



A Sprinkle of Fun that Helps Keep Kids Healthy

Amidst the recent talk of obesity epidemics, one of the more startling revelations has been that regularly eating breakfast is actually slimming because of the impact it has on one's metabolism. Moreover, it is also shown to increase energy and attention levels and this has prompted the establishment of breakfast clubs at schools around the country aimed at improving children's performance. But how exactly do you make children excited about breakfast and particularly healthy eating options? This was the issue foremost in the thinking of international naming consultancy Nomen as they created the name Muddles for Kellogg's new cereal launched this month - one that led to a highly innovative approach.

We've all heard the interview advice that what you say is far less important than how confidently you say it and this has tacitly informed naming processes for many years. But Nomen have extended that thinking by realising that pester power is based on oral communication much more than the written word. As Managing Director Paul Norman explains " 'Capturing the Essence' of a brand has led us to consider more carefully the sonorities of the brand names we create. After all, the first time one encounters a new name, especially in the FMCG field, is upon seeing it on a package on the shelf or perhaps hearing it in a TV or radio advertisement. Kids don't write shopping lists – they just shout out the name of whatever it is they want you to buy!"

The linguistic science of sound symbolism that lies behind this urges brand managers to consider the linkage between the sounds of various consonants and vowels (phonemes) and the emotions and meanings they conjure in the consumer's brain. Previously, when companies have found that certain names tested well with consumers, they didn't make the connection that a product can be perceived as possessing certain attributes solely on the basis of the sound of its name. But that is increasingly being shown to be the case. Moreover, it is clear

that this is not language specific and thus the potential for creating a single universal name is greatly enhanced.

On the down side, however, one could argue that being too reductive and focusing on the fact that, for example, a hard k evokes activity (think Corvette, Camaro and Corsa) or that v is one of the most energetic sounds in language (think Viagra) might limit your creativity a little. Nomen therefore concluded that the proof of a great name is revealed when people, especially children, want to say it and indeed have fun saying it, thereby enhancing the likelihood of repetition and true word of mouth.

As Paul Norman explained “It’s standard practice to check new names for pronunciation but traditionally that had more to do with ease and consistency of pronunciation across national and regional dialects and the weeding out of embarrassing double meanings” – as Centura Foods singularly failed to do when naming their curry sauce Bundh (not realising that it sounded very much like the Punjabi word for buttocks). “But none of this really spoke to the emotional resonance of a good name beyond the onomatopoeic impact of names such as Sizzler.”

So, in addition to supplying Kellogg’s with list of potential names distilled via an extensive process of creative sessions and linguistic and legal checks, Nomen also provided a telling audio selection featuring children from the target demographic saying (or sometimes struggling to get their tongues round) the various options. The relative attractiveness of the names to what are, after all, typical end consumers was hugely insightful. “You could tell which names enthused and excited the children just by the way they said them. Muddles was the clear winner not only because of its links with the variety of shapes and colours, but also because of the childrens enthusiasm when saying it, evoking fun and liveliness, as well as the brand values of, fantasy, discovery and snap, crackle and pop, exactly the attributes that align with the positioning of the product.”

In the future it is hoped that Muddles will be the name on millions of kids' lips.
And it truly will have been a case of "out of the mouths of babes"