**Coffee Mate: Stir-up passion**

Coffee creamer, popularly known as whitener, is a milk and vegetable fat-based powder that is used for smoothing out coffee's bitter taste or strong aroma. Coffee-mate, a coffee creamer from Nestlé, is one of the few international brands in the whitener category in Malaysia. The category is dominated by F&N – an established Malaysian heritage brand; SBC – a local brand, and a few other private label brands competing on price. F&N also has the highest Top of Mind Awareness (TOMA), and although Coffee-mate has high awareness amongst whitener consumers it is still not part of their first consideration set.

In communications, Coffee-mate highlights taste and value, F&N differentiates itself on versatility and Malaysian heritage, and SBC banks on value pricing. The whitener category also faces stiff competition from traditional categories such as condensed milk and fresh milk, as most Malaysians also use these for whitening their coffee.

Large families are heavy users of coffee whitener, and taste and brand affinity drives preference amongst such heavy users, whereas the younger generation is either developing a preference for black coffee with sugar and thereby moving away from whitener usage, or are continuing to use a whitener brand that they have grown up with. F&N tends to gain on this count because of its TOMA and Coffee-mate loses out on consideration. Although Coffee-mate was witnessing steady growth, it needed to attract new users to accelerate growth in the future.

Coffee-mate had the following target options:

Attract consumers from condensed and/or fresh milk buyers: Conventional wisdom suggested that this offered the maximum potential as the consumer is already habituated to whitened coffee. But it also required a lot more resources on the ground to change existing usage behaviour. At the same time, lower priced competitors as well as F&N stand to gain preference of newly converted consumers in favour of whitener.

Introduce Coffee-mate to young coffee drinkers: Strategic need and resource constraints made this option more feasible, as this would mean getting long-term commitment and loyalty of consumers towards the brand.

We decided to make Coffee-mate relevant to young couples. It matched with the brand essence – my coffee's perfect mate, and the brand personality of being playful, flirtatious and imaginative. The aim was to forge an emotional relationship with the younger generation and get it into their consideration set. It made good business sense too, as young couples would stay with the brand for longer.

Young Malay couples in their mid-20s were chosen as the communications target. Malays get married young and in the early years of married life are open to change and adopting new habits. To build an emotional bond with them meant Coffee-mate had to become an integral part of these young couple's lives. After careful consideration we decided to focus our efforts on the female, as they tend to make more effort in the couple's relationship to keep it thriving.

However, we were short of resources and our young audience was short of time, because high-decibel advertising categories and brands (telecoms, white goods, FMCG, etc) were so busy trying to get their attention.

It is a common observation that young women engaged in a relationship are preoccupied with love, romance, expectations and dreams, so to engage them we decided to appeal to the romantic side of these young women. Insights on couples' relationships revealed that they begin with lots of romantic passion, but somewhere along the way the passion fades away as the daily chores take over.

At this point, the relationship needs reigniting and stirring up to keep it fresh. Women understand this better than men and often plan pleasant surprises for their partner to enliven the original passion. We decided to leverage the secret of a perfect relationship: 'Keep finding out ways to make each other smile'.

As a strategic approach, we presented Coffee-mate as the focal point of a couple's original and passionate relationship. This approach touched a chord with consumers and resonated with the brand essence. Hence the idea: 'Stir up passion'.

This idea hinged around Coffee-mate stirring the lost passion and hidden emotions between young couples, making it an inseparable part of their lives.

How did we bring it alive? We all know that the beginning of a passionate love between young couples is the humble and romantic love note – the Post-it note, letter, phone text, note written on a tissue or a song with a message – and our idea was borne from this truth.

'Love Notes' ('Nota Cinta' in Malay) became the theme of our campaign.

**Implementation**

The creative challenge was to get couples involved with the brand. Although TV gives the greatest reach for young Malay couples, their highest affinity is with the Internet. Most of them are working full-time or part-time and have access to the Internet; hence the web became the backbone of our campaign. This was supported by traditional media to drive traffic, and on-ground activation was leveraged to convert affinity into action.

Webisodes entitled Nota Cinta (Love Notes) were conceptualised as the lead communication. It was to be a web-based soap featuring the different phases of a relationship and highlighting its typical cycle – the initial passion, the fading of the relationship, efforts by the woman, realisation by the man and the reigniting of passion – with Coffee-mate being presented as playing a vital role in their initial love and later in reigniting the lost passion. A Facebook fan page was then created to receive comments on the episodes, and was activated two weeks prior to the webisode launch so that fans could interact with the cast. To create a viral effect, a contest was launched on the Facebook page where it was mandatory for participants to send a link to three of their friends.

TVC, web banners and POS were leveraged to drive traffic for webisodes, in-store posters promoted Nota Cinta and a 20-second trailer of the first episode was released as a TVC. The episode was also promoted on prominent websites through both static and rich media banners, and a 30-second version of the trailer was hosted on these websites with a link to the microsite.

Bloggers were engaged to do a review of the episode and promote the contest, and eDMs were sent out to fans and Dear Nestlé subscribers (a CRM programme from Nestlé).

A Facebook application named 'Ku Untukmu' (Me and You) took the 'Stir up passion' concept even further. Using this application, couples could customise a song for their partner by inserting photographs of themselves and their partner into an animated video, then choosing the score, genre and instruments used. The execution related it to Coffee-mate attributes and usage.

An on-ground activation entitled the 'Mobile Music Café' was a truck that travelled to 78 locations across Klang Valley. At each of the locations, an experienced team of baristas demonstrated how to make a cup of coffee just the way the audience liked it – with Coffee-mate.

The audiences were also entertained with various exciting activities such as a photography session (using a classical, romantic photo-frame that they could upload onto the Facebook page), and live music performances by Indie bands playing romantic numbers. The Facebook application 'Ku Untukmu' was also promoted on the site, demonstrating how to create a personalised dedicated music video for a partner.

Radio was also leveraged to drive traffic to Mobile Café locations and create hype for the Facebook page. Hot FM was the exclusive radio partner, and they ran a contest on their website to reward listeners who submitted videos with the most creative slogan and picture.

**Performance**

Sales revenue: There was a 13% value growth as compared to a category growth of less than 5% Sales volume: There was a 9% volume growth as compared to a category growth of approximately 5%.

Q. With limited resources and a not-so strong market position, Coffee-mate needed to create relevance amongst Malay coffee drinkers. Highlight the effective segmenting, targeting, positioning strategy developed by the brand and success factors behind the same.