OBSERUATIONS

New Uses That Revitalize Old Brands

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University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign Generating new uses for mature brands creates strategic opportunities for increased usage of the brand among heavy-users or newly targeted segments. In-depth interviews were conducted with 34 experienced brand managers and with 402 consumers who used old brands in new ways. The results focus on three key questions: (1) What new uses will revitalize an old brand?; (2) How do consumers learn of new uses for old brands?; and (3) How can new uses be most effectively communicated? Answering these questions enables one to craft a new usage campaign that increases both brand equity and sales.

Numerous mature brands have revitalized their sales by advertising new usage situations. Consider Arm & Hammer in 1969. Sales were dropping because of a decline in home-baking and the introduction of ready-to-bake packaged foods that already included baking soda. Revitalization was critical. Arm & Hammer responded by marketing the brand as a deodorizer for refrigerators, and sales skyrocketed. Clorox bleach is traditionally used for brightening clothes; however, surveys have discovered consumers using the brand all over the house from cleaning tiles and countertops to scrubbing windows and floors. Dannon yogurt, once viewed only as a stand-alone health food, is now seen on bakery mix packages as a substitute for high-fat eggs and oil in muffins, dips, and brownies.

Expansion advertising, promoting new uses for old brands, can increase sales by increasing usage frequency. Indeed, in some cases, it is considerably less expensive to increase the usage frequency of current users than it is to convert new users in a mature market (Wansink and Ray, 1996). Consider Table 1. By understanding how consumers learn about new uses for mature brands, marketers can become more effective at developing new uses and compellingly promoting these new uses to the most promising segments.

This research investigates three key questions: (1) What new uses will revitalize an old brand?; (2) How do consumers learn of new uses for old brands?; and (3) How can new uses be most effec-

tively communicated? To answer these questions, in-depth interviews were conducted with 34 experienced brand managers and 402 adult consumers who used old brands in new ways. We found a "best practices" answer to the first question through the 34 brand managers, and we found a statistical answer to the second question through the 402 consumers. These findings are combined with existing research to generate expansion advertising tactics and marketing strategies that successfully answer the third question.

1. WHAT NEW USES WILL REVITALIZE OLD BRANDS?

To determine the new uses that revitalize old brands, 34 experienced packaged-goods managers were interviewed by phone. These were managers who had been identified by trade articles as innovators in expanding old brands into new usage situations. The interviews, ranging from 12 to 54 minutes, included questions concerning the methods used to generate new ideas, the procedures they used to screen these ideas, and the promotional activities they used to educate consumers about these new uses.

Procedures to generate and screen new uses for old brands

While the processes for idea generation vary across companies and product lines, seven common processes were used to generate and screen new uses for their brands (see Table 2). In all cases,

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TABLE 1New Uses for Old Brands

÷	Proposed, Pretested, or Launched
Brand	New Use for the Brand
Arm & Hammer Baking Soda	Use as refrigerator deodorizer, toothpaste, laundry
***************************************	detergent, and carpet and litter-box freshener
Campbell's Soup	Used as sauce or flavor enhancer to add life to
***************************************	old recipes
Chex Cereals	Mix and eat for a party snack
Clorox Bleach	Clean and shine floors and windows
Dannon Yogurt	Substitute for high-fat eggs and oil in muffins, dips,
**************************************	and brownies
Heinz Vinegar	Use for cleaning windows, floors, and carpets
Pillsbury Big Country Biscuits	Use instead of bread for making sandwiches
RealLemon Lemon Juice	Add to poultry recipes for added flavor
Reynold's Aluminum Foil	Cook all ingredients in foil for quick and easy
***************************************	clean-up
Tums Anti-acid Tablets	Use as a nutritional calcium supplement
Wrigley's Chewing Gum	Chew the gum as a substitute for smoking
Pillsbury Big Country Biscuits RealLemon Lemon Juice Reynold's Aluminum Foil Tums Anti-acid Tablets	Use instead of bread for making sandwiches Add to poultry recipes for added flavor Cook all ingredients in foil for quick and easy clean-up Use as a nutritional calcium supplement

multidisciplinary project teams were formed with various responsibilities (including manufacturing, research and development, sales, distribution, accounting/finance, operations, and marketing). Advertising agencies were involved in the process to align industry expertise in consumer behavior, market research, and trend analysis with internal strengths and brand positioning.

Generating new uses begins with an analysis of brand usage, customer demographics, competitive products, and promotional effectiveness. Once the primary research is done, internal brainstorming (through round tables) is conducted to discuss the opportunities for new uses from both a technical and a behavioral perspective. Ideas are prioritized based on core competencies, competitive products, and technologies and are then tested both from a production feasibility standpoint

and a customer acceptance standpoint. After setting sales or brand equity goals, the marketing communication plan is laid out, and the role of the new use in the Strategic Brand Plan is decided.

Research methods that generate new uses for old brands

Despite the delay and the cost, the most successful campaigns involved primary consumer research. These methods commonly involve consumer mail surveys, focus groups of heavy users, in-home interviews, mall intercepts, write-in contests, and an 800 consumer line. Yet as Table 3 indicates, each method serves a different purpose, and no one method should be relied on to give the best answer.

The effectiveness of these methods vary. According to the brand managers, consumer surveys, focus groups, and inhome studies of heavy users frequently generate the most useful information because they allow the interviewer to probe more deeply than mall intercepts or phone surveys. The experimenter can also change tactics or shift focus as new issues develop, and he or she can follow up on unexpected new uses that arise during the interviews. The main drawback to these methods is the time and cost.

Alternative mechanisms—such as write-ins, contests, and 800 lines-are often used as public relations techniques and often prove useful in developing a database of users. However, the ideas that are generated in these ways are often unique to a specific consumer and do not generally provide marketable applications for the brand. Many of the more feasible ideas generated by contests and call-ins are reportedly ones that most project teams have already considered. In addition, various legal issues (such as credit and compensation) arise when a consumer's idea is used. This tends to not make it a favorite method among most teams.

Focus groups and consumer surveys For new uses, it is often the case that heavy users are best used in focus groups and light and nonusers best used in concept tests. Separating heavy users from light users increases the effectiveness of the test (Wansink and Ray, 1992). Heavy users would not be the best choice for concept tests, since their usage rates and brand equity would bias the results in a favorable direction. Likewise, light users would be less useful in a focus group, since their experiences with the brand are often not frequent or salient enough to provide deep or meaningful insights.

The objective of the focus group is to uncover tacit knowledge (and "consumer secrets") about the brand and its attributes. Generating attribute knowledge leads to the ideation of new uses (such as recipe ideas). These new uses can then be

TABLE 2Key Procedures in Generating New Uses for Old Brands

Procedure	Description of Procedures
1. Project Team Formation	Form project teams including managers of manufacturing,
	research and development, sales, distribution,
***************************************	accounting/finance, operations, and marketing.
2. Secondary Research	Analyze secondary data (i.e., quantitative consumer
Overview	research, trend research, and syndicated research) for
T0777707000000000000000000000000000000	expansion opportunities.
3. Idea Generation	Seek new uses through ideation sessions, consumer
	surveys, focus groups, in-home studies, mall surveys,
	write-in campaigns and contests, 800 consumer lines,
An-+->4->3	one-on-one interviews.
4. Idea Prioritization	Categorize ideas based on core competencies, technology,
	and competition. An industry standard impact of 3 to 5%
***************************************	sales increase yields a "good result."
5. Select New Uses	Use internal analysis and consumer research (including
74-04497246728632522555556555655565556555655	concept tests and market trials) to help select new uses.
6. Develop Marketing	Use research results and knowledge of substituted brands
Communication Plan	to determine target market, message strategy, and
***************************************	media strategy.
7. Incorporate in Strategic	Determine the role the new use will play in determining
Brand Plan	brand strategy.

categorized and screened according to the brand positioning (such as "easy to use," "low-fat, healthy substitute," or "new and creative" for food products), the feasibility, and the estimated consumer acceptance.

Concept tests The purpose of concept testing is to determine positioning and promotional strategies. Consumers are shown advertisement mock-ups or story-boards of the new uses and asked a variety of questions concerning perceptions (such as taste, efficacy, convenience, and cost) and usage likelihood. The danger of concept tests lies in overly leading consumers. Subjects have been repeatedly shown to modify their answers in order to

accommodate what they believe the interviewer or group leader wants to hear. Thus, control and cover questions should be included to help measure and control bias in the results. Table 4 provides sample questions that have been successfully used in food and in recipe advertisement concept tests.

In-home testing In-home testing generates creative and candid responses (Griffin and Hauser, 1993). It is also expensive and time consuming, because it often involves videotapes or written diaries of everyday activities. Care must be taken that the study lasts long enough for the desired new usage situations to naturally

arise (e.g., if a consumer uses lemons to clean their sink once a month, it is only 25 percent likely to show up in a one-week test). There is also a concern of bias since the heaviest users and most loyal consumers are likely to be among those most interested in exerting the effort to complete the study.

An alternative that is being tested at the Food and Brand Lab at the University of Illinois is the creation of a "laboratory home" wherein a simulated environment is created with everyday amenities. The consumer is asked to tour the environment and articulate uses for the brand being tested. Two areas of potential bias are (1) creating a "lab home" that has too few living areas, and (2) only including the brand being tested. (A "home" consisting of only a kitchen and bathroom will exclude any new uses from other parts of the house, and it can sometimes "force" new usage creation to appease the experimenter.) The sample questions in Table 4 were validated in both real homes and in the laboratory home. The feasibility and market potential of these ideas are analyzed based on consumer trends, adoption, competitive products, and volume projections. The top ideas move on to concept testing with new groups and surveys.

In-home call-backs Useful information can be acquired by having consumers experiment with the new use in their home and provide feedback. After consumers are screened, they are typically given a supply of the brand and instructions on its new use. After a set time period (from one week to two months), the consumer is interviewed or surveyed about their experiences with the brand in its new use. This helps determine the usage intentions for the brand and perceptions of the brand after it is used in the new way. Not only can attitudes toward the new use be mea-

TABLE 3Common Methods for Generating Secondary Uses of Brands

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages	Best Used When
Outsource to	• Understands	 Not close enough 	There are conflicts
agencies	brand portfolio	to the brand and	within project
	Has relevant	internal processes	teams.
	research templates	 Creative bias 	Agency has strong
	 Often closer to 	Media bias	experience with
	customers		brand and research
			The budget allows
*********************	********************************		for outsourcing.
Basis (ROI)	No time wasted		There is
testing	on unprofitable	hurdle rates	technological
	ideas	 Kills good ideas 	involvement with
	• Can reduce	 Slow to market 	research and
*****	number of ideas	***************************************	development.
800 numbers,	 Wide sampling 	Ideas not	• There is a need
write-ins, and	of ideas	applicable	to boost public
contests	 Provides a deep 	 Legal issues 	relations.
	penetration and	 Have to give credit 	 Awareness
	awareness of	and recognition	needs to be
****>>	uses	to participant	generated.
Phone interviews	 Wide sampling 	Difficult to target	Time is crucial.
	of ideas	loyal and heavy users	
	Quick	 Difficult to "dig 	
		deep" in the	
	,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,	interviews	
Consumer focus	 Provides a 	 Expensive 	• The "whys" behind
groups, surveys,	controlled focus	Time consuming	brand usage are
and home tours	 Provides an 	Often needs	of interest.
	effective platform	extensive analysis	 Substitutes need
	for discussion		to be considered.
1. + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + +	and probing		
Company	Aligned with	Slow to market	Consumer focus
brainstorming	company strategy	Too many approval	is clear.
sessions	 Weeds out bad 	levels	New uses have
	ideas	Not always	been narrowed
		consumer focused	down.

sured, but the effect of the new use on total brand equity can also be assessed.

While in-home call backs are relatively inexpensive, they are time consuming. Nevertheless, these are especially helpful when the company is concerned about the intervention bias that might result from too much exposure during use. In other words, it allows the company to test the feasibility of a new brand use without replicating the usage situation in a stressful lab environment or having an experimenter looking over the shoulder of the subject.

Companies use many different types of primary research and screening methods to derive new uses for their mature brands. If time and budgets permit, focus groups, surveys, concept tests, in-home visits, and in-home callbacks tend to be preferred methods. The question now remains: given a feasible new use, what is the most compelling way to promote this use? Put more broadly, how do consumers learn of new uses for old brands?

2. HOW DO CONSUMERS LEARN OF NEW USES FOR OLD BRANDS?

To understand how consumers learn of new uses for old brands, open-ended questionnaires were sent to 450 consumers from five states (California, Illinois, Iowa, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania) who had indicated in a prior screening that they used old brands in new ways. Of this sample, 402 consumers (89 percent) responded in time to be included in the analysis. Of those surveyed, 61 percent were between the ages of 35 and 50; 77 percent were home-owners; 73 percent had two or more children; 68 percent were female; 58 percent were college graduates; and 53 percent were from the midwest, 41 percent from the east coast, and 6 percent from the west. Compared to population norms, this sample was slightly more edu-

TABLE 4

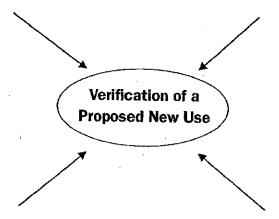
Sample Questioning to Generate and Screen New Uses for Mature Food Products

Focus Group and Panels

- How do you decide whether you will use a new recipe?
- What is the biggest meal problem you need to have solved?
- How have you used this product in the past six months?
- Why don't you use this product more frequently?
- Do you use this product in alternative ways than its primary use? Why and why not?

Concept Testing

- How likely are you to make this recipe?
- How will you feel when serving this to your family?
- When would you be most likely to make this recipe?
- How often would you make this recipe? Why?
- Do you find this flavorful, different, or easy? Why?



In-home Visits

- Why would you use this product/why not?
- What alternative products might you eat in place of this one?
- What do you currently stock as substitutes for this product?
- How might you use this product differently in different rooms?

In-home Call-Backs

- What were your original thoughts on making this new recipe?
- What were your likes and dislikes after making this recipe?
- Would you make this again? Why? When?
- What would you change about the proposed advertisement based on using this product?

cated than what would be expected from the basic age demographic. They were asked to describe a product that they used in a way different than which it was intended and to indicate why they used it that way. They were also asked to describe how they learned about this new use and how they would describe the typical person who also used the product in this alternative manner. The new uses they described varied from novel (using throat spray to treat razor burn and using

baking soda as an anti-acid) to common (eating breakfast cereal as a midnight snack).

Why do people find new uses for old brands?

While the classic example of a new use is that of using baking soda as a refrigerator deodorizer, the majority of new uses for old brands are not so drastic. They often involve recipe substitutions (using yogurt instead of cooking oil) or using brands in

similar ways but in different contexts (using Liquid Paper to cover up scratches on doorframes). What are the most popular new uses for old brands? As seen in Table 5, new uses are largely determined by the original use for a brand. To a large extent, food products are still eaten, personal care items are used for personal care purposes, and cleaners are used for cleaning.

The tendency toward using products in similar contexts (i.e., foods as foods and cleaners as cleaners) can be easily ex-

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TABLE 5What New Uses Are Popular with Consumers?

	New Use for Produ		
	For Eating or	For Health	
Original Use for	Drinking	or Beauty	For Cleaning
the Product	Purposes	Purposes	Purposes
Food			
products	78%	15%	7%
Health and			
beauty			
products	·	73%	27%
Cleaning			
products	_	9%	91%

plained from a psychological standpoint. Consumers do not like to think that the Vaseline they use to remove makeup can also keep door hinges from squeaking; nor that the soda they drink can strip corrosion off battery terminals. There are some mental lines between product categories that people are hesitant to cross. This is especially true when it comes to products that go in or on our bodies (foods and beauty products).

People use old brands in new ways when these brands are seen as better than a substitute product that is currently used in that usage context. As Table 6 indicates, old brands are most often used because they are seen as more convenient, less costly, healthier, or more effective than what would otherwise be used. In nearly all cases, the old brand is used in the new situation because it dominates the product that is typically used. Foods are used in

TABLE 6What Advantages Do the New Uses Have over Other Products?

	More	Lower		More	Habits	More
Product	Convenient	Cost	Healthier	Effective	Changed	Ecological
Food products						
(n = 218)	22%	19.3%	25.7%	10.1%	11.9%	11%
Health and beauty						
products						
(n = 101)	18.8%	23.8%	17.8%	23.8%	13.8%	2%
Cleaning products	*********************	*********	*****************	****************		************************
(n = 83)	30.1%	18.1%		16.9%	21.7%	13.2%
Total						
(n = 402)	22.9%	20.2%	18.4%	14.9%	14.4%	9.2%

new situations because they are healthier (popcorn over potato chips, or sugarless sweeteners over sugar). Health and beauty products are used in new situations because they are either of "lower cost" or "more effective." And cleaners are used in new situations because they are "more convenient." These findings are consistent with an exploratory study (Desai, 1992) which found that consumers use brands in different ways for three practical reasons: (1) convenience—the brand is a handy, immediate solution to a specific need; (2) effectiveness-the brand works more effectively than an available (or unavailable) substitute; and (3) cost-the brand is less expensive than using or stocking an alternative.

How do people learn about new uses for old brands?

People learn about new uses for old brands either through referral-based learning (parents, friends, spouse, or self) or through media-based learning (packaging, magazines, television, or books). Many new uses for mature brandsparticularly those involving new usage situations for food-are a result of referral-based learning (see Table 7). With media-based learning, magazine advertisements were more effective than television advertisements. Subsequent focus groups indicated the perceived superiority of print was because more information can be communicated at a more leisurely rate. In addition, magazine advertisements gave the new uses a chance to "sink in," or to be revisited with repeated readings.

Of particular interest is the finding that the most compelling way to suggest a new use is to advertise it on the package or label itself. Part of this can be attributed to a captive market, that is, the person reading the package is already favorably pre-

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TABLE 7"How Did You Learn About the New Use?"

		and Other Media	Referrals from Others			Self-Generated		
Product	Package	Magazine	Television	Books	Parent	Friend	Spouse	"Trial and Error"
Food products		,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,			***************************************		***************	***************************************
(n = 218)	10.6%	12.4%	6%	7.3%	22.5%	11%	4.1%	26.1%
Health and beauty								***************************************
products								
(n = 101)	18.8%	9.9%	12.9%	3%	2%	38.6%	10.9%	3.9%
Cleaning products						·····	*************************	· (
(n = 83)	18%	8.5%	3.6%	3.6%	16.9%	19.3%	4.8%	25.3%
Total			***************************************		********************	**************************************	***************************************	
(n = 402)	14.2%	10.9%	7.2%	5.5%	16.2%	19.6%	6%	20.4%

diposed to it. However, a stronger reason could be the strength of packaging at the Point-of-Usage (Wansink, 1996). If the intended new use is actually printed on the package, the consumer will be reminded of the new use every time the brand is consumed. This also had a "halo effect" of increasing the perceived versatility of the brand, which has been shown to increase brand equity.

act as a very strong motivator to either decrease costs or increase convenience by using old brands in new ways.

Interestingly, the ideal user described by brand managers was remarkably similar. They were anecdotally described as early adopters, educated, curious, health conscious, not price sensitive, brand loyal, and female. The convergence of these perceptions of managers and consumers sugcore advantages that are the most appropriate for the new usage situation.¹

While doing this, the key to effectively advertising a new use for an old brand lies in making this new use appear similar to existing uses of that brand but not overly so. If perceived as similar, the existing use for the brand provides an "attitude halo" for the new use and eases its adoption. Suppose a woman sees an advertisement encouraging her to drink Pepsi during a morning break. If drinking Pepsi in the morning is advertised as similar to drinking it for an afternoon "pick-me-up," this "halo" can begin to make Pepsi a morning consideration. Usage-related advertising increased monthly usage of three test brands by an average of 73 percent (Wansink and Ray, 1996). If the new use is seen as too similar, however, the consumer will discount the message; reason tells them that if the two situations were so similar

. . . children act as a very strong motivator to either decrease costs or increase convenience by using old brands in new ways.

What consumers should be targeted?

What are the characteristics of a new user? When asked this question, consumers most often described a person who was "health conscious," "thrifty," "imaginative," "seeking natural products," "adventurous," "investigative," and a "timesaver." The majority described a woman (see Table 8), and over 27 percent specifically identified her as being a "mother." It comes as no surprise though that children

gests a clear target profile for new usage campaigns.

3. HOW CAN NEW USES BE MOST EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATED?

The insights generated from surveys and interviews will underscore the brand's advantages in the new situation. In promoting this new use, the main objective is to leverage brand equity by reinforcing the

¹Marketing to loyal brand consumers, heavy users, and segmented innovators is likely to be the best approach in promoting the new use. These markets are typically the ones that are primed to accept the promotional message in a positive light.

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TABLE 8"Describe the Ideal Target Customer for this New Use"

		Health		Homemaker/	Fast,			
	Mother	Conscious	Emetal	•	Efficient	Endermontalist	Adventureus	Imacinativa
*************************************		CONSCIOUS	Frugal	Housekeeper	Entrent	Environmentalist	Adventurous	Imaginative
Food products								
(n = 218)	28.7%*	23.4%	18.4%	8.6%	6.3%	9.8%	4.3%	0.5%
Cleaning products		:				_		
(n = 101)	20.1%	8.8%	16%	24.2%	16%	7.2%	5.7%	2%
Health and beauty								
products							•	
(n = 83)	2.5%	27.9%	2.5%	3.3%	19.6%	9%	17.2%	18%
Totals								
(n = 402)	21.9%	20.2%	15%	11.9%	11.2%	9%	6.9%	3.9%

^{*}Percentage of people who used this particular word to describe the ideal customer.

they would already be using the brand in that situation.

Perhaps the quickest means to increase usage frequency is to position the brand as a substitute for products in other categories. For instance, expansion advertising campaigns encourage consumers to tised. If they are too similar (frozen yogurt and ice cream), their differences should be advertised (Wansink, 1994).

There is no one perfect strategy to promote a new use for a brand. The effectiveness of a strategy depends on a brand's availability, its potential usage rate, and

to be in the house, a heavy distribution strategy and POP advertising plan is of primary importance (Desai, 1992). Ultimately, the best test for selecting the optimal marketing strategy is a copy-test with cognitive response questions pertaining to both usage likelihood as well as usage frequency of both heavy and light users (Wansink and Ray, 1992).

Perhaps the quickest means to increase usage frequency is to position the brand as a substitute for products in other categories.

use Philadelphia cream cheese instead of butter on bread, to eat Special K breakfast cereal instead of cookies in the afternoon, and to serve Orville Redenbacker popcorn instead of potato chips and peanuts at a party. These attempts are most successful when the revitalized brand is seen as different—but not too different—from the substituted product. If the new-use brand and the product it is looking to replace are too different (e.g., dry cereal and ice cream), their similarities should be adver-

the number of potential substitutes it has (Desai, 1992). Consider Table 9. If a brand is easily found around the home, has a high potential usage rate, and has many substitutes, a preemptive advertising and promotional strategy should be considered. On the other hand, if a brand is not normally found around the house, has a high potential usage rate, and has many substitutes for the new usage situation, a preemptive distribution strategy should be considered. Because the brand first has

CONCLUSION

While new usage campaigns can fully revitalize a brand (recall Arm & Hammer baking soda), even sales lifts of 3 to 5 percent are often considered successes (Wansink, 1998). What can be expected for a specific brand in a specific situation typically lies somewhere in between these two extremes. The possibilities are determined by (1) the number of substitutes for the new use, (2) the availability and penetration of the target brand, and (3) the potential frequency of this new use.

Generating new uses for mature brands creates strategic opportunities for increased usage of the brand among heavyusers or newly targeted segments. Doing so can increase sales, protect the brand

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TABLE 9
Marketing Strategies to Revitalize Old Brands with New Uses

	High Potential Us	age Rate	Low Potential Usage Rate		
	Many Substitutes	Few Substitutes	Many Substitutes	Few Substitutes	
Target brand easily found	Preemptive Advertising and Promotional Strategy	Increase Price to Reflect Value of New Uses		***************************************	
around house	Cereal as a snackSoft drinks in the morning	sauce	Bleach as a cleanerSteak sauce on burgers	as deodorant	
Target brand difficult to find around house	Preemptive Distribution and POP Advertising Gum as smoking deterrent Frozen candy as snack	Antacids as calcium supplements	Brand or Use Package Ads Vaseline as door hinge	Through	

from competitors, or simply decelerate a death spiral. Of key importance is understanding the *real* reasons behind why and how consumers use the brand. Understanding this information enables one to craft a new usage campaign that increases both brand equity and sales.

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