

Grand Prix Winner
(Gold: International Campaign)

London Calling: How Magners Cider took the UK capital by Storm

INDUSTRY SPECIALISTS ADVISED AGAINST IT, BUT MAGNERS IS NOW 'THE' ALCOHOLIC BRAND IN LONDON AND ITS SUCCESS IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO YOUNG EURO RSCG'S ADVERTISING.

Researching the market before entering the UK, industry specialists gave their professional opinion to C&C, 'Don't do it', claiming that it was a declining market which held little or no potential. Roll on 18 months and Magners is now the alcoholic brand in London with the latest predictions that sales figures would triple by the end of the year.

Magners Irish cider has become the talking point on an International level. A brand that has defied industry analysts views and in a relatively brief period of time catapulted itself to legendary status.

However this entry would be futile if we could not credibly link the advertising to this success.

What follows is how communications for Magners Irish Cider has contributed to the brand's International ascendancy, helping it shake up markets it enters with a style and clarity that expresses its brand credentials and unique selling point of the pint bottle over ice.

Results will show, in the selected markets in this case study that it is no coincidence once the advertising campaign aired, the effect was immediate. An Irish cider suddenly became a phenomenon in market places that are deemed some of the most competitive in the world.

To think that this is simply a fad would be a mistake, Magners Irish Cider has continued its upward climb in these markets resulting in competition reacting to such degrees that R&D has been fast-tracked with release of products, closely mimicking Magners.

Not only similar products being launched, but nearly identical advertising campaigns to ours are also airing. Imitation being the sincerest form of flattery and a vindication of the success of this Irish brand's advertising strategy.

To jump to the results section at this stage is tempting but the journey which we embarked on to achieve these dramatic figures is just as important.

But here are a few to whet your appetite:

- No.1 Long Alcoholic Drink (LAD) on-trade packaged brand in London
- No.1 LAD on-trade packaged brand in Scotland
- No.1 LAD on-trade packaged brand in Northern Ireland
- Magners is now a £100 million brand

BACKGROUND

Magners is now available in 17 countries worldwide and is already the leading brand of cider in Boston, New York, Northern Ireland, Holland, Belgium as well as Scotland.

In Scotland we carried out extensive research in early 2002, feedback was promising enough leading to an initial Glasgow launch in March of that year. Magners then rolled out across Scotland in the Summer of 2004 accompanied with the Magners 'Seasons' advertising campaign.

However, for the purposes of this case study to best illustrate our communications strategy the recent launch in London will be our primary focus. Its success over the past 18 months has led to unprecedented media attention and has driven the business success of C&C, trebling the share value of the company and propelling the brand onto a Global stage. We will also highlight the results of the successful Scottish launch which just preceded London.

Having a clear and defined brand proposition which stretches across all our activity, no matter the market, still allows us to take into consideration subtle cultural differences within these markets.

SO LET'S LOOK AT LONDON...

Marketing Objectives for London

- Build brand awareness and generate sales
- Become the number one bottled alcoholic brand within 4 years
- Make each season as relevant as the

next (learning from our Bulmers experience)

- Position ourselves as a premium LAD
- Research told us that...

"The London market is likely to prove more challenging but not insurmountably so"

"Distance and its effect on time and transport costs shape how Londoners do drinking"

"Over-choiced consumers who have learned to speed, decode and super-edit their way through accelerated culture, avoiding the clutter and evading the superfluous" **Source: RG Research**

STRATEGIC SOLUTION

In reality this told us a brand which placed such a premium on 'Time' and 'Heritage' was exactly the antidote that these 'over-choiced' consumers needed. Our Seasons campaign which was designed to re-enforce the importance of time within another world, the orchard, could serve to propel these consumers out of the monotony of being rushed and into an aspirational zone of 'Lazing on a Sunny afternoon'.

INSIGHT

Irrespective of economic or cultural differences, people will adopt and crave an ideology that opposes the routine and habitual.

THE CONNECTION MOMENT

The orchard is more than just a place; it's a sanctuary whose natural consistency is refreshing.

BRINGING OUR IDEA TO LIFE THROUGH MEDIA

Even though research had told us that the London audience were possibly the most cynical and hesitant in the world, due to their over exposure to brand messages, it is very difficult to be cynical about something that is rooted in a product truth.

The media marketplace in London is a

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circus and as such warranted a radical, innovative and completely integrated strategy to achieve maximum impact with our 'Seasons' TV campaign acted as the lead media. This activity would communicate both the emotional and functional benefits of the Magners brand to the key target market.

Due to the frenetic nature of the London market the media brief was to create 'Shock and awe' while remaining true to Magners and the integrity of the 'Seasons' campaign. In essence we had to:

'Bring the Irish orchard to the concrete jungle'

This strategy is one of heavy, sustained attack in highly concentrated areas. Prior to launch, Magners had near zero distribution in London. Our approach was to drop high impact, highly visible advertising into new areas to build distribution in pubs and bars quickly.

Put simply in London, 'If the punters ask for it the landlord has to get it'. So through our advertising campaign we had to ensure talkability, thereby triggering consumer call for brand.

Our seasons TV campaign, due to its immediately arresting visuals and highly evocative music tracks enabled us to achieve significant cut through, however we then needed to build on these visuals and bring our strategy to life.

Making the Irish orchard actually live and breathe within the London concrete jungle.

CONTINUOUS ADVERTISING

In order to overcome the negativity that existed in regard to cider and give permission to an audience to drink cider and even more so over ice, significant media investment and TV media weights were appended to our Seasons TV advertising campaign.

This was supported by continuous mainstream outdoor, radio and 'Seasons' press campaigns.

INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO MEDIA

In collaboration with our media arm MPG (London), we developed creative outdoor executions to leverage the brands 'natural apple' proposition by turning Waterloo Underground station into a virtual orchard by buying every

poster site on the concourse. This original initiative not only created a visual feast but took an artificial man made structure and naturalized it thus bringing to life the Magners brand values e.g. Craft, Tradition, Nature, Time and heritage.

In style press such as FHM and Arena we created 3 page seasonal pull-out gatefolds, again bringing our orchard into an unexpected environment and making the audience think twice.

The supposed cynical London audience would find it very difficult to argue with the Magners way of doing things. By bringing our insight to life and thereby giving this cynical audience who were tied into the habitual a refreshing snippet of a landscape that was far more engaging and motivating than where they presently were i.e. standing waiting for a train to take them to their 9 to 5. An image that would not immediately be forgotten, but stay with them throughout the day.

To dramatize even further the contrast of the natural Magners world with that of the synthetic urban environment we created a media first with a 96 sheet poster which dispersed real apple blossoms. These showered down on passing human traffic resulting in scenes that were intended to stir a reaction in people, resulting once again in positive talk around Magners Irish cider.

We also created another media first, this time at Heathrow airport, taking a banal setting and refreshing it dramatically. We dressed the entire length and breath of the well known Heathrow tunnel with authentic visuals of the Clonmel orchard, giving the appearance that you were in fact in the orchard itself.

FURTHER INTEGRATION THROUGH SPONSORSHIP

This became another vital layer in our 'Seasons' strategy, deepening our relationship further with the consumer. We had to, as in all our markets; ensure that our brand proposition came through. Building on the success of previous sports sponsorships Magners decided that London Wasps rugby club was the perfect fit for them. The 'Natural' link with wasps and blossoms was inherently obvious and the very fact that we would team with an

emerging successful rugby side made the decision that bit more inspired.

All in all, an integrated communications campaign that took Magners Irish Cider's naturally refreshing brand proposition and implanted it directly into an audience's life, a life that was in some respects starved of such thought provoking and arresting imagery.

RESULTS

N.B. The publication of detailed results which were made available for judging purposes has been restricted due to confidentiality.

- C&C estimates that Magners accounts for 75% of the current growth in UK cider sales.
- No.1 bottled alcohol brand: outselling bottles of Stella or Budweiser, the previous category leaders in London, after just 12 months (well ahead of target)
- Every £1 spent on advertising in Scotland delivered £23 worth of sales
- Packaged Cider is growing fastest and now accounts for 21% of total GB cider sales (May 06)
- Magners is the No. 1 Packaged Cider brand in GB with 74% share (May 06)
- Magners is the No. 1 Packaged LAD in Scotland with 23% share and 45% share of Cider sales
- Magners is the No. 1 Packaged LAD in London with 18% share and 29% share of cider
- Magners brand success has been key to driving the C&C share price from €2.26 from initial stock market quotation to €8.58 today (25th August 2006)

IN SUMMARY

"Advertising has been at the core of Magners phenomenal entry onto the International scene. Overcoming the cider markets poor imagery and inertia has been achieved by clear messaging, coupled with excellent production values within the 'Seasons' advertising campaign alongside a heavy media investment and real innovation in consumer communications. It is our intention to continue this advertising strategy over the coming years as we establish Magners Irish Cider as a force within the International drinks market"

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