

Campaign Title: Distant Memory

Brand: Advil

Company(s) Involved: Pfizer Consumer Healthcare, Grey, Tribal Worldwide, GFK Brainjuicer, Forbes Consulting (now isobar), The Sound Disruptyx, Firefly Millward Brown, Kantar Millward Brown

Category: Mobile, Reinventing Traditional Media

Summary

The over-the-counter pain reliever category is a \$3.5 billion category in the US, with Advil being the #1 brand. However, the brand had a huge challenge in 2014. Sales & household penetration were declining and Advil was losing its leadership equity. Consumers viewed Advil to be substitutable with its generic, store brand counterpart, as they failed to identify a personal connection with the brand. In order to reinvigorate its equity and consumer connection, the brand needed to break through the clutter with a memorable campaign to win consumers' hearts and minds. Learnings from quantitative studies, mobile video diaries, in-home immersions, and a heuristics-based analysis led to a ground-breaking campaign, "Distant Memory." The massive omni-channel launch and continued support have grown Advil sales significantly, improved TV effectiveness, and generated record-high levels of positive attitudes towards Advil and its advertising.

Marketing Challenge

Consumers have a deep & personal connection to the pain that they experience; however, the same connection is not as strong to their pain remedies. The OTC pain reliever category is seen as a commoditized, problem-solution category to consumers, with little perceived differentiation between brands. And although Advil is the #1 brand, it was not insulated from this lack of recognized differentiation. Whether branded or generic, consumers perceive that all brands deliver satisfactory results. Nothing stood out. Nothing was personal.

In fact, over the span of five years, the brand had experienced declines in many of its key attributes, resulting in overall equity erosion. This meant that Advil struggled with a lack of identity among consumers, as they saw it to be substitutable with others, especially its generic counterpart. In order to positively differentiate itself, command a price premium (vs. store brands), and grow the business, Advil needed to strengthen its emotional connection with consumers.

Methodology

The path to success was a consumer-centric one that delivered a powerful yet simple idea that encapsulates how our consumers think and live their daily lives in the presence of pain. We leveraged, mined, and re-tooled existing data, and used that as a springboard for new research programs. An existing segmentation study was used to identify and align on the core beliefs and values of the Advil consumer. From there, a rigorous insights journey revealed the following learnings:

1. Functional attributes are correlated to, and ladder up to, key emotional benefits. From mining the brand equity tracker, the team understood the most important attributes to win, and identified a pathway to link the two areas.
2. Although pain plays a big role in people's lives, our consumers choose to defy the pain. Qualitative consumer immersions were used to bring the Advil consumer to life, in a video story-telling format for all stakeholders to internalize. These immersions consisted of some new tools to the team: online community boards, mobile video diaries, in-home interviews, and shop-alongs.
3. There are unspoken drivers of decision-making in this category. A heuristics-based approach was used to uncover the unspoken drivers of behavior. This approach allowed for expansive thinking that yielded 200 new campaign idea concepts, which would normally be hidden to traditional research.
4. Advil had consumers' permission to engage in a much more emotional way. Forty campaign ideas were quantitatively tested, using Predictive Markets & Wisdom of the Crowds. In addition to a quantitative ranking, this approach also provided insights re: the emotional strength of each idea... a reaction which is crucial and often overlooked in screening ideas for advertising.
5. The power of an idea was rooted in its simplicity. Qual-Quant Ad Developer was used to optimize creative executions within the winning ideas (from quantitative test). From this, one idea, "Distant Memory" consistently rose to the top. The big breakthrough moment came when consumers smiled & laughed at this execution, and when they told us the insight and relevant brand benefit

was pithy, memorable, telepathic, and is exactly the sentiment they want to exude to their social circle (defiance towards pain). Without this step, the powerful simplicity of the idea would not have been realized.

In its final validation stage of copy testing (Millward Brown LINK testing), the “Distant Memory” TV execution not only exceeded internal action standards, but also achieved the highest Awareness Index ever tested on the brand! To date, it is the only Advil TV spot to deliver on ALL the necessary measures needed to drive emotional connection with viewers (branding, enjoyment, engagement, brand appeal, relevance), which was the very objective that the team sought to achieve.

Creative Execution

Advil's Distant Memory campaign became the multi-channel platform idea, leveraged in TV, print, digital, social, and in trade.

The launch TV execution featured various everyday people doing extraordinary things, such as an elderly woman doing yoga on her hands, a man breakdancing on his wrists, a juggler, etc. The accompanying voice-over states, "With Advil, you'll ask, 'What backache? What sore wrist?'.... Advil makes pain a distant memory" and then continues to provide brand-specific claims. The spot portrays the incredible things that our consumers are driven to do, when pain is in their rear-view mirror, and that Advil is so effective, consumers forget they even had the pain. The execution has an upbeat pace throughout, and the accompanying music is lively & invigorating. Additionally, the Advil brand is integral to the creative idea and lends to strong branding throughout.

The campaign idea generated so much organizational excitement that it was launched during the Super Bowl in February 2016 - a media-buy that hasn't happened since 1992. Aware that our target consumer overindexes on social media, and will have his/her mobile devices during the Super Bowl, the Advil team set up a newsroom for live tweeting during the game. The tweets were timely & game-relevant, with an Advil message. That week, AdAge published an article "*Which Super Bowl Ads Might Actually Sell Stuff,*" on which Advil's Distant Memory execution ranked #2 in overall creative effectiveness from Advertising Benchmark Index.

As part of the ongoing campaign, content was developed for Facebook consisting of thumb-stopping videos, showcasing exhilarating moments in life when pain is a distant memory. These videos were visually appealing with a unique perspective, and tied back to the campaign idea.

With the subsequent pool-outs of TV execution and accompanying print ads, retailers were so excited by the campaign that they brought Distant Memory into their in-store displays, per their request, and in some cases, played the TV spot in store where feasible.

Business Results

Advil's Distant Memory campaign has been very successful in driving the brand's market performance, as well as reinvigorating and inspiring a new direction for the brand. This campaign addressed the key challenges that were identified at the onset of the journey, namely brand saliency, leadership equity, and performance vs. store brand pain relievers.

- Brand tracking results showed significant increases for Advil across many key metrics:
 - Advil KPI increases (vs. year ago) along Top of Mind Awareness (118 index), Past 12-month usage (113 index), and Retention (114 index).
 - Key Brand attributes increases (vs. year ago) along "beats even your toughest aches & pains" (112 index) and "provides long-lasting relief" (111 index).
 - Advertising performance increases (vs. prior campaign) on Ad breakthrough (244 index) and Ad enjoyment (131 index).
- Positive Sales growth:
 - Just six months post the Distant Memory launch, Advil sales increased by 3%, significantly outpacing the category performance! In a \$3.5 billion category such as OTC pain relievers, which are found in 90% of US homes, a 3% increase in a six month timeframe is significant growth.
 - Advil's buy rate increased 8% vs. YAGO, while the remainder of the category was flat. At the same time, buying rate for store brands was down -3%.
- Marketing mix analysis also showed very positive brand results:
 - The launch spot during the Super Bowl drove the largest incremental sales volume in over 5 years for Advil.
 - As a whole, the Distant Memory campaign increased overall TV effectiveness by 7% vs. year ago.
 - The digital efforts during the campaign drove a 24% increase in both effectiveness and ROI.

The Distant Memory campaign continues to be the foundation of our integrated marketing plan, allowing Advil to extend into various vehicles.