(Case Study)

Absolut, UV and Level Vodkas

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We argue that vodka ads had greatest impact when used with freedom and individual psychological mechanisms.

**Advertising objective**

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Original Absolut advertising was simple, stylish, and witty. The design of the bottle was important. It was to be an icon. Ad agency TBWA in New York hired artists to create print ads that interpret the bottle. Actor Richard Lewis explains, “The hero is the bottle. The bottle is the star”

The “Absolut Perfection” campaign ran for 24 years until sales began to drop.  In 2007, “An Absolut World” campaign emerged. Images of impossible worlds and abstract art were used to gain interest of the individual spirit. The new campaign switched focus of the icon to brand recognition and prestige of Absolut vodka in an attempt to rebuild demand.

UV

The objectives of UV vodka advertisements are integrating the product with holiday and celebratory themes. This association gives the vodka an opportunity to reach a large target market and attempt to ingrain UV as staple of various social events.

LEVEL

The objectives of Level vodka advertisements are to gain awareness of consumers that are experienced alcohol drinkers who are middle-to-upper class.  Level is a super-premium vodka, and do not target a younger market with less discretionary income.

**Message Content**

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1,500 of the ads in the first campaign feature Absolut's distinctive bottle - with the stubby neck and transparent label (Wharton, 2002). The new focus shadowed the bottle  and brought light to world issues and evolving technology. “Absolut World” appears in 2007 - still in use - and concentrates on the value and possibilities of a world with Absolut vodka. The ads represent a bold and optimistic view of interesting  situation... “In an Absolut World”.

UV

The UV ads feature the UV bottle used as art. The first print ad arranges the bottles to represent wrapped presents with bows and ribbons. The Halloween ad features bottles arranged into a bat. During Independence Day, the bottles are red, white and blue, and appear as bursting fireworks. The similar design themes aid in reinforcement of the brand identity, and the idea that UV vodka is a celebration staple.

LEVEL

     Level commonly produces print ads.  One ad has a red background with a horizontal bottle of Level sitting on a martini glass at a 45 degree angle with the copy “Taste the perfectly balanced vodka” above.  Another has a martini glass with five ice cubes stacked on the rim, and a horizontal bottle of Level placed on top with the copy “Introducing the world’s first perfectly balanced vodka” on the side.  The ads give the look of class and elegance because of the clean lines and minimization of objects and text in the ad.

**Behavioral Impact**

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The company is consistent with the brand philosophy that “doing things differently always leads to something exceptional” (Kesmodel, 2009). However, new ads focus on world issues and transcend the emotion of uncertainties with current economic climates. We can create an Absolut world.  Pundits refute the campaign as cute and farfetched in this economy (Kesmodel, 2009). The campaign change was not only meant to create interest, but also a sense of value and a need for the Vodka. This year they also came out with Absolut wild tea and Absolut orient apple (Pernod, 2011). They had a 6% total volume growth this year (Pernod, 2011).

UV

When consumers prepare a special event, Phillips wants their decision set to include several flavors of UV vodka rather than a selection of competing brands. Phillips also engages an active community on Facebook with over 119,000 “likes”. Fans exchange recipes and ideas and talk about the various ways in which they have used UV Vodkas in their social gatherings.

LEVEL

Level being a newer product, created in 2004, must target awareness to gain market share of the super-premium vodka sector. The advertising highlights the brand as the first perfectly balanced vodka. Level wants their audience to either switch within or move up a level of vodkas to Level.  One print ad copy reads “Advance to the next level.”

**Psychological Mechanisms**

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Value was used in the second campaign. Freedom and individualism are both used in the ad campaigns.The Absolut world gives you the freedom to create your own world and forgot common norms. The unique worlds created in the ads also give consumers a sense of individualism. The ads emphasizes that they can express their uniqueness when they drink Absolut.

**UV**

Repositioning is one mechanism used in the UV ads. In the past, UV pushed the individualism of the brand and sponsored a lot of musical events. There is a definite social appeal at work in this campaign as well, they are encouraging consumers to serve UV Vodka at all of their holiday social events, implanting the idea that their events will be more fun by including UV. The ads also draw on the emotional association people have with the iconic holiday imagery used in the advertisements.

LEVEL

The techniques that are used in the print ads for Level are minimalism and very clean lines.  This is so there are no distractions and nothing else to draw attention away from the bottle.  This eliminates confusion and it’s easy to figure out what the ad is for.  Also, they stick out compared to most other ads because they have little color and are very simple.  Not very many commercials have no color, limited sound, and Cirque Du Soleil performers.  Their ads are intriguing because of their uniqueness and they create curiosity.  Their ads are unlike any other, including other vodka ads.  The text in their ads intrigues their audience and gives them a reason to try their product: it’s new and it’s the only one of its kind.

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