



Headspace Marketing Inc. and Weston Bakeries Ltd. win Bronze 2006 CASSIES

Executive Summary of the Case:

"Many CMOs feel that brands follow irrevocable life stages: they are born, mature, plateau, and eventually decline and die. Generally, companies that witness declining brands in their portfolios employ the "best business practice" of cutting marketing investments in them, and reallocating the dollars on growth brands instead."

Revitalizing, Rejuvenating and Reformulating a Struggling Brand (brandchannel.com)

There are times when a brand is more than an asset in a brand portfolio. Such as when the brand name happens to be the founding family's name and one that has been associated with the bakery business since 1882. In this case, letting the brand wither away and eventually die was simply not an option.

The bread market in Quebec is dominated by two key players; Weston Bakeries/Gadoua and Multi-marques (a division of Maple Leaf/Canada Bread). While some brands such as Country Harvest and D'Italiano compete nationally, most brands are local. The Weston brand is only marketed as a brand of bread in the Quebec market and is used as a corporate brand in the rest of Canada. Despite several recent attempts at reversing three consecutive years of declining sales via advertising and promotions, volume and share as well as key brand attributes continued to erode.

Along with the different competitive landscape, the bread market in Quebec is also characterized by unique category dynamics. While Canadians have generally increased their consumption of whole wheat and whole grain breads in recent years, Quebecers have a strong preference for white bread which represents a third of the bread market. They love its taste and texture. In fact, the texture of white bread is referred to as "*moelleux*" by both consumers and manufacturers.

This paper describes how, following years of steady decline, the Weston brand was revitalized via a new brand positioning, a new product formulation and a new advertising campaign. It demonstrates how advertising had a direct and immediate impact on sales despite aggressive competitive activity. It also shows how it created a solid foundation for long-term growth allowing the brand to eventually expand into new segments and categories.

New Weston *Moelleux* bread, a white bread with the goodness of whole wheat bread, was launched on January 5, 2006. Rather than take the safer route and introduce a line extension, *Moelleux Plus* was launched as a product improvement of the existing Weston white bread. As a fresh product sold via direct-store-distribution, results can be assessed quickly – usually within three to four weeks. Weston *Moelleux Plus*' sales surged to an unprecedented level of 228K units for the week of January 30, 2006, only four weeks after the start of advertising, representing a 128% increase over sales for the same week the previous year. Importantly, sales of *Moelleux Plus* remained at double the previous year's level throughout the six months Business Result Period from January 2006 to the end of June, 2006.

We placed a major bet by investing three times the traditional support levels to revitalize the Weston brand in Quebec. From an ROI standpoint, this campaign most definitely paid for itself delivering over \$5MM in sales. In fact, it did so in four months versus our 24 months payback objective.