxidant green teas, soymilk and calcium-fortified *everything*.
- Newly-mainstream technologies like DVRs and the Internet dramatically changed how Californians engaged with media, challenging the brand's historical focus on television.
- Our earlier success now posed a problem – the extremely well-known Deprivation strategy, while adored by many, was no longer motivating or compelling for consumers overall.

After receiving confirmation of this in our quantitative Deprivation Positioning Check, the necessity was clear. Californians understood that milk 'does a body good' – but what we now needed was a new strategy that forced consumers to look at milk in a way they never had before.

Knowing just how to make this significant strategic shift required a concerted research effort that could identify a fruitful target, help craft our key messaging and also inform our media architecture as a whole. And it was these insights, grounded in a multi-faceted research approach, which would ultimately allow us to reinvigorate the *got milk?* brand in a most unexpected way.

The Research Story

The challenge, which was to redefine the perceptions of an otherwise boring commodity in the minds of Californian consumers was anything but straightforward. To attack it head-on, the California Milk Processor Board (CMPB) and the agency designed a coordinated research program that would help provide insights and knowledge from a number of different perspectives, utilizing both existing research as well as a few alternative methodologies. Overall, we set out to uncover a better, up-to-date understanding of a different California milk consumer – their behaviors and perceptions – as well as the larger beverage environment that the brand now played in.

Identifying a Pivotal Target Opportunity

To start, we needed to step back and reconsider our core target consumer altogether. For the entire life of the *got milk?* campaign the primary focus had been to message to moms with kids in the home. This came along with a broad goal of increasing household penetration – striving to have milk in the fridge of every Californian home. Yet with penetration now high and stable, we needed to find a way to drive more incremental drinking occasions – to give consumers good reason to drink more milk overall. And we needed to identify a worthwhile target that would continue to offer long-term results.

Looking back over fifteen years of Milk Consumption Tracking studies, we began to investigate a pivotal age group: teens. When kids become teenagers, lots of things change. Voices get deeper. Skirts get shorter. Friends become more of a focus than family. And milk falls off the radar screen.

And how: we saw in the tracking a consistent per-capita consumption drop in the teenage years – which only continued to slide into early adulthood, at which point usage leveled off.¹ This slippage was disconcerting, but it made sense – especially as we began to talk to these kids directly in our Teen Qualitative Conversations.

Freshly liberated teens are away from home more and making more of their own choices – including what to drink. Without mom hovering over them with a ‘drink your milk’ admonishment, teens were choosing to drink it less. They certainly weren’t drinking milk when they were out with their friends and gravitated instead to an ever-changing bevy of drinks with a cool image that purport to offer various benefits: Vitamin Water, RedBull, Starbucks, teas and sodas. On the other hand, milk was the same thing they had known when they were four years old. It wasn’t relevant – and it certainly wasn’t cool.²

To stave off this consumption decline, our challenge was to connect with California teens and transform the milk they thought they knew: from something uninteresting and inherently un-cool into something worth thinking and talking about – and, ultimately, worth drinking more of. If we did this properly we would not only get teens drinking more milk, but we would be changing behaviors that would carry on into adulthood and offer the CMPB continued sales success.

Getting into Teens’ Heads

As marketers, we had faced a number of difficult targets, but none quite as alien to us as the West Coast teenager of the 21st century. We needed to better understand what made them tick – how they interacted with their friends, what sort of content they were into and what role they saw milk and other beverages play in their lives. But one thing we already knew: to be successful, the research we conducted had to be on their terms not ours.

A customized ‘Natural Habitat’ Blogsporation study (a first for the brand) set up multiple blogs that enabled us to have an ongoing – and much more open – conversation with a number of California high school students. After recruiting a diverse group of teens, we had them blog for us – six days a week for a full month. Daily questions were posted and bi-weekly photo assignments explored a wide range of topics – family, friends, technology, pop culture, politics, school, brands, advertising, exercise, health, food and beverages... and milk.³ Aside from the important validation of milk’s image problems amongst teenagers, this rich research revealed several other key target insights:

- **Music is where it’s at.** From a popular culture perspective, it was clear that music plays a very central – even defining – role for teens. It drives a large percentage of their conversations and online behaviors. MySpace band pages; watching music videos on YouTube; getting new music from iTunes, Limewire, Rhapsody; learning about new music from blogs and from friends’ social networking pages. Music for teens is the social currency of who they are.

- **Randomness reigns.** The prevailing sense of humor – and teens’ flighty interest – is centered around things that are deemed *random*. Coming up over and over again, that simple word helped describe what teens are drawn to: the strange, weird, bizarre and utterly nonsensical. This element of surprise and dissonance is what gets them to talk about something and pass it on. And if you can deliver something entertaining and random, they will become a legion of LOL’ing amplifiers of your message.
- **They are true children of technology.** Teens’ lines of communication are AIM, texts, tags, posts, emails and vmails. Online is where they experience and engage with a lot of what matters most to them – and that’s the place to be to create an experience for them. Knowing just how deep these connections went helped us to start envisioning a reality for milk that stretched far beyond the traditional television work *got milk?* was so famous for.

Repositioning Health Messages as Teen Vanity Messages

The issue was then *what* we could say to teens to incite a reevaluation of our brand. As we had learned, the funny thing about milk is that it is a product that everyone thinks they know everything about. *‘Plain white milk hasn’t changed. It has no new news. It does the same thing for me as it did when I was four years old – but I’m not four anymore. It’s... boring.’* And no one thought this more than the jaded, over-stimulated and trendy teens we spoke to.

Luckily, science never ceases in its efforts – and it was in a variety of Academic Journals that we began to find a number of new and surprising health benefits that were attributed to milk.⁴ Surely everyone knows that milk helps build strong bones and teeth... but what about its almost magical ability to give you better hair? Nicer nails? Strong muscles? Better beauty rest? Even reduce PMS symptoms?

Suddenly the benefits that milk provides could take on relevance for an image-conscious teen. These scientific facts then became the basis for teen vanity messaging, giving us an arsenal of rational benefits that could both surprise and interest teenagers across California. To dive deeper, we looked back at our Perception Tracking studies and found some initial findings that pointed to teens being open and receptive to this sort of messaging. Testing the waters by taking these facts into our online and offline conversations with the target, the response was clear:

“I think that’s koo how milk can be useful for your hair, skin, nails, etc... I never thought about it that way. I’d love to learn more about it so I’d know what I could do to make this happen to MY hair, nails and skin.”⁵

It was all the license we needed to lean into a vanity strategy as a way to reposition milk as a ‘fountain of beauty and strength.’ The only problem was finding a way to communicate that to a target notoriously difficult to engage – and without the help of a Miley Cyrus or a Chris Brown.

Fishing Where the Fish Are

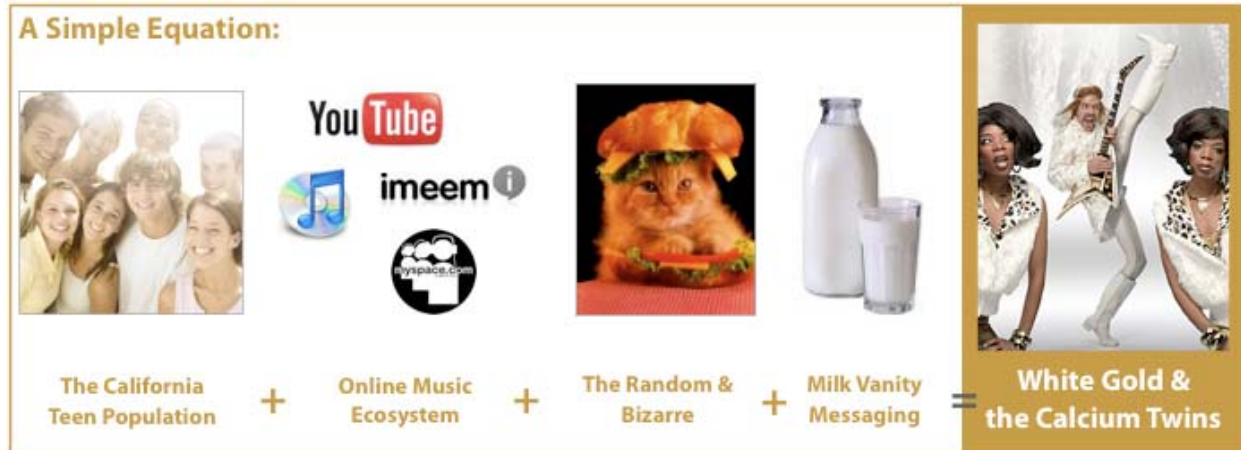
We had learned about some of the target’s day-to-day behaviors in our conversations with teens around the state, but a Custom Teen Media Quantitative Study carried out by the agency explored the different ways they were using media in depth. Moreover, it probed specifically into the types of content that they were seeking out online – and what they would be likely to pass along or talk about with their friends.

Through this research, we knew that the creative expression of this strategy had to work within the ecosystem that these teens were already involved with online. It could not stand alongside it – or be shoehorned into it – else we risked losing legitimacy with a group that would be quick to call foul. As we had heard before, music sites and videos played a big role in these kids Internet activity – and their

predilection for 'weird stuff' helped set the tone in our minds. As we took these two disparate ideas – popular music and 'the random bizarre' – and began to mesh them together, we could feel that we were on to something.

Creating Pop Culture Around Milk

Coming out of our research, we had defined a clear repositioning strategy that presented milk to teens as a vessel of *health and hotness* – and we wanted to create characters who would embody those benefits of milk in an entertaining way and become part of teen pop culture itself. Drawing on all we had learned about teen behaviors, popular culture and milk's surprising new health benefits our equation for success became clear – if a little unconventional:



Our creative solution was surprisingly simple: we invented a band called White Gold. Named after its lead singer – the guitar genius White Gold – and backed up by the Calcium Twins (Wholena and Skimberly) the band would not try to be straight-up cool. It would be a ridiculous band in the spirit of Will Ferrell and Zoolander; a band you could laugh with – but also learn from – and a band whose music, videos and entire backstory are all about milk and its transformative superpowers.

The Campaign: What would a real band do?

In figuring out how to introduce White Gold to California's teenagers, the idea of band behavior and music adoption drove both the creative content we developed and the communications touch-points we used. It was this approach – driven by the insights we had gleaned from our research with the target – that eventually led to a brand experience that organically permeated our target's lives, with creative and media are completely intertwined in bringing the strategy to life.

Authenticity in Creative

The band White Gold had to have real music, of course. So we wrote and recorded a five-song EP called *The Best I Can Give is 2%*. The songs include: "One Gallon Axe," "Tame the White Tiger," "Is It Me, Or Do You Love My Hair?," "Pour the Milk, Sister (PMS)," and "Dr. Dairywiggles Luxurious Lullaby Ride Into the Creamy Cave of Wonderment." We shot full-length music videos of the first three songs.

Any band today has got to have a social networking presence, so we developed band pages on MySpace and Facebook. The band had its own slicker, record label-backed website, whitegoldiswhitegold.com. Television ads told the story of White Gold and his music and drove people to that website, as did rock-poster styled print ads in magazines like Rolling Stone, Spin and Entertainment Weekly.

White Gold's popularity grew – and in late 2009 he starred in the first long-format rock opera all about milk, *"The Battle for Milkquarious."* The 20-minute long musical premiered online and is the centerpiece of a contest that is to award \$50,000 to California public school art and drama programs.

Authenticity in Media Strategy

In keeping with the authenticity of a real band, our media strategy mimicked the condensed lifecycle of a band – from indie obscurity to stadium sell out.

We began with a “natural discovery” phase. The “*One Gallon Axe*” music video was seeded on music, teen and pop culture blogs. The MySpace band page was up, and the video was released on YouTube. This allowed some people to come across it and start to spread the word. After some time, the band made it big: all of the music and videos were dispersed across our online touch points, and the TV and website were launched.

White Gold’s music is available on iTunes, Amazon and Rhapsody. You hear it on Pandora, Last.fm and Buzznet. The videos live on YouTube, the whitegoldiswhitegold website, MySpace and Facebook pages as well as in pop-up banners themselves. In many respects, it is difficult to determine a difference between them and a full-fledged band in the real world – except to say that White Gold likely has a more solid distribution platform than most acts.

The Results

White Gold was provocative, ridiculous, over-blown, ostentatious, gold-laméd, blow dried and excessive. It also proved to be quite effective at getting the teen audience to lean into the conversation around milk again and start to reconsider their perceptions of the beverage.

Just as we had devised a structure for upfront research, we have ensured that the White Gold campaign has a host of quantitative and qualitative tools in place for measuring how teens are engaging with our work – and what affect that is having on milk perceptions and consumption. Measurement tools include ongoing Perception and Consumption Tracking, Microsite Behavioral Analytics, Qualitative Focus Groups, Social Networking Surveys and Listening, as well as our own Exit Surveys that gauge reaction to our branded online experiences.

Engaging the Target

All evidence points to a strong and growing teen engagement with White Gold and milk overall. As such, we’ve achieved:

- **1,773,447** White Gold music video views,⁶
- **489,451** MySpace and Facebook band page views,⁷
- **~2,000,000** website page views with over **800,000** unique visitors.⁸

Critically, **52% of California teens** are aware of White Gold and an exit survey on WGisWG.com found that **89%** of teens said White Gold is “*a fun and interesting way to learn about milk.*”⁹ A previously disengaged audience is at least prepared to be surprised into thinking about milk again.

Likewise, in qualitative research we saw that **7 of 10 teens** said they wanted more videos and songs from the White Gold campaign – and that they would even want to attend a White Gold concert. California teens posting on MySpace demonstrated that their connection with White Gold was live and lively. A sample:

White Gold, your glass is always half beauty-full. You have a certain glow about you and it isn't just skim deep. Wow...wow...wow.
- Mike

Hey White Gold! Come on to Sacramento and say hi! I'll whip us up a couple of milktastical Sweet Slumber Stimulators, or maybe a Pearly White Protector or two ☺
- Jeff

I love you White Gold. You are my idol man! Love milk so much! You're so milk-gatastical!
- AliehSWANK

Changing Perceptions

Through ongoing tracking we saw a significant difference between teens who knew about White Gold and those who didn't. Most importantly, White Gold aware teens rated milk far higher on key image attributes – showing that the message was coming through loud and clear:

	Unaware of White Gold		Aware of White Gold
<i>"Milk is nature's superdrink."</i>	68%▶	81%
<i>"Milk tastes great."</i>	62%▶	77%

White Gold-aware teens were also much more likely to associate milk with key 'vanity' benefits like "provides strong nails" or "helps rebuild muscles." Overall, the campaign's lift on benefit association was dramatic – hammering home specific messaging for teens and bringing double-digit percentage point increases for those exposed to multiple facets of the campaign.¹⁰

Increasing Consumption

While all the engagement with our creative – and the perception shifts – are important, our ultimate goal is still to deliver higher milk consumption for the CMPB. Luckily, the White Gold campaign has worked to help drive consumption amongst teens by bringing new relevance to a product they had all but forgotten.

First of all, White Gold has elevated milk's social acceptability for teens – an important first step to more drinking occasions with this target: teens aware of White Gold are **23% less** likely than before to say "I wouldn't drink milk when I'm with my friends."

And while we never imagined we could impact milk drinking so quickly, White Gold has sparked claimed increased consumption in California: White Gold aware-teens are **28% more** likely to drink milk multiple times a day year-over-year.¹¹

The Results

The oddball humor and overall incarnation of White Gold – as well as the unexpected connection between such a character and an age-old commodity like milk – might appear completely random. In fact, the creative's success was dependent on that appearance. Yet what has been shown is that the campaign was anything but arbitrary, and was in fact extremely well researched and planned for. The fact that such out-of-the-box creative work can come from true, grounded insight is heartening.

It might always be a mystery as to how exactly a spandex-clad rockstar struck a chord with California teenagers, causing them to reevaluate a beverage as old as milk. But there is one thing we know for sure: California would never have been graced by the presence of a rock god such as White Gold had it

not been for the program of insightful research put in place that helped to identify an opportunity – and further turn it into a reality.

Appendix — Notes

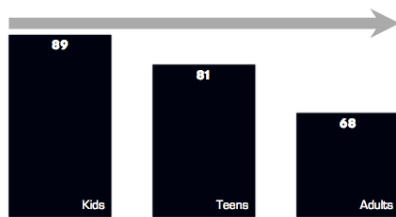
1. CMPB Consumption Tracking, NovaQuant
2. Agency Teen Focus Groups
3. Agency Blogsporation
4. A list of some of these scientific studies can be found on gotmilk.com or whymilk.com
5. Agency Blogsporation
6. YouTube and MySpace Analytics
7. MySpace and Facebook Reporting
8. Google Analytics, whitegodliswhitegold.com and milkquarrious.com
9. CMPB Brand Tracking, NovaQuant
10. CMPB Perception Tracking, NovaQuant
11. CMPB Perception Tracking, NovaQuant

Appendix — Additional Charts

Appx. 1 – Consumption tracking strategy-setting

IDENTIFYING A NEW TARGET

The Reality:
Average Consumption (Past 24 hrs)
CMPB Tracking
1993–2005



Our Objective:

Short term: **Stem the decline in teen consumption**
Long term: **Pave the way for continued consumption into adulthood**

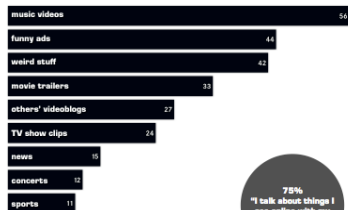
Appx.2 – Drinking exercise in Teen Blogsporation



Appx. 3 – Teen Media Study insights

FISHING WHERE THE FISH ARE—MEDIA INSIGHTS

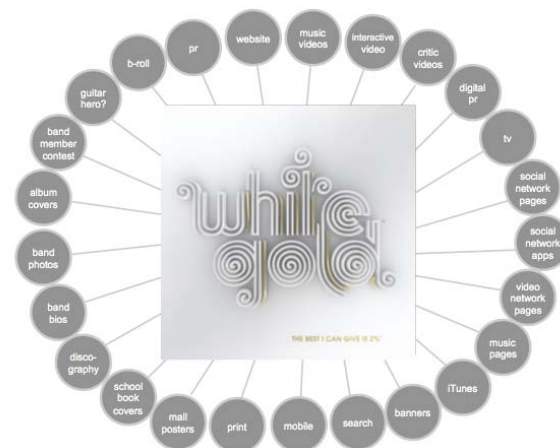
Types of videos watched online:



75%
"I talk about things I see online with my friends."

And which video sites do you use most often?	Percentage
YouTube	74
MySpace Video	39
Google Video	20
Joox	3
Other	2

Appx. 4 – White Gold campaign ecosystem



Appx. 5 – Campaign measurement summary

MEASURING SUCCESS

Has the campaign connected with teens and affected their **perceptions and consumption?**

Have we **held steady with parents/adults** despite the focus on teens and the reduced use of TV?

Quantitative and Qualitative Tools

Two ongoing brand tracking studies
(Consumption & Perception studies with six waves of White Gold data)

WGISWG.com Exit Survey

Facebook Fan Survey

Behavioral Website Analytics

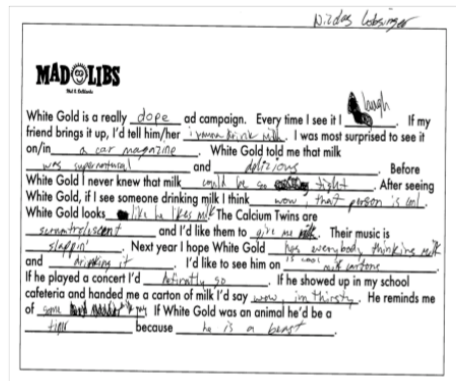
High School Program

Focus Groups

Facebook & MySpace Posts

Appx. 6 – White Gold MadLibs qualitative exercise

CHANGING TEEN PERCEPTIONS



Appx 7 – Perception tracking results summary

	TOTAL CHANGE	TEEN CHANGE	PARENT CHANGE
Milk constantly improves to keep up with the times	+5	+11	-1
I'm open to drinking it more	+4	+9	+8
What strong and healthy people drink	+8	+8	+10
Milk is unique	+3	+9	+15
I wouldn't drink it when I am with my friends	-1	-5	-

23% Change

Appx. 8 – Teen benefit messaging shifts

COMMUNICATING SPECIFIC BENEFITS

Teens:	No Ad Exposure	Saw TV Only	Saw TV and Online
Helps strengthen nails	39	+16	+24
Rebuilds muscles	42	+12	+22
Makes hair healthier	26	+4	+23
Reduces PMS symptoms	15	+8	+21
Helps you sleep better	28	+2	+20
Prevents cavities	32	+10	+15