An executive summary for managers and executive readers can be found at the end of this article

Revitalizing mature packaged goods

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Abstract *Managers of mature or established brands have received little guidance regarding the strategic and tactical decisions they must make to keep their brands healthy. By focusing on how existing consumers perceive, choose, and use brands, this paper suggests how managers can generate and prioritize strategic and tactical opportunities for revitalizing their brands. Specific recommendations are presented as to how these strategies can be successfully implemented by brands with differing levels of market share and resources.*

When Something's a Waste,
It's Gone in Good Haste.
A Good Brand Though,
Should Never Go (*Burma Shave*).

Withering market share

In 1948 Burma Shave owned approximately 52 percent of the shaving cream market. It enjoyed high awareness, high repurchase rates, and high market share. Shortly thereafter, it began to experience intense competition and price erosion. Within the next five years its share withered to 9 percent. By 1960, Burma Shave was nearly dead (Rowsome, 1979).

The example of Burma Shave can serve as a reminder of what can happen to brands that lose sight of their existing customers. Often, these brands divert attention from their customers due to competition or a myopic focus on quarterly earnings (Day *et al.*, 1979). This paper presents a method for retargeting existing customers of a brand by focusing on how they simultaneously perceive, choose, and use that brand. This framework enables managers to develop revitalization programs that can be integrated into a company's long-term planning for effective brand leveraging and equity gain.

Revitalizing more profitable

For some companies, revitalizing a mature brand can be much more profitable than spending $75-100 million to launch a new one. The key question, however, is how costly are such efforts and how profitable will they be (Aaker, 1984; Zeithaml, 1988). Some brands have been successfully revitalized simply by modifying their brand's size (single-serving size pizza or canned soup), strength (triple-ply reinforced trash bags), ingredients (dish

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soap with skin softeners), form (deodorants in stick, powder, spray and gel form), flavor (cough drops in fruit flavors such a lemon, cherry and orange taste; extra-crunch peanut butter), color (nail polish and lipstick in numerous shades), or quality (i.e. performance, conformance, reliably, durability, and aesthetics). Nevertheless, while some brands are easy to revitalize and worthy of revitalization, others should be divested or treated with benign neglect (Varadarajan, 1986). This raises two key questions:

(1) Which brands can be revitalized?

(2) How should they be revitalized?

Which brands can be revitalized?

Characteristics of revitalized brands

Targeting brands for revitalization is difficult because "brands that fail tell no tales." One method for obtaining some initial insights is to profile successfully revitalized brands. To accomplish this, a matched classification cohort analysis was conducted for 84 brands (Wansink, 1997). Of these brands, 42 had been successfully revitalized and the other 42 were a matched comparison set of less successful brands. All 84 brands were coded by sales, sales velocity, and distribution. In addition, they were compared to category averages by 360 consumers who rated them based on their packaging, advertising, price, distinctiveness, and quality compared to the typical brands in that category. Two-stage discriminate analyses were then used to relate these characteristics to the time series sales data that had been collected for each product. Although results varied by category, revitalized brands typically had five common characteristics:

(1) *Moderate to premium-priced.* Part of the equity and value of these 42 revitalized brands is that none had ever been heavily-discounted or seen as a "budget brand." Revitalizing an overpriced product bodes better for success than trying to revitalize an under-priced one (Winer, 1986; Lattin and Bucklin, 1989).

(2) *Under-advertised and under-promoted.* Compared with other brands in their categories, 93 percent of these revitalized brands were seen as "quiet" brands. Consider Ovaltine – once the revitalization effort kicked in, even inexpensively-produced "awareness-generating" radio ads led to dramatic sales increases. The latent loyalty was there; all that was needed was to remind people the product was still around (Raj, 1982).

(3) *Wide distribution.* While quiet and all-but-forgotten, many of these revitalized brands were always able to maintain some shelf presence. They may have dropped to the bottom row, or they may have been periodically replaced with a line extension, but they did not have to fight stores for reintroduction (Huffman and Kahn, 1998).

Vivid memories

(4) *Long-held heritage.* The average brand had been around for 53 years. In 87 percent of these cases, there were vivid memories associated with the brand among at least a small core of the market. This core often played an important part in helping the brand in its first stages of revitalization (Aaker, 1984).

(5) *A distinct point-of-differentiation.* The importance of differentiating a product is not news to any marketer, but doing it is a talent. Revitalized products had unique points of differentiation that set them apart from the competition in 88 percent of the cases. Sometimes these points of differentiation had little to do with the tangible functionality of the product, but were related to advertising, a spokesperson, packaging, a

well-known theme song, a style, or a hedonic emotion they evoked (Chandon *et al.*, 2000).

Focus of current users

Every revitalized brand met at least three of these criteria, and 32 of 42 had all five. Besides suggesting a brand's potential for revitalization, the results of this study also underscore the importance of initially focusing revitalization efforts on loyal or existing users of a brand. With many of the brands, the initial successes in revitalization came from improving perceptions current users had toward the brand and by increasing the purchase frequency and usage frequency of these brands (Wansink, 1997).

Changing how consumers perceive, choose, and use mature brands

The existing customers of a brand interact with that brand in the way they perceive it, choose it, or use it. While often depicted as sequential, these can occur in any order and each element must be given consideration when studying customer behavior (see Figure 1). For each of these three elements we will describe how theory and practice have combined to help managers revitalize the sales of mature brands.

Managing how existing users perceive a brand

A consumer's perceptions of a brand are based on the associations (characteristics, usage situations, past experiences, etc.) he or she has with that brand (Aaker, 1991). While these associations contribute to brand equity, they also make it difficult to reposition the brand (Goodstein, 1993). For example, if a particular brand is strongly associated with economy but not convenience, repositioning the brand as convenient may erode perceptions of its low cost. Understanding customers' associations with a brand allows managers to modify the associations by refreshing their salience, associating the brand with new goals and usage situations, or by encouraging category substitution.

Using past associations

Refresh favorable perceptions and salience. New information is often most easily learned when it is related to what is already known (Batra and Ray, 1986). Similarly, it can be quicker and less expensive to refresh or re-activate existing associations with a brand than to create new ones (Deighton, 1984). Refreshing past associations with a brand can create salience for a brand that was once favorably perceived (Keller, 1993). Kellogg's has drawn on past associations to refresh favorable perceptions for Corn Flakes by using old packaging, old slogans, and old jingles to remind customers to "taste them again for the first time." Other examples of using past associations to refresh a brand are the return of the Oscar Meyer jingle and the reintroduction of the classic Ovaltine jar. Refreshing past associations to form positive associations can aid the customer in being more reception of the marketing

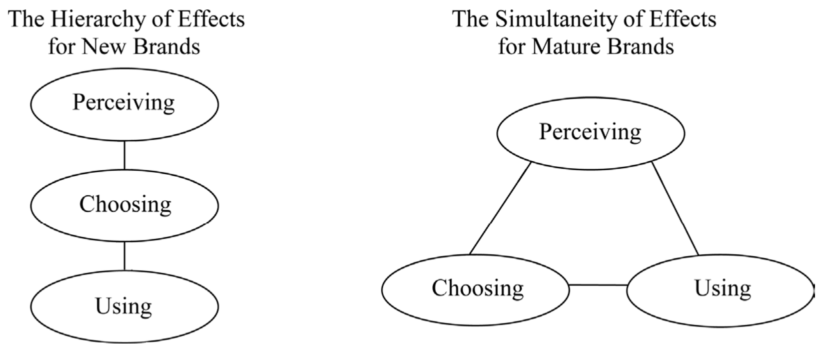

Figure 1. Why mature brands are different than new brands

messages and nostalgia campaigns. Nostalgia campaigns – such as those of Ovaltine, Lavoris, and Gold Bond Powder – attempt to leverage favorable childhood memories of baby-boomers.

Specific usage situations

Associate the brand with relevant goals. People associate brands with specific usage situations because the brands help them achieve goals for particular situations (Ratneshwar and Shocker, 1991; Huffman *et al.*, 1997). When consumers no longer perceive a brand as satisfying important goals for particular situations, the brands will be used less frequently (Huffman and Houston, 1993). Bisqick has seen slowing sales because of changes in baking and meal preparation habits. When baking or making a meal, time is at a premium, and convenience is important to the consumer. To build new associations between Bisqick and the relevant needs of its target segment, it is now being marketed as an aid to fast, conveniently prepared meals. By associating the brand with the new goal of convenience, Bisqick is more likely to be recalled and considered a viable option.

Focusing on nonsalient attribute

Similarly, Hershey's Syrup's revitalization campaign stressed that it is "Virtually fat free." By focusing on a nonsalient attribute (fat-free), Hershey's told consumers they could rely on the same quality, taste, or richness, which attracted them to the product in the first place. For Dodge, revitalizing light truck sales centered on research indicating that most drivers spend the bulk of their time driving on pavement, not off-road or working in the field. Dodge responded to these people with "The rules have changed" campaign that avoided the stereotypical "work horse" truck ad and focused on technology, style, design, and comfort.

Associate the brand with new usage situations. Expanding a brand's usage situations can also increase sales (Lutz and Kakkar, 1975; Wansink and Gilmore, 1999). Successful campaigns for usage expansion were used to establish recall in new situations (see Table I). Since 1969, Arm & Hammer's sales have skyrocketed because it was marketed as a deodorizer for refrigerators, freezers, and kitchen sink drains. This revitalization was critical because of the decline in home baking that was accompanied with the introduction of ready-to-bake packaged food products, which included baking powder.

Favorable associations

Successful usage expansion advertising establishes favorable associations with new usage situations (Wansink and Ray, 1996). New usage situations that have been successful are perceived as similar to existing uses of that brand. For example, a consumer sees an ad encouraging her to eat soup for breakfast. If eating soup for breakfast is advertised as similar to a favorable existing use (eating it for lunch), her positive attitude toward eating it at

Brand or service	Proposed, pretested, or launched advertising campaign
A-1 Steak Sauce	Use to flavor rice and potatoes
American Express	Use for small purchases
AT&T	Business calls instead of letters
Burger King	Use for picnics
Campbell's Soup	Eat for breakfast
Clorox Bleach	Clean counters and sinks
Gatorade	Use to replenish liquids after flu
Pepsi	Drink in the morning
Special K Cereal	Eat as a snack

Table I. Promoting new uses for established brands lunch provides a "halo" that makes her more likely to consider it for breakfast.

Increase usage frequency

Encourage category substitution. A related strategy is to increase a brand's usage frequency by promoting it as a substitute for products in other categories (Srivastava *et al.*, 1981). Advertising campaigns, for instance, have attempted to convince consumers to drink Pepsi instead of coffee; eat Special K breakfast cereal in the morning instead of cookies in the afternoon; and to serve Orville Redenbacker popcorn instead of potato chips and peanuts at a party. Such advertising attempts to associate the target brand with a new situation (and the established goals in that situation) and thereby encourage a substitution. Ironically, an effective strategy for doing so is to encourage a substitution without mentioning the competing product (Wansink, 1994).

In sum, understanding how existing users perceive a brand enables these perceptions to be reinforced or expanded by advertising new usage goals and new usage situations. As will be discussed later, a manager's effort needs to be prioritized based on their needs.

Managing how existing users choose brands

An important objective of a revitalization strategy is to increase the eventual likelihood that a consumer will choose (purchase) the brand over competing brands. Improving the sales of a mature brand can be accomplished by increasing choice likelihood and increasing the number of units consumers purchase. The tactics that have succeeded in accomplishing either one or both of these objectives include:

- ensuring that the brand is available for purchase;
- multiple or alternative shelf placement;
- ensure the brand compares favorably with others;
- increase the quantity purchased.

New forms of distribution

Ensure that the brand is available for purchase. Clearly, increased distribution can increase sales (Kahn and McAlister, 1997). One feature that many revitalized brands have in common is that their managers creatively generated new forms of distribution, new outlets, or they cooperated with marketers of complementary or substitutable products (Elliott, 1993). Microwave popcorn extended its reach by accessing vending machine distribution (as did Snapple, Lipton, etc.). Taco Bell and Pizza Hut have been successful with their mini-stores inside convenience stores, supermarkets, and mass merchandise stores. And sales of gourmet coffee increased substantially once it became available in specialty stores and in grocery stores.

"Shopping scripts"

Multiple or alternative shelf placement. Increased availability can sometimes be achieved by gaining new shelf placement (Blattberg and Neslin, 1990). Consumers often shop in certain aisles, for certain products, in a certain order. It may be that a marketer "loses" sales to customers whose "shopping scripts" do not include the aisle or area of current shelf placement (Hoyer, 1984). Consider, for example, a consumer who never buys sauce mixes, but does buy Mexican foods. She would miss an enchilada sauce in the sauce mix section, but if a marketer also places the sauce in the Mexican foods section, the chance that she will notice it increases dramatically. (Certainly this appears to be one rationale for placing grated parmesan cheese with the shelf-stable cheeses, above the refrigerated cheese case, and with the pasta sauces.) Multiple placement thus provides multiple opportunities for the consumer to be confronted with the brand and to purchase.

Perceived superiority

Ensure that the brand compares favorably with others. In order for a consumer to choose a brand, it must be perceived as superior to brands in competing categories (Inman *et al.*, 1990). One way to improve favorability is to gain shelf placement among less favorable competitors (Shimp, 1978). For example, although Tang might be negatively evaluated when compared with canned fruit juices (due to its perceived lower juice content), it enjoys a comparative advantage on nutrition when placed with the powdered sugared drinks such as Kool Aid (Huffman and Kahn, 1998).

Another related means by which perceived superiority might be achieved is when a new attribute is added to the evaluation process (Puto, 1987). One way this can be accomplished is through new packaging. Thus, juice became convenient when re-packaged in individual-serving aseptic boxes, and laundry products became ''environmentally-friendly'' when reformulated as concentrates. Interestingly, the new attribute need not be important to the consumer in order to influence choice. Small differences between brands can make a decision easier and increase purchase likelihoods (Pechmann and Stewart, 1990). Nevertheless, high quality brands can harm their equity with such meaningless differentiation (Aaker and Keller. 1990).

Increase the quantity purchased. Once choice likelihood is high, emphasis shifts to increasing the quantity that is purchased. There are several ways to stimulate larger purchases. Some operate directly (through effects on the desired quantity), while others operate indirectly, through reducing the perceived price (thereby increasing the consumer's belief that he or she can buy more).

Limiting purchase quantity

First, recent studies indicate that purchase quantity limits can, paradoxically, increase sales of a brand. For example, placing a limit on the number of cans of soup a consumer can buy (e.g. limit 12 cans) increases the number of cans purchased, relative to the number purchased when there is no purchase quantity limit. This occurs because consumers do not tend to be very involved in determining how many of a particular brand they will buy, and they use externally-provided numbers as a starting point or as an anchor when making quantitative judgments. For a manager, these findings suggest that sales may increase as progressively larger purchase limits are used. That is, a high purchase limit, such as ''12 per person'' will cause people to buy more cans than an equivalent sale with no limit. Similarly, recent work has found that nearly any quantity anchor in a point-of-purchase display can increase sales. This can be accomplished with multiple unit pricing (''two for $1.00'') and suggestive selling such as ''Grab ten for the weekend'' or ''Buy five for the family'' (Wansink *et al.*, 1998).

Out of sight ... out of mind

Increasing the amount a person purchases also has a referred benefit on one's usage frequency of the product. That is, the more soda we have in the refrigerator, the more we tend to drink. Evidence exists that stockpiling increases one's consumption frequency of the brand, but only when the brand is salient. If it's out of sight ... it's out of mind. If no effort is made to increase the salience of the brand, the brand will merely gather dust in the pantry (Wansink and Deshpande, 1994). Hence, advertising for Campbell's soups reminds consumers to use the soups they already have in the cupboard, by providing recipes along with the advertisement text. The impact of salience on the usage of stockpiled products is addressed in the next section.

In sum, there are several ways that a marketer might revitalize a mature brand by focusing on choice likelihood and choice quantity. The keys are to make the brand available for purchase through increased distribution or additional shelf placement, to encourage favorable comparisons, and to influence the quantity purchased through quantity limits or package size.

Managing how consumers use mature brands

In addition to influencing perceptions and choice of a mature brand, a brand manager may wish to encourage directly greater consumption of the brand[1]. The consumer usage decision includes which item is used, when it is used (how frequently), and how much of it is used[2]. The first is primarily influenced by how strongly the brand is associated with different usage situations, as discussed earlier. The latter two are influenced more by inventory levels, the salience of inventory, packaging, and the perceived price of the brand.

Food visibility

Ensure awareness at the point of consumption. Recall the expression, "Out of sight, out of mind." In order for a brand to be considered for use, consumers need to be aware of it in various usage situations (such as breakfasts or morning snacks). Eating behavior, for instance, is greatly influenced by factors such as food visibility. In one study, the consumption of breakfast cereal nearly doubled when it was stored on the counter (a salient location) rather than in the cupboard (Chandon *et al.*, 2000). It is clear that the brand must be on the top-of-one's mind and convenient when the consumption decision is being made (Wansink *et al.*, 2000). This underscores the importance of media scheduling. Campbell Soup, for instance, schedules its radio advertisements to be broadcast just prior to lunch and dinner. Furthermore, they instruct radio stations to broadcast specially developed "Storm Spot Ads" during inclement weather.

Ideas for new uses

Other means of increasing brand salience obviously include increasing gross rating points and altering the advertising message to increase its attention-getting properties. In addition, salience can be cued by long-lived promotions designed to be kept and used by the consumer. For example, a point-of-purchase display can offer ideas for new uses of the brand along with tear-off recipes. Or, premiums can be included in the packaging or made available through mail purchase. These premiums may be somehow tied to usage – a "chip clip," a scoop, a glass – or they may not, as in the case of refrigerator magnets. The key is that the premium should be a means to keep the brand in the front of the consumer's mind and in the front of the pantry (Wansink *et al.*, 2000).

Larger packages

Alter packaging to influence usage. Studies have shown that larger packages can encourage greater usage with many categories of foods, beverages, and household cleaners (Wansink, 1996). That is, the larger the package size (up to a point) the greater a volume of the brand that a person will consume. Although there are a number of reasons why people might pour more from larger packages, it has reliably been shown that one contributing reason is that they perceive large packages to be cheaper per unit than smaller packages. Nevertheless, changes in usage occur only when these sizes fall within the sensitivity range for that brand. That is, extremely large package sizes do not promote proportional changes in usage volume, and the largest changes occur with small to medium-sized packages. As a general "rule of thumb," if a manager is trying to decide which of two small or medium-sided packages to introduce – say 20 ounces versus 24 ounces – the larger of the two packages should encourage greater usage volume per usage occasion.

Larger openings

Other package-related characteristics may also influence usage volume. Some of these affect perceiving and choosing, such as the package's shelf appeal, while others can influence functionality after use. One such factor is a package's opening. Folk wisdom and anecdotes have suggested that increasing the size of a package's opening might alter the usage volume of a brand. For instance, it has been suggested that a person uses more toothpaste when he or she squeezes from a tube that has a larger opening, and that ''big mouth'' beverages are drunk more rapidly than those with conventional openings. The likelihood that larger openings will influence usage volume led Mountain Dew and Coors to enlarge the openings of its bottles by one-third to ''enhance chugability.''

Price promotion

Decrease perceived price per unit. As noted earlier, one reason large packages encourage greater usage is that they are perceived to be cheaper per unit than smaller packages. It is not surprising, therefore, that directly decreasing a brand's price similarly increases usage volume. Although this can be accomplished through shelf price reductions, such promotions are unlikely to impact usage volume if the consumer does not recall having bought the item on sale when using it. Given how inaccurately consumers recall the prices they pay for products, the sales promotion will be most likely to have an impact on usage volume if it is made highly salient at the point of usage. One way this can be accomplished is by having a ''cents-off'' sticker on the label.

Although it might appear that simultaneously increasing package size and decreasing price would have the maximum impact on usage acceleration, this may not occur. Combining large package sizes with a price promotion may drive the perceived unit costs of a brand down to a point where any further reduction of unit cost (such as a larger package size or a deeper price cut) would have no impact on usage (Wansink, 1996). Regardless of how inexpensive a brand is perceived, there is a limit to how much spaghetti one would want to eat and to how much detergent one would want to use.

In sum, the usage behavior of existing customers and heavy users is an important avenue for increasing sales of a mature brand (Wansink and Park, 2000). Of particular interest is their usage frequency and usage volume. We argue that the key to usage frequency is to maintain and increase the salience of the brand, since usage is determined by whether the brand is evoked at the time of consumption. Increasing usage amount, on the other hand, can be managed by decreasing the perceived unit cost of the brand, through either package size or price promotions.

Need for variety

Managers must remember that most brands could be used to a greater extent than current usage suggests. However, increasing usage must be weighted against the possibility of user satiation. That is, consumers who use ''too much'' of a brand might become bored or tired of it and seek variety by purchasing competitors or substitutes. Managers must therefore identify the levels at which satiation tends to occur for their brands and work to ensure either that consumers generally do not reach this level, or that line extensions or other company products are available to satisfy the consumer's need for variety.

Tactical trade-offs

Defining one's market

New advertising campaign

Selecting revitalization strategies

Three factors – the customer, the brand's market share, and the company's competitive strengths – influence what revitalization strategies should be used with a particular brand. Not all strategies are equally appropriate for all brands at all times. Besides relying on industry- and company-specific factors[3], the appropriate strategy also depends on a brand's market share and on the tactical trade-offs that managers are willing to make.

Redefining a company's share of their target market

High-share brands are in an enviable position. They tend to enjoy a high degree of loyalty and favorable perceptions. Low-share brands, on the other hand, often suffer from low awareness, or poor perceptions, both of which lead to low purchase incidence. Revitalizing the sales of a mature high-share brand such as Campbell Soup requires a different approach than revitalizing a small share brand like Healthy Choice. A high-share brand should focus on strengthening perceptions of the brand and on accelerating its use. In contrast, a low-share brand should place a greater emphasis on simply encouraging choice. As Figure 2 illustrates, medium-share brands may need to employ strategies based on all three strategies (perceiving, choosing, and using), in order to attract new consumers.

The critical part of this deceptively simple framework lies in defining one's market. It is important to note that the ''Market share of target segment'' is not the same as the ''Total market share.'' A niche brand such as Healthy Choice may have a 16 percent share of the total canned soup market, but it may have a 58 percent share of the premium soup market. If they want to define their market as ''all soup users,'' they need to invest in ''choosing strategies.'' If they want to define their market as ''premium soup users,'' they need to invest in ''perceiving and using'' strategies. The market share of the target segment suggests what strategies should be employed.

Analyzing tactical trade-offs

After defining the target market, tactical options can be analyzed based on:

- effects on margins;
- effects on brand image; and
- speed of implementation (Blattberg and Neslin, 1990).

Each revitalization option necessitates different trade-offs.

While Table II summarizes the impact of some tactics on the three target criteria, this varies across companies. While some companies can quickly and inexpensively implement a new advertising campaign, others might be more efficient at increasing their distribution. Therefore, we offer Table II not as a definitive statement, but as a checklist and reference in assessing the possible effects of various executional tactics on a particular brand.

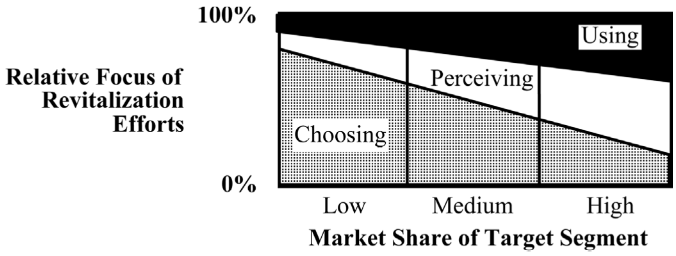

Figure 2. How market share influences which strategies will drive sales

Tactics	Impact of tactics Effects on margins	Effects on brand equity	Speed of implementation
Perceiving the brand			
Refresh favorable perceptions	Advertisement costs	Positive	Moderate
Associate with relevant goals	Advertisement costs	Positive	Long
Associate with new usage situation	Advertisement costs	Positive	Long
Choosing the brand			
Increase distribution coverage	Distribution costs	Neutral	Moderate to long
Expand or change shelf placement	Distribution costs	Neutral	Moderate
Encourage favorable comparisons	Distribution costs	Positive	Moderate
Encourage stockpiling	Point-of-sale costs	Neutral	Short
Using the brand			
Ensure salience at usage point	Varies	Positive	Varies
Alter packaging to influence usage	Manufacturing costs	Neutral	Moderate
Decrease perceive price per unit	Redemption	Negative	Short

Table II. Typical impact of tactics for revitalizing mature brands

Two revitalization scenarios

Implementation ideas

"Where do I start?" Consider two managers of two hypothetical mature brands: a presweetened breakfast cereal and a mouthwash. Using the framework in Figure 2, the manager of the breakfast cereal and her team generated a number of different implementation ideas they believed relevant for their brand. Marketing research culled this list, and the feasible options are noted in Table III. The strategic thrust of the revitalization campaign was to expand usage of the product into the market of adults who had enjoyed the cereal as children. As a result, the definition of the adult target market was identified as "'Backslidden Boomers,' who had once enjoyed presweetened cereals but who had moved away to adult alternatives or to no breakfast." Because the penetration of this market was low (Figure 2), it was decided to focus on perceiving and choosing tactics.

Encourage household stock piling

To prioritize these tactics, both short-term ("quarterly") and long-term goals needed to be satisfied. To satisfy the short-term goals, plans were made to encourage household stockpiling by using suggestive selling campaigns ("Buy three for the fall"). To satisfy long-term goals, plans were made to leverage the company's convenience food division and to begin expanding into the bottom row of vending machines. Plans were also made with an ad agency to determine the most effective way of executing a new usage campaign that focused on an expanded set of usage situations for cereals. To expand usage among current users, a selected set of these new usage situations would be promoted on the box along with some cereal-related "fun-facts" thought to increase the box "readability" and thus the salience of the cereal.

The manager of mouthwash found himself in a different situation. His company owned a profitable, but stagnant, brand that he feared had already peaked in popularity and sales. Unlike the cereal manager, his brand was too

Tactics	Impact of tactics Breakfast cereal	 Mouthwash
Perceiving the brand		
Refresh favorable perceptions	Makes breakfast fun like it used to be	Freshness you feel; freshness they notice
Associate with relevant goods	High energy; low fat	Confidence up close
Associate with new usage situation	Dashboard breakfast	After lunch; whenever you munch
Choosing brand		
Increase distribution coverage	Snack packs in vending machines	Ethnic restaurants (Mexican, Italian, Korean)
Expand or change shelf placement	Display snack packs with chips and crackers	Small bottles of convenience store check-outs
Encourage favorable comparisons	Compare with fat content of chips and chocolate	Compare with inconvenience of brushing
Encourage stockpiling	Suggestive selling ("Buy 12 for the car")	Multiple unit discounts
Using the brand		
Ensure salience at usage point	Promotional cereal bowls and "Fun-to-read" box	Lunch time radio campaign
Alter packaging to influence usage	Promote larger packages	Larger openings: convenience packages for desks
Decrease packaging to influence usage	Price promote with salient on-pack pricing	Multi-unit packaging or "Under cap" promotion

Table III. Typical impact of tactics for revitalizing mature brands

small to merit a costly advertising campaign and extensive ongoing revitalization efforts. Using Table II as a springboard for brainstorming, he and his assistant manager used a company retreat as an opportunity to generate a list of revitalization tactics. Because their share of their target market (young adults) was high and because there were not the resources to expand beyond this market, his objective was to increase usage among current users. A decision was made to focus efforts on packaging and on new distribution channels.

Feasibility tests

The medium-size package was dropped in favor of a larger package with a larger opening and a small "portable size" package which was sold in multi-packs. The media budget was redirected toward morning "drive-time" (pre-school) radio and noon-time programming. The theme of the campaign was "Freshness you feel, freshness they notice," and was incorporated into the radio ads and onto a label redesign. Expanding the distribution channels to the check-out counters of convenience stores and restaurants took more time, and the feasibility was being determined by tests at a subset of 7-11s located near schools and universities.

Conclusion

Not a bang but a whimper

Most dead brands died not with a bang but a whimper. This paper has examined the revitalization of established brands, a topic that we believe has been overlooked for too many years. Brand managers have numerous options for revitalizing the sales of an established brand in a mature category. The strategies suggested here present opportunities for many managers to salvage and leverage the equity that has been built over the lifetime of the brand. Brands die because of neglect and consumer indifference. While bad brands may fade away, we contend, "a good brand though, should never go."

Notes

1. Some products are usage invariant, that is, they are generally used at a constant rate, and it is difficult to increase either the frequency or the amount of usage. These products include most personal care products, such as toothpaste, contact lens cleaner, and bathroom tissue, and products with negative consequences to overuse, such as medicines and certain cooking ingredients. However, most foods and household cleaning products are usage variant and therefore, users may be influenced to consume them more frequently.
2. Understanding how consumers use products can be accomplished through in-home observations, panels, and through laboratory studies and surveys.
3. These include market structure, competitive structure, cost structure, demand interrelations, ease of entry and penetration, cost dynamics (scale and experience effects), investments, and risk and return considerations.

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This summary has been provided to allow managers and executives a rapid appreciation of the content of this article. Those with a particular interest in the topic covered may then read the article* in toto *to take advantage of the more comprehensive description of the research undertaken and its results to get the full benefit of the material present

Executive summary and implications for managers and executives

There is life in the old brand yet!

The idea of the product or brand life cycle implies the mortality of the brand. We are trained to consider that brands and products are, by definition, ephemeral. Yet, when we look around us at the brands on our shelves, we must be struck by the longevity of the brand names we encounter. There is really no reason why a brand should die – at least so long as it is attached to a product people want to buy.

Despite the longevity of brands, we need to consider how we extend the success of a "mature" brand. How we make people aware of the brand and its relevance to their everyday lives. How we rejuvenate the tired old name.

Why should I kill the old brand?

Modernity is something of a curse. The old must go simply because it is not "modern". The old reflects past values, past behaviour. Childish things we have put behind us. For some managers – obsessed by the "white heat" of progress, the excitement of the new – the solution is to change. To hack away at the thickets of old brands and create a brand new, shining, modern brand.

But why kill off something old and familiar? Why should your customers be more interested in the exciting modern image? Why shouldn't they be more attracted by the old tried-and-tested brand? Wansink and Huffman show us that change and success can be achieved without scrapping the old brand in favour of the new.

Packaged goods brands become part of our culture. This may seem – to some at least – a strange assertion. But it is – without question – true. We see old brands as stable points in a changing life. We may now shop in a huge out-of-town superstore but the old familiar brands are still there. The brands we remember from the shelves of the old high street grocer are still sitting on the shelves in Wal-Mart. And these brands are important because they remove the scariness from modern consumer environments, they provide reassurance and consistency. If you can avoid it, you should not shoot the old brand – it is probably a mistake.

Have you tried a bit of promotion for your old brand?

One thing that strikes me about the stories related by Wansink and Huffman is that the simple act of promoting an old brand results in significant increases in sales. It is almost as if the consumer has forgotten about the brand and, when we remind them of that brand's existence, they say; "wow, we haven't had that for a while, let's get some".

We know that under-promoted brands quickly lose salience with the consumer. We do forget about a brand – especially when it is not an everyday purchase or there are heavily promoted alternatives. Wansink and Huffman remind us of the old adage; "out of sight, out of mind". We need to make sure that people know they can buy what we sell. I know this is common sense but you would be surprised (maybe not?) at the number of marketers who ignore this fundamental principle.

Promotion is, however, just one part of the story, since a well-promoted brand without good distribution and in-store prominence will struggle in much the same way as a brand receiving too little promotion.

Try improving where your brand is sold
Wansink and Huffman argue that the place within a store where your product is sold can make a difference to its performance. We should think about the way in which customers use our product – when do they eat it and with what, for example. And we should follow this up with effort to increase the exposure the consumer has to our brand in-store.

One of the ways in which brand usage is improved is through the linking of the brand – formally or informally – with other brands. If most people consume our product for breakfast then we should consider how the product sits in relation to complementary breakfast products within the store. This approach can also, as Wansink and Huffman describe, form the basis for encouraging new uses for our brand.

So we have sorted out promotion, we have sharpened up our distribution and we have been creative with the way in which the brand is displayed in-store. Is this enough to save the brand from a humane lethal injection or a period of "benign neglect"? Perhaps not. We must consider ways in which consumers can buy more.

Consider the packaging of your product
The little consumer who sits in my mind does not think much of the cunning schemes to make us use more without noticing – slightly bigger openings to bottles, bigger boxes, the "enhanced chugability". But we are told these things work – at least so long as they are not too blatant. You must consider whether subtle changes to the presentation and packaging of your brand will result in more consumption. But please do not treat the consumer as an imbecile – he/she is not and he/she does not like it much.

At the same time as we consider the way we package our product, we must consider our brand's heritage. Chances are the brand's been around for decades and is part of consumption history. You might find that losing the old shaped jar or bottle costs you sales or even that, when you bring the old shape back, consumers begin to notice the product again.

Wansink and Huffman have set out a rescue process for tired old brands. It might not be the elixir of immortality, but it should mean you get a far bigger return on your investment in the old brand than you get at present. Try a few of the ideas – and dream up a few of your own.

(A précis of the article "Revitalizing mature packaged goods". Supplied by Marketing Consultants for MCB University Press.)