ALTOIDS: the CURIOUSLY STRONG case study

04.24.12
ALTOIDS: CURIOUSLY STRONG SUCCESS

- over 300% growth in the first five years
- sold for $US 1 Billion in 2005
- still the category leader
- a decade of winning top industry awards
A BRAND POISED TO SUCCEED

Unique product + unique place & time = unique niche
Was gaining traction with “thought leaders”
Gaining buzz and badge value
SO WHAT DID WE DO? first, what we DIDN’T do:

- We didn’t think ourselves stupid
- We didn’t apply a lot of group-think
- We didn’t ignore our gut instincts
- We didn’t fear experimentation
What we did: We pulled the truth right off the tin.
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We made “CURIously STRONG” our strategy, our mantra, our mission statement.
WE USED LIMITATIONS TO OUR ADVANTAGE

We had no money, but that forced discipline
We could only afford limited media, but that forced simplicity and smarts
We had few resources, but that kept chefs out of the kitchen
Nobody at Leo Burnett wanted to work on it. It was an odd little breath mint not many people had heard of. The budget was tiny. There would be no television shoot.
We worked with some very sophisticated marketers at Kraft. But we tenaciously maintained the courage to be stupid.
Art director Mark Faulkner and writer Steffan Postaer were just screwing around and they figured it out.
'NICE ALTOIDS'
THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS™
NICE ALTOIDS HAD A NICE RESPONSE

People immediately began stealing the outdoor
It became a gay icon. huh?
By popular demand, more posters were created
THE AMAZING
ALT OIDS
THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS
HEADLINES WERE WRITTEN TO GIVE VOICE

How do you start a conversation? You dialogue, you provoke!
The ugly comedian / hot girlfriend theory of humor.
MINTS SO STRONG THEY COME IN A METAL BOX.

The Curiously Strong Mints™

Made in Great Britain
OUR MINTS CAN BEAT UP YOUR MINTS.

THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS
REFRESHERS YOUR BREATH WHILE YOU SCREAM.

THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS®

The Original Celebrated Curiously Strong Peppermints®
YOU MIGHT WANT TO PRACTICE ON OTHER MINTS FIRST.

THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS
LUCKILY NOT AVAILABLE IN EXTRA STRENGTH.

THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS™
WE BEGAN TO WRITE THE UNWRITTEN RULES:

1) Is it Curious, is it Strong.
2) Affect OR Effect
3) “And now for something completely different”
4) Something old, something new, something borrowed...
5) We are An Equal Opportunity Offender
6) Extending: Curiously Strong and __________
7) And occasionally, Curiously Wrong
“PEOPLE SHOULD ALWAYS KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT, BUT NEVER EXPECT WHAT THEY SEE.”
RULE ONE: IS IT CURIOUSLY STRONG?
IRON MINT!
THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS
RULE TWO: AFFECT VS. EFFECT
RULE THREE: “AND NOW, FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT”
RULE FOUR: SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW, SOMETHING BORROWED...
NOW THIS WON'T HURT A BIT.

THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS
DYNO MINT!
THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS®
THE MINTS WITH THE KUNG FU GRIP.

The Curiously Strong Mints

ALTOLDS®

The Original Celebrated Curiously Strong Peppermints

Made in Great Britain

Mints [www.altoids.com]
RULE FIVE:
WE ARE AN “EQUAL OPPORTUNITY OFFENDER”
USE ONLY IN SELF-DEFENSE
THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS
SHE'D BEEN HURT BEFORE, BUT NOT LIKE THIS.

THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS®
BUT SOMETIMES, EVEN WE GO TOO FAR
(a brief side trip to the island of lost toys...)

MY ALTOIDS ARE KILLING ME!

THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS
CAN'T DECIDE?
THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS
THEN, KRAFT INTRODUCED LINE EXTENSIONS
THEY APPEAR TO BE DIVIDING!
THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS
“IT’S OVER” THEY SAID.
BUT IT FORCED A NEW RULE:
RULE SIX: WINTERGREEN ALTOIDS = CURIOUSLY STRONG & COLD
ALTÖIDS WINTERGREEN
THE 'CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS'
SHRINKAGE MAY OCCUR
THE CURIOSITY STRONG MINTS
RULE SIX: CINNAMON ALTOIDS = CURIOUSLY STRONG & HOT
COLD AND LONELY?

WWW.TOOHOT.COM
WE REALIZED WE HAD TO
push into other media
THEN, KRAFT INTRODUCED A NON-MINT
BUT WE WENT BACK TO THE RULES.

RULE SIX: ALTOIDS SOURS = CURIOUSLY STRONG & UHH... FRUITY
BUT SUCH A TRANSFORMATION WARRANTS AN INTRODUCTION
- or -
“How I learned to love focus groups.”
“I’m not sure if I *want* my Altoids to change.”
The proposition: Your Altoids are changing.
It’s a little surprising, but exciting, too.
“Altoids needed to leverage the equity of “curious strength,” but differentiate it slightly for their new “Sours” product. To create a new category and new usage occasions for the brand, Altoids targeted trend-defining hipsters who tend to generate buzz about new products and ideas.”
Offline: fringe print, hipster out-of-home, on-premise, highly targeted spot cable, cinema.

Online: destination site, pass-along.
IT'S NORMAL FOR YOUR ALToids TO CHANGE.

www.40eses23.com
SOON, YOUR ALTOIDS WILL BLOSSOM.
MY ALT OIDS ARE CHANGING
AND I'M OK WITH THAT.

www.gonesour.com
KEEP THE HEALTHY IN HEALTHY CURiosity
Results: 500,000+ unique visitors to gonesour.com within first four weeks.

Target’s #3 font–end SKU within first four weeks.

One of the highest–velocity launches in Kraft history.

Armloads of shiny advertising trophies.
The Creative Brief.
We want _____ to _____ because_____. 
CREATIVE BRIEF

What do we want the advertising to do?

Who are we talking to, and what insights do we have about them?

How do we want them to describe this brand—how would they talk about its essence and personality?

What is the single most important thing we want them to take out of this advertising?

How can we make this believable?

Is there anything else worth thinking about that might help us get to great creative?

Are there any executional mandates?
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Homework: write the Creative Brief.