

British Brands

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH BRANDS GROUP

The heritage of brands

One often forgotten aspect of the Industrial Revolution is the way it accelerated the growth of the 'consumer revolution', when people stopped attempting to be self-sufficient and began to rely on the wealth of ready-made products and articles that were becoming available. This new culture of mass production and the introduction of quality standards established a relationship of trust between manufacturer and consumer that had the brand at its core. No longer would the Victorian consumer suspect their chocolate to have been bulked out with chalk or their tea with sawdust. As a consequence, living standards improved alongside the products.

In order to show the evolving story of these new consumer goods, their promotion and marketing, the Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising has been established in Notting Hill, London. The permanent exhibition presents over 12,000 items from a collection of more than half a million – TV and print advertising, every conceivable form of packaging, toys, books, fashions, magazines and a whole host of other paraphernalia. Presented in a decade-by-decade time tunnel that begins in the early part of the 19th century, it brings the past to life in an unconventional way quite unlike any other museum.

The story of the museum began with a 16-year-old Robert Opie having second thoughts about throwing away a 7d packet of Munchies. Struck by the idea of collecting packaging for posterity, he kept the empty pack and so the development of the world's largest collection of marketing

ephemera began. Fast-forward forty years and Robert Opie's collection is now the basis for the museum, and there is an awful lot to see.

Not only does the museum show a chronological history of many individual brands, but also the story of how they have changed our lives. Visitors can see for themselves how the consumer world has evolved and can readily spot the preoccupations of society at different times. The military influence and themes that shaped the consumer world at the time of the two world wars and the fascination with space travel in the 1950s are just two examples. The museum is as much a record of our social history and consumerism as it is a collection of consumer goods and the marketing that went with them.

The significance of the museum goes further, recording and promoting the heritage of our marketing community, a major component of Britain's increasingly important creative industries.

Certainly, the sheer volume of creativity that has resulted in a mass of incredibly well-executed design is striking. And although the output is commercial by nature, when seen in the context of the museum it is an incredibly vibrant and passionate collection of commercial art.

So what brings people to the museum? Many come out of general interest, perhaps prompted by nostalgia to journey through time and recall the products that shaped their lives from childhood, rediscovering old friends along the way. Then there are those who work in the industry, as well as students of design and

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marketing. In short, the museum has wide appeal, from the general public to specialists who work in consumer communication such as advertising, the media and marketing.

For the marketer, laid out before them in the museum is a history of individual brands, allowing a comparison of the hows and whys of those brands that have succeeded with those that, over time, have fallen by the wayside. Here it is possible to learn from the experience of others, with the benefit of hindsight. The current marketplace can only be properly understood with a knowledge of the past, and it is only with that knowledge that the future can be more confidently predicted.

The museum is a treasure trove of surprise. The collection offers a unique perspective on many brands. At a glance, the development of the brand can be seen in response to changing consumer needs, markets and even brand owners. It is fascinating to compare, for instance, two successful 50-year-old brands, Johnson & Johnson's Baby Powder which has displayed great consistency, and Lucozade which has shown many significant changes over time. Here is a unique insight into brand and marketing history. Where else can you track the shifts and changes that have taken place over the decades, unless of course you have had the benefit of first-hand experience?

The museum is fast becoming a new resource for the marketing industry, as well as being a testament to the many great brands that have shaped all our lives. It is arguably the first recognition of the consumer industry's contribution to innovation, better quality products, higher standards and improved quality of life. As such, industry is putting its weight behind the project, with companies jumping at the chance to have their efforts recorded and promoted. Their brands may be their commercial output but they play an important part in our society. For that to be showcased and properly represented has real value.

The elusive ingredient that transforms a functional product into a brand, something with real emotional resonance, is the gold dust that every brand-focused company seeks. Once achieved, brands become something that people grow fond of and trust. Great brands nurture that sense of trust and consistency carefully for years, and in some cases centuries, and this sense of longevity is present throughout the museum. It is a genuine surprise to discover that Perrier has been around since 1902, for example. The emotional connection with these products is such that it will be only the hardest hearted visitor who leaves this unique collection untouched.

For further information: www.museumofbrands.com
Museum open Tuesday to Saturday 10–6pm, Sundays 11–4pm.



Competition between branded and private label goods

The European Competition Law Review (Issue 5, 2006) has featured a paper on 'Competition between branded and private label goods. Do competition concerns arise when a customer is also a competitor?' Written by Alastair Gorrie, the paper outlines potential competition concerns, the approach currently adopted by competition authorities and possible remedies. The paper questions whether the combined role of retailers as customer and competitor operates to the benefit of consumers and suggests that the tools to deal with abuse of retailer buyer power below dominance are weak. Further information is available from the British Brands Group.

The Lovemarks effect

How to form closer connections with consumers through powerful emotional links, and how to move beyond trade marks and brands to Lovemarks were explained by Kevin Roberts, Worldwide CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi, in the sixth Brands Lecture, *The Lovemarks effect*. Copies of the lecture, and all previous lectures, are available free from the British Brands Group or can be downloaded from our website (www.britishbrandsgroup.org.uk).

British Brands Group

The British Brands Group represents the interests of brand manufacturers in the UK. Membership comprises companies of all sizes across a wide range of product sectors.

The role of the group is to build in Britain the optimum climate for brands to deliver choice and value to consumers, through constant innovation and fair competition.

The group is the UK representative of AIM, the European Brands Association based in Brussels.

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