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FMCGe News Article

An Ode to '76!

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An ode to '76: With the prospects of a long hot summer and the rise of nostalgic brands those in the drinks industry who have planned ahead should capitalise on out-of-home opportunities

By Andrew Tharme, Joint Managing Director, The Oxford Research Agency

The long hot summer of 1976 seemed eternal at the time and even longer thinking back. With the recent long range weather forecast that this summer will be long and hot, coupled with the current clamour for nostalgic brands, those in the drinks industry who have planned ahead should capitalise over the next few months.

The Oxford Research Agency has conducted a significant amount of NPD and Shopper research on the out-of-home market and suggests that those who have capitalised on a 'summer strategy' will benefit.

1. Have you targeted out-of-home usage occasions?

When the sun shines, consumers flock to gardens, parks, pools, pubs and beaches. Broadly, there are two overarching usage occasions: 'getting there' and 'being there'. 'Getting there' is the travelling involved – this summer, with fewer people going on holiday abroad, more will be heading to UK locations as soon as the clouds clear. Previous research conducted by The Oxford Research Agency shows that a significant amount of out-of-home purchase is made for the journey itself, usually by car – for kids and adults.

'Being there' includes: in the garden, BBQ's, picnics, at the park, at the beach etc. To really grab hold of the opportunities available, one needs to 'own the occasions'.

2. Have you worked with the out-of-home channels?

Recent research shows that the frequency of visits to local convenience stores, grocers, petrol forecourts is on the increase as the public buy fewer products but more often. This will be accentuated during a long hot summer for purchases for immediate travel and outdoor consumption. Therefore, opportunities to maximise retail opportunities with out-of-home channels are significant. This means that those who have concentrated on achieving the best space in the chillers, targeting promotions at outdoor usage, cross-promotions with complimentary categories, locating products and POS to encourage impulse purchases by grabbing attention in consumers' traffic footprint should benefit the most.

Of course, one cannot forget the multiple grocers as they will have both front-of-store impulse ranges and stock up ranges. If the consumer public believes the weather forecast, stocking up on multipacks and large serve SKUs for the continual summer will also prevail so as to maximise value for money and 'be prepared' for the outdoors.

3. Can you act now and renovate brands to fit the mood?

Time is short and summer is nearly here. Whilst most product reviews take a minimum of 4-5 months to implement a long NPD process will miss the summer window. At this late stage are there any opportunities within the current brand portfolio where brands will fit with the double whammy outdoors/nostalgia mood this summer? Tick *both* big boxes and BINGO. Whether to bring back heritage brands is about knowing why they worked (or didn't work) last time around. Many successful brands back in business now were unique in their category at the time and, arguably, didn't need to be withdrawn but simply fell out of marketing favour. Less risky, and quicker, will be to renovate and/or reposition existing brands. The Oxford Research Agency is currently spending a lot of time helping manufacturers to renovate ranges and reposition brands via consumer research.

4. Have you chosen the right research approach?

Researching what will work in the out-of-home market needs a more focused and bespoke approach than simply replicating traditional research techniques. This is particularly true for leveraging brands with *both* a nostalgia *and* outdoors theme.

Here at The Oxford Research Agency, we have a totally holistic and bespoke suite of research approaches that combine NPD and Shopper research methodologies and commercial expertise. Add to this that we are one of the fastest and best value research agencies in the industry then we believe we are well-placed to help you re-capture the mood of '76!

To find out how The Oxford Research Agency can help you this and every summer, please contact Andrew Tharme (andrew.tharme@tora.co.uk or call 01865 728272 / 07970 962091).