

Glenmeadie



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Glenmeadie is a Scotch Whiskey distillery whose reputation of excellence comes from their long-term presence in the market and consistent delivery of quality products. Glenmeadie's spirits have received several gold medals (7 just this season) in both national and international competitions. The company is now in the middle of a huge marketing campaign, organizing events in 25 cities and offering a new program (the Tastemakers programme) which has been medalled by Corporate Events, a magazine dedicated to customer programs.

Additionally, in an effort to make the customers "feel a more personal connection with the brand", Glenmeadie developed its website - offering new interactive capabilities - invested in software for label and card printing (which is handed out at the previously mentioned marketing events), set a local customer information phone service and created a loyalty card program. It has also had an event-based program (email marketing and coupons for anniversaries and birthdays) and a quarterly newsletter which have been ongoing for several years.

Despite the brand's reputation, age and tradition, the company is relying on its marketing efforts to increase sales, which indeed have never been better. Ellis Cameron (master distiller) expresses his disapproval of the new strategy taking over product development and suggests separately bottling each cask of whiskey. This would allow each label to be extremely detailed in terms of date, production process, number of bottles from the same cask, etc. meaning each bottle would be part of a limited set.

When you have a product that is clearly superior, do you focus on showing your product is superior or do you bond with your customers? (i. e. product-oriented vs. customer-oriented strategy) During these events, people get to taste the products, which is very good, but does that make them potential customers or are they drinking because it's free? Is the return on investment of these expensive marketing coups worth it? Ellis's idea, (single cask bottling scale) would be hugely expensive and only really expand the market to the true connoisseurs since the added value of the product would only speak to amateurs.

For this idea to be interesting to market (i. e. profitable), Glenmeadie should ask itself: who is the current market? If it is a good old, traditional, quality brand with a reputation of excellence, it is highly possible that these connoisseurs are either already in Glenmeadie's market or in a competitor's and aren't going to budge from it, since they have had the opportunity of choosing their favourite brand a long time ago. The question is not whether the marketing campaigns work. It's how long they're going to work.

It is expectable for the first season to make sales skyrocket. But over time chances are they will stabilize at a lower level, maybe even start decreasing. However, if the product is better, it may take some time to recoup from the investment but high quality stays high quality, and in the long haul, it seem to be a more profitable solution over punctual marketing events, especially if these regularly go over budget. On the one hand, there is the existing product and its marketing campaign. Both are sound and have been awarded.

The identified issues are Bob's concern over ROI and Ellis's doubts of the efficiency of those marketing efforts. On the other there is Ellis's idea that would allow Glenmeadie to turn expertise into a marketable value, with the one hiccup that it would be pricey to set into motion. Right now, front end is working fine. But it is taking away the budget from product development. The thing is, in a world where people are used to loyalty programs, email marketing, gifts, etc. can you really afford not to bond with your customers?

Also, it has to be kept in mind that product innovations can be matched, when customer-brand relationships cannot. That is why balancing front end and product development in terms of innovation seems to be the best strategy. Glenmeadie is currently distributing printing software for gift cards, labels, etc. It is good that people who attend the events leave with something from Glenmeadie to keep the brand in mind. A good strategy would be to develop this idea but with proper targeting to the high-end market (e. . stylized business cards) which would fit into whiskey tastings better.

As a conclusion, my advice would be to prioritize the front-end side of the business as it will help establish and differentiate the brand in the customer's mind, allowing a relationship to be built between the product and the consumer. As a long-term strategy I would work on Ellis's idea to refine the product so that once the relationship is strong enough, the brand continues to surprise and please its customers.