

**TITLE OF CASE STUDY: Kimberly-Clark U by Kotex**

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In March 2010, Kimberly-Clark (K-C) launched a breakthrough campaign that changed the way feminine care products are marketed. By leveraging social media as the centerpiece of a multi-channel campaign, K-C achieved one of the most successful and celebrated consumer packaged goods (CPG) product launches of the year, while increasing sales for its Kotex brand by almost 10%. In addition, *Advertising Age* named U by Kotex\* one of the hottest brand of 2010 based largely on the breakthrough U by Kotex\*. Working with digital marketing agency Organic, K-C used key digital and social channels to reinvent an irrelevant, older brand for today's young women, drive healthy dialogue, provide education around a "taboo" topic and engage thousands of young women in meaningful conversations in a low-interest category.

To begin this cultural shift, K-C recognized that in order to replace existing marketing methods, it first had to better understand the target audience by gathering intelligence about its customer. Working with Organic and public relations agency Marina Maher Communications, Inc. (MMC), K-C set out to understand teens' and young women's feelings about feminine healthcare and the associated product. To achieve this, Kimberly-Clark commissioned an online study of 1,600 U.S. and Canadian women conducted by Harris Interactive called "Break the Cycle: A Study on Vaginal Health." The research presented astonishing results, including:

- 70% of women believe that it's about time society changes how it talks about vaginal health issues; however, less than half (45%) feel empowered to make a difference
- Most women claim to be knowledgeable about vaginal health issues, however, more than a third cannot dispel some basic myths
- More than half of women (52%) feel that society looks down upon talking about vaginal health
- More (60%) respondents turned to the Internet for information about vaginal health vs. their friends (30%) or mothers (40%).

Research also found that the vast majority of women were embarrassed by their bodies and more specifically, menstruation. They wanted a feminine care brand to stop talking about menstruation in "code" (metaphors, girly language and secrecy) and "just tell me what I need to know." This presented an opportunity for K-C to become a champion for women and a torch-bearer for a momentous cultural shift - it was time to remove the shame from being a woman. We leveraged the brand launch to become a **vocal change agent** about the way women think, feel and act about issues relating to their vaginas, particularly about menstruation.

Additionally, K-C understood that most women lock into their feminine care brands by the age of 18. For this reason, the effort focused on the 14-17 age group. What it found was young teens want to talk openly about their periods and desire real answers/education around vaginal health, but at the same time, feel repressed by societal mores. This business insight provided an additional piece of the

intelligence gathering and played heavily into the focus of the product launch as we looked to position U by Kotex as an authentic voice and educational resource to drive mindshare and market share by building relevant, enduring emotional connections with young women.

K-C and Organic also examined current industry marketing materials. The findings were laughable—women were being portrayed as joyful, triumphant figures often twirling in a field or worse, doing cartwheels in white pants. It immediately became clear that today’s campaigns were not rooted in reality but rather showcased a dated, misguided approach to marketing, one that promoted euphemism that bordered on self-loathing. At this juncture, they made a critical decision— K-C would no longer be part of this problem, it would be a part of the solution.

The U by Kotex\* product launch was supported by an integrated marketing program. The campaign included a product integration on The Tyra Banks Show, a cause-related campaign entitled “Declaration of Real Talk” that supports Girls for a Change (GFC), a national non-profit organization that empowers girls to create social change, a community-driven website, extensive social media efforts, targeted print, TV and online advertising, direct-to-consumer online communications, extensive consumer sampling and retail in-store support.

The K-C digital strategy integrated a three-platform approach: the branded website, primary social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube and Twitter) and the larger social web. The U by Kotex\* website was designed to serve as the focal point of the campaign and innovative elements include:

- Get Real – This section shines the light on what is currently wrong in the feminine care category and motivates visitors to discuss these important issues. It also provides viewers with the ability to watch, share, create and upload video stories. Humorous viral videos are hosted on the site and can be easily shared on social media platforms
- Real Answers – This section provides answers to real questions from teen girls and young women on feminine hygiene. The answers come from three perspectives – a mother, a doctor and a peer– and are available both on the site and throughout other digital channels that the target audience frequents
- Products – Here, the innovative new line of U by Kotex\* products are highlighted in a highly interactive way--from immersive 360 degree photography to authentic feeling product demonstrations shot from the first person perspective
- The Mission –This section challenges girls to get involved and join the cause. Users are given the opportunity to sign the declaration and take back the word “vagina,” as well as meet other people making a difference

Aggressive PR efforts drove two major waves of widespread media coverage. The first, conducted six months prior to launch, seeded the new product story with influential beauty/health editors at priority women’s books to ensure stories appeared when product hit shelves. Following that, MMC partnered with Kimberly-Clark corporate communications to devise a marketing media strategy that included a top-tier exclusive with *The New York Times* timed to launch day and other targeted outreach. The team created a custom message track and tailored pitches focusing on U by Kotex’s fresh approach, standout products and bold mission.

MMC conducted a comprehensive media audit to identify over 150 reporters and online influencers who cover new products/health & well-being/beauty and shared our story. Knowing that our target audience consumes most of their news online, creating buzz in the blogosphere was paramount.

This first wave of efforts ignited an instantaneous dialogue among consumers, bloggers and traditional media who praised Kimberly-Clark and built affinity and advocacy for the brand.

The second wave was timed to product availability. Knowing that our target audience consumed a lot of their news online and via entertainment media, MMC aligned with high-profile, millennial influencer, Khloé Kardashian Odom, to generate mass awareness for the brand and its mission when product hit shelves. MMC staged a live media moment in NYC where Khloé, in a branded hardhat and armed with a hot pink sledgehammer, took down a wall covered with feminine care euphemisms revealing the brand's *Declaration of Real Talk*. The wall served as a metaphor for barriers to this important women's health conversation. Khloé signed the declaration and encouraged other women to join the cause to benefit GFC. For every woman who signed on, \$1 was donated to GFC to support educational training to help young women "change the world."

MMC secured interviews for Khloé surrounding the media moment with national and local media. She kicked off the day on "TODAY" and then delivered our call-to-action to more than 250 consumers and 30+ media in attendance.

Khloé was selected as a spokesperson after multiple spokesperson analyses which vetted different influencers against criteria set forth by K-C. Candidates were then submitted through the U by Kotex Communispace panel to see how the influencer resonated with the target. Communispace was a valuable tool throughout the marketing process. This online network of girls between the ages of 14 – 22 provided target audience input and feedback on most of U by Kotex's communications.

The coverage communicated U by Kotex's fresh approach, standout products and mission. In addition, the coverage focused on the brand's alignment with GFC and invited women to join U by Kotex in creating social change by signing the Declaration of Real Talk online.

These efforts ignited an instantaneous dialogue among consumers, bloggers and traditional media who praised Kimberly-Clark for building advocacy with hundreds of women sharing their personal experiences and thanking U by Kotex\* for igniting a long overdue conversation about vaginal health. The campaign helped drive even more online dialogue, earning the brand six and a half times more conversations online than the next closest competitor, with over 99% of the feedback positive or neutral.

An important component to the campaign and its success in achieving the results mentioned above was Organic's predictive social media tool. The tool was used to accurately predict the peak number of Tweets, blog mentions, Facebook fans, etc. and link these behaviors with measurable ROI-based goals such as sample requests of U by Kotex\* products.

Specifically, Organic's predictive intelligence model enabled the K-C to do the following:

- Project the 'plateau' level of Tweets following any major campaign event
- Tie in the relationship between Tweets and sample requests to forecast the cadence of sample requests
- Optimize its media spending, product placement and website features in real-time

Since the campaign launched, it has realized the following results as of November 10, 2010:

- The website has experienced over 2.3 million visits with more than 1.2 million sample requests
- The sample conversion rate remains steady at 40% and there have been over 25,500 tweets about Kotex
- Over 86,500 Kotex discussions have taken place in the social space with over 100 million impressions through various channels
- Over a million girls have been activated on the brand site, including 14,065 declaration signatures and 110,357 likes to the Mission, including 22,957 likes on Facebook
- Over 640 million media impressions, including The New York Times, The Today Show (NBC), TMZ, People.com, OK!, Seventeen, Teen Vogue, Huffington Post, AdAge
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Additionally, sales of Kimberly-Clark's adult and feminine care products have grown significantly:

- Feminine care sales volumes grew at a double-digit rate for the third consecutive quarter as a result of the U by Kotex line extension.
- According to a Nielsen measured outlet report ending June 19, 2010, the Kotex brand is up 3.6 points or 25% increase over last year
- U by Kotex\* share increased by +5.0 share points and off-take continues to be strong, with share declines continuing across all primary U by Kotex competitors

The most significant metric is yet to come. Given the market share K-C has garnered today, the lifetime value of the consumers' brand loyalty will ensure that U by Kotex\* will be a dominate brand for a whole new generation