

Breaking Through In a Low Interest Category

Summary:

Lemi Shine, a family-owned Texas company, had developed a premium quality dish detergent to complement their dishwashing booster product. But the brand was struggling to gain share from Cascade, Finish and other marketing giants. The company was suffering overall sales declines and was in danger of losing shelf space in critical retail channels including Kroger and Wal-Mart. We were hired to reverse these trends with marketing and advertising.

Through investigation of the company, competitors and prospective target audiences, we identified a simple but powerful insight to leverage our tiny budget. By focusing narrowly on a particular geography and target audience psychology, we were able to connect with a new audience and improve brand awareness and trial.

Creative expression flowed naturally from our strategic focus. The work we put in market, supported by a media investment of just \$470,000 (February through May 2015), helped reverse sales declines. Lemi Shine has since experienced solid growth. Visibility has improved and retailers are more interested in the brand than ever before.

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1. Strategic challenge:

The dishwashing detergent business is insanely competitive. Giant brands like Cascade, Finish and Ecover spend millions of dollars every year on marketing and advertising. Consumers are inundated with promotions, product messages, techno-claims, eco-appeals, TMs and promotions. This makes it difficult for a little brand to break through. Lemi Shine was suffering sales declines and was in danger of losing shelf space and facings at Wal-Mart and Kroger. Unfortunately, those two retailers accounted for nearly 65% of the brand's retail sales.

Searching for connections between people and brands in the category, we quickly identified pockets of genuine interest in "green" products, but we couldn't quite go there in messaging. We also understood the category key driver to be "efficacy" but realized it would be tedious and expensive to develop claims that might or might not break through. We needed to find a new way to establish a connection between people and Lemi Shine.

2. Approach

Through passive listening and secondary research we had a good sense for how competitors were positioned in the market. Premium brands tended to focus on product efficacy and performance proof points. Green brands brought a gentler design sensibility and provided an emotional appeal. We wanted to know what potential target audiences thought of Lemi Shine in the context of these other brands.

To gain understanding, we recruited heavy category users to participate in focus groups designed to explore the purchase decision. Participants were asked to describe their own purchase drivers and motivations and to react to a mock shelf experience featuring Lemi Shine products versus competitive products. We went in searching for clues for how to break through and induce trial.

3. Insight

At first, qualitative research results appeared bleak. Creative teams and digital content developers were discouraged to hear that most people simply don't care about the category; they assume all the major brands work pretty well and don't see the need to use multiple products like boosters and rinses in the first place. With such low category interest, it seemed impossible to generate a connection capable of changing behavior and generating trial.

But as the planner persevered, they observed that while most people did in fact not care and could not be bothered to think about or try a new brand, there was a tiny minority (approximately one-tenth) that did care, and actually cared *a lot*. Further digging revealed that these people were unusually fastidious in multiple ways and even proud of what others might describe as obsessive-compulsive habits and standards of cleanliness. They expressed interest in trying Lemi Shine in

pursuit of superior results. Faint streaks and smudges may not bother most people, but they really agitate a select minority.

4. Strategic focus

The best and most obvious connection between people and Lemi Shine turned out to be a shared motivation to achieve super squeaky-clean dishes. We decided to restrict our media investments to hard-water (heavy mineral content) geographies where streaks and smudges were likely to be most visible and problematic. We chose to focus communication efforts upon those with unusually strong perfectionist instincts and decided to forget about the rest.

Category competitors spend millions of dollars communicating what the product is, what it's got inside and how it works. We decided instead to focus on *who it's for*. We surmised that, if we could become the favorite brand of those with the highest standards and expectations, the rest of the market would follow.

CREATIVE BRIEF: FOR THOSE WITH A HIGHER STANDARD OF CLEAN

5. Creative idea

"Clean-Freak Clean"

Lemi Shine is created for Clean Freaks by Clean Freaks, because we understand that there are people in this world who demand a higher level of clean. Who refuse to settle for cloudy dishes, spotted glasses and cruddy cutlery. We'll stop at nothing short of Clean Freak Clean because we're Clean Freaks too.

6. Engagement plan

After identifying suitable target geographies, we created a "Neat Freak" media target using MRI markers. These were folks we judged to have unusually high standards for clean. Our strategy was to get on their radar, induce trial and ultimately promote brand evangelism.

	Aware >	Compare >	Try >	Buy >	Evangelize
Digital Advertising/KPI Responsibility	Cast a Wide Net/ Targeted Hard Water States, Competitive, Motherhood, Do-It-Yourself	Retargeting and Look-alike, Competitive Conquesting	Drive to Site for Coupon Download	No Online Purchase Opportunity	None
Search/KPI Responsibility	Get in the Conversation/Targeted Keywords & Phrases to Hard Water States	Targeted Competitive Keywords	Targeted Coupon Queries, Competitive Coupons	No Online Purchase Opportunity	None
Social/KPI Responsibility	Deliver Brand Personality/Targeted Hard Water States, Competitive, Motherhood, Do-It-Yourself	Retargeted Off of Site Visits/Link Page Post Ads	Coupon Links/ Facebook Offers	No Online Purchase Opportunity	Share Your Story/"Clean Freak of the Month" & Valentine's Card

7. Brand experience

Shelf Talkers

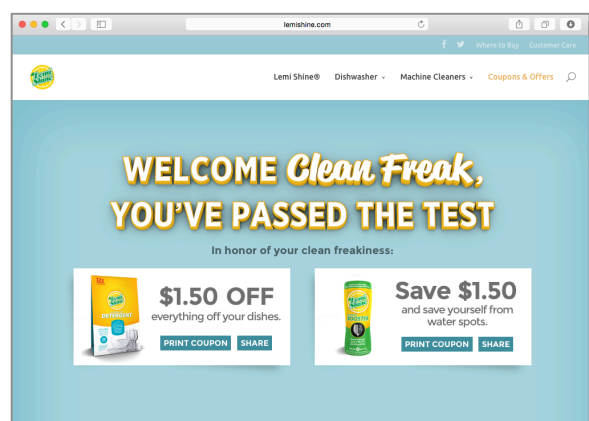
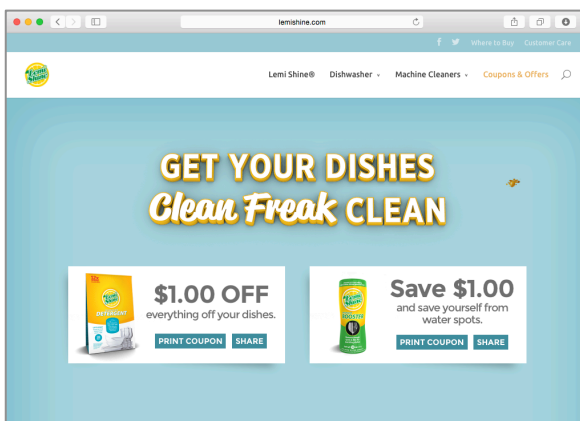


Banner Ads



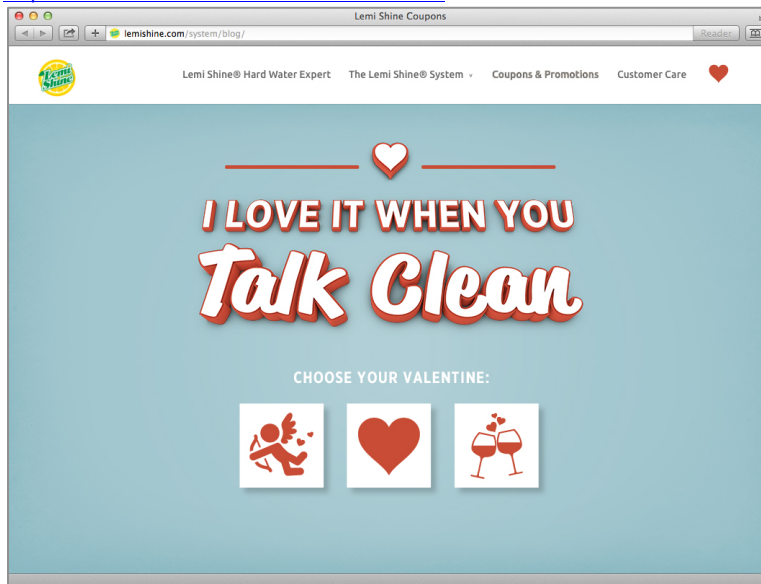
Website Coupon Page: "Clean Freak Test"

<http://lemishine.com/system/coupons-offers/>



Valentine's Day Campaign Site

<http://cleanfreak.lemishine.com/cleantalk/intro>



Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/lemishine>



8. Performance

We established a successful new connection between people and Lemi Shine. Since the campaign launched, Lemi Shine has experienced a 300% growth in site traffic, and Facebook fans tripled in three months. Social engagement rates are averaging 4%, at least twice the industry average.

People who proudly identify as clean freaks have united around the brand to exchange dishwashing advice and share tips for keeping things - dishwashers, sinks, ovens and just about anything that gets dirty - super squeaky clean.

Most importantly, our campaign helped reverse a downward trend in sales and helped mitigate pricing and distribution pressure from the channel. Sales overall are up. And retailers are feeling better about future prospects for the brand.

