

Brand portfolio analysis of clinique and radox



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There used to be a time when the sole purpose of taking a shower was to get clean. It was an environment centric mode of cleansing that required much lesser water and was an efficient, quick and easy alternative.

The wave to time, however, decided that this outlook was too simple and turned showering into an 'experience'. It became the thing about luxury; a way to pamper oneself and a method to enhance our 'private time' with a mind spinning range of toiletries to help us along our way. The products like shower gels, lotions, and specialty soaps offer a 'spa like' experience. The bar of soap that used to clean your stinky spots now has been replaced with a loofah and a bottle of aromatherapy shower gel.

It has become a standalone industry with more competitors than the car manufacturers in the market!

The following report endeavours to analyse the product category of bath gels in the industry by doing a brand study of two of the prominent market players - Clinique and Radox. It also suggests improvements in brand image of Radox to make it more successful.

Liquid Soap Market Overview

Liquid soaps, bath gels, and lotions have created a special position for themselves by benefits they offer over the conventional soap bar. The benefits include convenience of use; they tend to hold scents longer than bar soaps, lathering is better with bath gels than with bar soaps. It is a general perception that liquid products are a better option for providing relaxation, energy enhancement. Also, these are considered to be cleaner than bar soaps. Bar soaps are often used on the body parts directly. And, they save

the user from the not so pleasant site of hair on the soap bar. Add to that the fancy herbal & natural ingredients that keep making their way into these liquid products and you get a worthy competitor for the good old soap bar.

As a result, the Liquid soap market (made up of body washes, bath gels & lotions) has steadily shown an annual increase pattern of over 4%; while the bar soap market is at the losing end of this share.

However, a very important factor to take into account is that an average bar of soap costs 28 cents per ounce and an average ounce of body wash or shower gel may cost as high as 55 cents. In other words, it costs 16 cents per use for bath gel while only 5 cents for traditional bar soap. Therefore, the market for soap bars is still strong and will remain so and liquid soap marketers have to know to their specific target audience.

Analysis of Clinique Brand

In the year 1967, Vogue magazine (American edition) published an article titled ' Can Great Skin Be Created?' It challenged the age old notion that the skin was a gift of the birth. Estée Lauder's granddaughter brought this article to her attention and a year later, the brand Clinique premiered which truly brought a revolution to people's perception with regard to their skin.

Since its launch, Clinique has been recognized world-wide for its customer centric approach and the revolutionary product launches it has made time & again.

It is one of the few brands that have made their name by deeds and not talks. All its products are tested by experts before introduction in the market.

It's almost a tradition at Clinique. Thereafter, there is extensive allergy tests were every single formula is subject to a very accurate and stringent test that involves whopping 7000+ person times. The products are certified Appropriate for people of all ages and all skin types.

If the products are the best, so are the customer services. The brand takes its visual image very seriously. As a result, one will always find spotless service counters, professional beauticians in their white robes, sophisticated and yet simple packaging and advertising styles.

The product categories offered by Clinique include skin care; make up, fragrance, sun and men's. The product basket is comprehensive and bath gels are an important ingredient in it.

The brand carries forward its image to its bath gel product line as well. It regularly refreshes its catalogue with newer products while ensuring its traditional principals are adhered to.

A big change that the liquid soap industry has seen is bringing in the 'nature' element. Customer, nowadays, look at using natural products, without additives. With this in mind, Clinique has increased their sales by adding natural oils found in plants and flowers. The concept is called Aromatherapy which utilizes the sense of smell by using natural oils, usually found in plants, flowers, roots, etc. It is believed to bring about physiological changes in the body. The smell and fragrance associated with Clinique bath gels and body washes offers stress release, peacefulness, and mind soothing benefits.

The brand has further strengthened its environment friendly image by things like recyclable bottles, customer education campaigns etc.

All these factors make Clinique a market leader in the bath gels market which has a very strong quality and responsible product provider's association with its customers.

Analysis of Radox Brand

Radox is primarily a shower gels and bubble bath brand. It operates in United Kingdom, Australia, Ireland, Czech Republic, Malaysia and South Africa, with United Kingdom being its strongest market.

Radox debuted in the UK market in early 20th century as a salts foot bath that 'RADiated OXYgen' (the basis behind its name). It was brainchild of Harry Marland. By 1957, Radix made a name for itself as a relaxing bath meant to be enjoyed after physical activities like sport, gardening etc.

In 1960, the brand was bought over by Aspro-Nicholas in 1960 which lead to a period of product development where new fragrances, colours and herb extracts were added.

A radical frothing agent was also introduced to deliver a foaming bath. It was first marketed with the slogan 'Relax in a Radox Bath'. The launch was an immediate success. It was voted amongst the 10 most successful products to be launched in the grocery trade in its first year and created a totally new sector: the mainstream liquid bath market.

Drawing strength of this success, further areas of development were assessed. In the 1970s, a shift was made towards showers. The basis for the success of the Radox brand was adding value.

The product range of Radox is probably the most dynamic in the market. It keeps coming up with innovative product ideas aimed at newer target markets. The recent examples being: the 'Be Selfish' campaign and the marketing drive to capture the evolving male grooming market.

The Be-Selfish campaign was launched in June 2009 to encourage women to take time out of their day for themselves. In Sep' 09 the brand & celebrity author Kathy Lette tied up for the novel 'All Steamed Up' which was made available free online. In 2010, BBC Radio 1 DJ Sara Cox got associated with the Be-Selfish campaign and is seen encouraging new mums to take time out of their day to enjoy an hour to themselves.

Later in 2010, Radox attacked the male grooming market with intentions of cracking the market with its brand's universal appeal; especially the 25-45 age groups which it felt was the neglected group by its competitors.

The brand that has done so much and so often should be a market leader but it's not, rather its losing its market hold with time. The reason, ironically, is what has been the brand's biggest strength. Radox is a classic example of the saying – jack of all trades, master of none. It does so much so often that the customer is not able to make a perception of the brand.

The brand has to be credited for its innovation, but what the brand doesn't realise is that product tweaks will come & go but the brand has to be defined

by its core values. Today, one doesn't know what Radox in nutshell is. These identity crises of the brand, coupled with strong one point perception earned by brands like Clinique has made Radox a brand that everyone sees on the shelves, appreciate its uniqueness, but very few buy.

Recommendations for Radox brand

The brand is currently unable to take leverage of its innovativeness, but with some adjustments the trend can be reversed. The brand doesn't need to go to the quality based route for two reasons; one, that's not the brand's forte; second, there are already established players following this philosophy.

First and foremost the company has to make a conscious effort to give adequate time gap between its products / campaigns launches. This will allow the consumers to digest and appreciate the launch. Also, there has to be a continuous thread binding all the activities of the brand. Although, the launches are all unique but they have to be presented with a common idea of a company that is striving to make consumers' lives better & better. That brand image has to reflect all the time.

A method of binding all the innovations together is to make the consumers a part of the process. The brand should make its launch and welcome the people to make possible improvements in them. It will practically become the brand tagline. Also, it will help the brand develop a very strong connection with the consumers. They will like to see a brand that works by them.

Radox is one of the oldest brands and its market existence is known to all. To break the perception of customers the brand needs to redesign its logo and

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tagline to take advantage of all its experience but get rid of the mindset barriers of the consumers.

Conclusion

Bath gels market is slowly but steadily evolving from the shadow its traditional avatar of soap bars. Both products cater to different needs of the customers and can co-exist with boundaries getting stronger amongst them.

There is constant innovation in the emerging market of bath gels with improvements like herbal ingredients etc. New needs are being created along with addressing of existing ones.

Market has a large no. of players and all of them are trying to create a special position for itself. But the stronger operators are the ones who have established themselves as the quality product supplier with constant efforts.

Clinique is one of leading bath gel supplier with a rich heritage of a company dedicated to providing high quality products and, most importantly, a company whose prime focus is its customers. This image has been carried forward to its bath gels range as well.

Radox is a pioneer player in the bath gel industry with a continuous focus on product and marketing innovation. The brand was somewhat lost its identity with bringing too many innovations without a primary image.

Brand Radox can be revived by restructuring its efforts towards emphasising itself as a company which works hard to introduce revolutionary products for the consumers and then works harder, with customer inputs, to improve these products.

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