

Buster Plughole Care: The Big Clean-Up



Category
4.0 Packaging

Sub Category
4.3 Branded Other

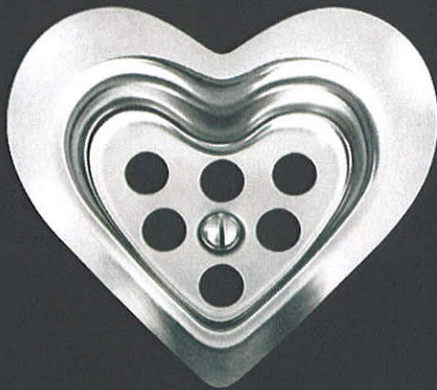
Client
Challs

Design Consultancy
Elmwood

Date
March 2009



Executive summary



You're a small Ipswich-based company who makes small bottles of sink and plughole cleaner. You moved from obscurity on supermarket shelves in 2004. You're now hoping to increase your sales and distribution. However, faced with a global recession and mega-brand competitors such as Domestos and Mr. Muscle, the marketplace isn't exactly beckoning.

In such an unwelcoming environment, how do you persuade more people to buy your products? Simple. Grab your USP - your products do separate jobs while others are all-purpose - and run with it.



In tough times, consumers look for products that really work because they can't afford to waste money. Specialist rather than generalist brands work better. By re-designing the packaging for both Buster's products, our aim was to get noticed for their specialist approach to plughole care.

The new designs were launched in January 2009, and by June sales were soaring.

Overall brand leader with

30%

market share

Brand leader

Buster has gone from obscurity in the plughole market to brand leader. (June to December 2009 by volume)

No.1

in both Tesco and ASDA

Increased trade share

With **41%** share in Tesco and **26%** in ASDA (June to December 2009 by volume)

13%

increase in volume sales

Increased volume

Sales volumes have increased by 13% in the last 6 months.

Executive summary

Original



1st time around



Won a Design Effectiveness Award in 2008

2nd time around



+42%

increased sales by volume

Increased sales

Bathroom plughole and sink treatment up by 42%

Increased distribution

From minimal UK distribution to fledgling export success. The Buster brand has begun to be sold internationally. This is quite an achievement in the face of stiff competition, downward pressure on pricing in the grocery sector and a troublesome economic climate.

8%

increase in value

(Between June and December 2009.
Like for like June to December 2008)

Increase in value

Buster is now a multimillion pound brand, closing in on a double digit value figure.

Both Unilever's Domestos and SC Johnson's Mr. Muscle were experiencing decline at the end of 2008, despite heavy above the line support.



Project overview



Our task:

Communicate Buster's unique and specialised approach to plughole care

As a highly effective product, there was no good reason for Buster not to trouble the bigger brands. Our job was to refresh the packaging and clarify Buster's USP – having a separate usage for their four principal products, where competitor products are all-purpose. Buster has two kitchen products: one is formulated to combat fat and grease, while the other is a 'maintenance' treatment. And two bathroom products: one to clear hair and soap, plus another 'maintenance' treatment. The aim was to get noticed for their specialised (rather than one-size-fits-all) approach to plughole care.



Description

Challs (Buster's parent company) is a small, Ipswich-based business. They began manufacturing cleaning products in the early 1990s. Since then, the Buster brand has come a long way. We first worked with them in 2004, which helped increase their supermarket listings. Sales increased and by 2008, they were ready for the next big push.

Project overview cont.

Overview of market

Buster was re-launched in March, 2009, when the global economy was still in recession. The cleaning product market had long been dominated by the likes of Unilever and SC Johnson. Yet at this point, sales of SC Johnson's Mr. Muscle and Unilever's Domestos had fallen by 27% and 22% (TNS 27th Dec 2008) respectively, despite plenty of advertising as of Dec 2008. Actively flying in the face of recession, by the end of 2009 sales of Buster had reached £8m, a total 13% increase in volume sales from the beginning of the year (from June to December 2009).

Project launch date

March 2009

Size of Design Budget

£16k

Outline of design solution

Buster was the only brand on the market with a definable plughole care system as opposed to all-purpose usage. As this was their biggest differentiator, we set to work defining this product system across the packs, and changing the product names to help consumers understand and navigate the range.

As Buster's packs are small, especially compared to competitor bottles, space was precious. To create more room for clearer, more confident messaging, we replaced the labels with shrink-wrapping. The use of shrink-wrap also increased the product's dynamic, 'premium' appearance. The result was a striking, contemporary product system and pack design that actively demonstrated its four key uses and benefits.

- 1 Shrink wrap
(more surface area for messaging)
- 2 More dynamic branding and layout
- 3 Clearer naming and benefits
- 4 Introduced the "test tick" device



At the time of re-launch Buster's main competitors were declining despite heavy ATL support. Buster sensed a weakness and leveraged their point of difference with a clear and unique customer proposition.

Summary of results

Overall brand leader with

30%

market share

Overall brand leader with 30% market share

It's fair to say that Buster have pretty much 'cleaned up'. Especially as, until 2004 when we first rebranded them, Buster was a complete unknown in the plughole market.

From minimal UK distribution to global success and no.1 in Tesco and ASDA

After only minimal distribution, Buster now has 41% trade share in Tesco and 26% in ASDA (based on June to December 2009 by volume) and has a widespread national and international distribution.

Distribution increased by 773 listings

Tesco	from	to
Bathroom Plug Unblocker	409	702
Kitchen Sink Treatment	248	346
Sainsbury's	from	to
Bathroom Plug Unblocker	467	557
Kitchen Sink Treatment	368	557
Morrisons	from	to
Bathroom Plug Unblocker	27	289
Kitchen Sink Treatment	352	375
Robert Dyas	from	to
Bathroom Plug Unblocker	90	90
Kitchen Sink Treatment	90	90
Waitrose	from	to
Bathroom Plug Unblocker	180	200
Kitchen Sink Treatment	180	200
Ocado	from	to
Bathroom Plug Unblocker	All 3 products	All 4 products
Kitchen Sink Treatment		
Wilkinson's	from	to
Bathroom Plug Unblocker	220	337
Kitchen Sink Treatment	229	265

13%

increase in volume sales

Since April 09, sales volume has grown an additional 13% based on June – December 2009 figures.

Summary of results cont.

Bathroom plughole and sink treatment sales up by

42%

June to December 2009

Kitchen plughole and sink treatment and sink up by

12%

June to December 2009

Confidence to invest

Intelligent design helped Buster succeed in 2004, which gave Challs the confidence to reinvest in design to create their on-pack product system.

Changes in consumer behaviour – Customers are getting the message

Buster are seeing increasing sales of their maintenance product, which shows that customers are getting the message that germs and odours can be avoided by regular plughole care and maintenance.

Factory investment

On the back of all this, Challs are now building a new factory in Ipswich, creating new jobs and more investment in the local economy. Now a truly international brand, Buster are also continuing to open up new markets in Europe and have just launched a 'professional' range for business customers.

“The new Chall’s factory is a great boon to our local economy, and is especially welcome in the current difficult economic climate. It will generate 5 new jobs, and provide stable employment for our local community”.

John Dugmore, Chief Executive of Suffolk Chamber

Research resources

Unlike Unilever or SC Johnson, Challs do not have significant marketing budgets. Their success was achieved without any other marketing support – no advertising, no direct mail and no poster campaign. Buster has made it to the top of the market by the packaging alone.

All statistics supplied and verified by TNS Data