effie Awards United Kingdom

2023 Effie Winner



Unilever | STUDIO POWERED BY OLIVER

POT noodle

Hello

We've pulled together some of the most interesting and inspiring 2023 cases to bring to life what an Effie award-winning entry looks like. We hope that they provide some helpful pointers for those of you tasked with writing submissions for this year's awards.

To show you how to win big with a non-traditional campaign here's ***Lost the Pot*** **– Pot Noodle by U-Studio/OLIVER** (entered in the Social Media category); a brave, bold strategy brought to life via a laugh-out-loud funny activation that remained 100% true to the brand.

For more information and advice to help you write your best entry and maximise your chances of winning visit our Awards website.

If you have any questions at any stage of the entry process, please ask and we'll be happy to help. Just email effieuk@effie.org

We wish you all the best in this year's Effie Awards UK!

Effie UK



Executive Summary

The Challenge
Re-launch a new “Lost the Pot” Noodle when consumers had already tried and hated the old version (it was rubbish).

The Insight
We’d failed, publicly. Pot Noodle’s audience like nothing more than seeing ‘experts’ taken down a peg. We’d embrace that.

The Strategic Idea/build
Eat humble pie to gain attention.

Bringing the Strategy to Life
No longer Crap...Now with flavour.

The Results

- Market share 3%to7%
- Y1 Sales target achieved 6 months
- Penetration ^21%
- Incremental revenue ROI2.6:1
- Organic reach 1.5m, engagement rate 22.7%

Why is this entry an outstanding example of effective marketing in this Effie entry category? This campaign played to the strengths of social media and community management on a low budget to deliver business impact, not just social success.

Paid and organic social activity was the only activity in market. We increased household penetration by 21% [Kantar], delivered a sustained 50% increase in sales, a 38% increase in market share in our chosen retailer Asda, [Nielsen] and a strong organic engagement rate of 22.7% in our social channels [Sprinklr]. With an overall revenue ROI of 2.6:1 [Unilever].

Section 1: Challenge, Context & Objectives



1A. Before your effort began, what was the state of the brand's business and the overall category in which it competes? What was the strategic challenge for your business? Provide context on the degree of difficulty of this challenge.

The original creators of the brand obviously couldn't conceive of a future without pots, but this was the market we wanted to tap into – block noodle. Without the same portability or convenience as a Pot Noodle (you need your own pot to cook it in) this category is used more for in home consumption, and typically bought in bulk and at a lower price point.

Dominated by Batchelor's Super Noodles, our first attempt to enter the market in 2021 with Lost the Pot V1 had performed poorly - receiving vocal and very negative feedback from those who tried it – with an average review rating of less than 2/5 on retailer sites.

"The vegetable one tasted like garbage water"

"Chicken one tasted like puke"

"They were absolutely awful! Put them out for my seagull pals and they too spat them out."

"I used to live on these things and now the mere thought of eating one fills me with anxiety."



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOD4aVGpLos

By 2022, Lost the Pot was in danger of being de-listed from sale in all major grocers.

Our commercial objectives were shaped by this context:

1) Market share increase of block noodle from 3% - 5% by 2023
2) Incremental turnover value increase
3) By proving success, secure additional listings in other retailers

1B. What were the Business, Marketing and Campaign/Activity objectives that you set to address your challenge? What were the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set against each objective? How did they change overtime? Provide specific numbers/percentages for each and benchmarks wherever possible.

Business Objective

Market share increase of block noodle from 3% in 2021-5% by 2023.

Rationale

In the instant noodle category, Block noodles (dominated by Batchelors) were seeing higher growth than Pot noodles. (Dominated by us).
We needed to get a foothold in this fast-growing category. Benchmarking was based on prior product launches in adjacent categories.

Measurement

Nielsen, Retailer and Unilever sales analysis

Marketing Objective

Penetration 15%.

Rationale

In the instant noodle category, Block noodles (dominated by Batchelors) were seeing higher growth than Pot noodles. (Dominated by us).
We needed to get a foothold in this fast-growing category. Benchmarking for target penetration was based on prior product launches in adjacent categories that achieved similar market share growth.

Measurement

Nielsen, Kantar, Retailer and Unilever sales analysis

Campaign Objective

Drive target audience reach and engagement using paid and organic media.
KPI 20% TA reach, engagement rate above benchmark (3%).

Rationale
Driving mental availability is key to grow penetration in any FMCG category. Given our budget, 20% target audience reach was a stretch but achievable.
Our normal nutrition engagement benchmark was 3%.

Measurement
We used Sprinklr and platform social analytics in our regular reporting, this campaign would be no different.

Data sources Section1

- Nielsen 13th August 2022. LTP share of block noodle sub-category in ASDA last 4 weeks vs MAT.
- Nielsen 13th August 2022 LTP rate of sale in ASDA new vs old products average across the three SKU's.
- Kantar block noodle penetration data 4th September 2022
- Sprinklr, Social platform analytics and results
- Rival IQ, Social media category benchmarks
- Mindshare, media performance data
- Unilever Sales data
- Outsiders Insight, Working class research

Section 2: Strategy: Insights & Strategic Idea



2A. Define the target audience(s) you were trying to reach and explain why it was/they were relevant to the brand and the challenge.

The failure of our 2021 product had left us with the following legacy challenges:

- We could not re-brand – this would not be cost-effective, and we did not have the budget
- We could not rely on significant paid investment to buy reach – our A&P budget was slim, reflecting the 'last chance' nature of our initiative
- We could not change our audience (category buyers) as they were essential to drive sufficient volume to avoid delisting – we needed to appeal to the same groups we'd already alienated

Category buyers are typically time poor British parents, families and workers, often lower income, but not always.

Lost the Pot is a quick, no-nonsense convenient and tasty snack. You just add (or stir in) to boiling water. It's filling and requires minimal prep time.

We simply needed them to add Lost the Pot to their repertoire as another handy option to feed the kids or themselves. Our major challenge was that many had already tried the previous version of Lost the Pot and disliked it, vocally, with an average review rating of less than 2/5 on retailer sites.

"The vegetable one tasted like garbage water"
"Chicken one tasted like puke"
"They were absolutely awful! Put them out for my seagull pals and they too spat them out."
"I used to live on these things and now the mere thought of eating one fills me with anxiety."

2B. Describe your insight(s) here. Explain the thinking that led you to your insight(s).

Our core audience of typically lower income, time poor working Brits appreciate humour, and they also appreciate honesty from big companies.

Time and time again this audience has been screwed over or outright lied to by politicians, big business or other authority figures – meaning they view the world with a healthy dose of scepticism, particularly enjoying experts being taken down a peg. [*Outsiders Insight*]

In our favour, the new product was straight up delicious. In testing, 95% of consumers preferred the taste of our new product vs the old.

We didn't have anywhere to hide, nor did we want to.

2C. What was the strategic idea or build followed from your insights that enabled you to pivot from challenge to solution for your brand and customer?

Our previous product was awful.

The new one was good.

Our audience hate bullshitters.

We had no money to buy attention (or credibility) with scale.

So we'd earn it by coming clean.

There'd been a trend of brand 'apologies' a few years back - famously Carlsberg had 'apologised' for poor product quality with premium, exquisitely shot, subtle homages to Nordic noir. KFC too had finally admitted their fries weren't tasty.

But we'd go one further.

To do this, our strategy was to first hold the so-called marketing 'experts' (us) responsible for the failure first time around to account, as there's nothing our audience likes more than to see 'experts' being taken down. [*Outsiders Insight*]

Then, we'd parody the sort of saccharine, recessive marketing claims our audience are deluged with. We'd own our mistake in the hope they'd give us and our now delicious noodles a second chance. Owning our mistake needed a creative leap to take us away from the conventions of brand apologies.

We'd celebrate the fact that 'Lost the Pot' was …

"NO LONGER CRAP…

NOW WITH FLAVOUR".

Section 3:
Bringing the Strategy & Idea to Life



3A. Describe the key elements of your plan that activated your strategy. Outline any components that were active in the effort e.g. CRM programme, customer experience, pricing changes as well as promotions and communications.

Our campaign used digital media channels only across Meta and Twitter (X) properties and our own website. This was the only activity running at the time either for Lost the Pot Noodle or the Pot Noodle Masterbrand. We activated through our existing social community channels of Instagram, Facebook and Twitter (X).

In store we had no budget for paid promotion, simply bringing the new product to the shelves.

3B. Outline the key building blocks of the creative executions for your main marketing vehicles e.g. endline, call-to-actions and format choices etc.

To drive reach we needed to stand out creatively everywhere our budget could take us. For our audience this was primarily static formats in Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (X). We'd also engage our active and passionate community through these same channels using our content and community management team.

We also needed to share pack image and range to ensure consumers could easily make the connection with this relatively new product and format.

And we needed to be noticed it amidst the sea of pack shots that already deluge our audience. Which meant being very single minded. And blunt.



3C. How did you bring your strategy to your target market? What was the rationale behind your channel strategy/approach? Explain how the elements worked together to drive results.

Our campaign ran in two phases.

The first consisted of a public apology to our fans as the new product hit the shelves through our social channels made by "Head of Workplace Flavour Disasters" Jerry Nöhdellberg which accumulated a whopping 65k engagement in 14 days. We boosted this with paid once we saw it was kicking off, but the majority of reach was organic.

This was followed up by a series of leaked emails one which included receiving an OOO response from our "Head of Flavour" Steve, (who we dubbed Annual Steve) as well as a website refresh.

We also carried out fake consumer research groups again shared via social, that indicated people did not like the taste of cardboard, sharing our conclusion that after extensive research and data collection, Lost the Pot Inc. had an epiphany – people wanted food to taste of stuff.

We then launched phase two: Lost the Pot Noodles, Now with Flavour, promoting our core message in digital and social display channels, and taking up the bulk of our paid media budget.

We used our community management team to share our 'revolutionary' strategy with the world. We reached out to "bland" brands such as dried pastas, Weetabix and so on, suggesting they try adding flavour. We used our community management team to create a conversational tone for this content, investing to boost these posts too.

We created classic HR inspired posters illustrating our "360-approach to flavour", alongside pack shots and promoted them through paid digital/ social formats.

We essentially crushed failure and sprinkled it all over our noodles, and social media. Turning Lost the Pot Noodles into a success – finally.

3D. If relevant, include and explain any important changes to the creative work and channel plans during the campaign.

Our combined brand, creative, community management and media team identified top performing posts and other content through the campaign then redeployed budget in flight to drive greater reach.

This was enabled by Unilever's unique DMC structure that blends agency, brand teams and Unilever channel experts in cross functional project teams who're able to respond at the speed of culture.

Data sources Section 3

- Nielsen 13th August 2022 LTP rate of sale in ASDA new vs old products average across the three SKU's.
- Kantar block noodle penetration data 4th September 2022
- Sprinklr, Social platform analytics and results
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Section 4: Results



4A. How do you know it worked? Explain why these results are significant for the brand's business.

Our campaign was the only marketing activity running at the time, either for Lost the Pot or the wider Pot Noodle brand.

Business impact:

- Share of block noodle market increased by 38% in Asda during the campaign, taking us to an overall market share of 7% - smashing our 2-year target *
- Over the year to 31st December from campaign launch, we more than doubled monthly sales from our lows in in the months prior to launch.
- In the immediate aftermath of the campaign Kantar reported a 21% increase in penetration for the product
- On the back of this success, we achieved additional listings.

Marketing Reach and engagement:

- 295k total engagements across Meta and Twitter, on paid and organic posts which include likes, shares, saves and comments.
- Organic Reach: 1.5M
- Organic engagement rate: 22.7%, significantly above our benchmark of 3%
- Fantastic community engagement and feedback:
  "They have too much flavour now"
  "If the marketing these past few days is anything to go by, I don't think I'll need to eat anything else for the rest of my life"
  "Pot Noodle wins marketing."
  "Your marketing team deserve a raise"
  "Probably the best marketing ever for a mistake any company has ever done"

Overall, our activity had a healthy incremental revenue ROI figure of 2.6:1. This is just based on short term sales data, and does not include long term effects [Unilever calculation based on monthly sales averages prior to campaign launch and post campaign launch]

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Measurement

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List Result
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Context
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List Result
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List Result
Organic Reach: 1.5M
Organic engagement rate: 22.7%, significantly above our benchmark of 3%

4B. Marketing rarely works in isolation. Outside of your effort, what else in the marketplace could have affected the results of this case - positive or negative?

- Societal or Economic Events (e.g. changes in economic, political, social factors)
- Public relations

Explain the influence (or lack of influence) of the factors you selected.

The campaign took place within the context of a deep cost of living crisis in the UK, exacerbated by the impact of the war in Ukraine on global fuel and commodities crises.

This will have driven overall category expansion and penetration as block noodles present an affordable and delicious meal. However our market share has been shown to increase as a result of the campaign and relaunch, so we're confident we outperformed our competitors in this moment.

Data sources Section4

- Nielsen 13th August 2022 LTP rate of sale in ASDA new vs old products average across the three SKU's.
- Kantar block noodle penetration data 4th September 2022
- Sprinklr, Social platform analytics and results
- Rival IQ, Social media category benchmarks
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Contact Effie

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR ENTRY

For any questions regarding the entry process, materials, categories, rules, etc., contact: effieuk@effie.org . You can find the Entry Kit, Entry Form templates and other useful guidance at https://marketing.effie.org/effie-awards-united-kingdom-2024-1 .

CASE DATABASE & SUBSCRIPTIONS

The purpose of the case database is to educate about effective marketing and to showcase the companies and individuals creating effective work to enhance learning in our industry. Take a look at what the Effie case database has to offer here. For more information email our dedicated team on subscriptions@effie.org.

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EFFIE INDEX

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