

Classic Case Study: Shreddies Cereal

Introduction to Shreddies Cereal

Shreddies is a brand of breakfast cereal first brought to market in the 1950's. It is a plain and bland tasting cereal that only consists of square-shaped whole wheat cereal pieces. It's general market positioning has been built around providing a good value, simple, nutritious, and wholesome breakfast option.

Sounds a little boring, right? Well, it probably was a dated brand - which leads us to this classic case study. How do you make a boring product a bit more exciting and fun without really changing the product itself? Let's find out...

"New" Diamond Shreddies

For this classic case study, we are going back to 2008 for a "repositioning" campaign that the brand rolled out in the Canadian market.

It was a humorous campaign that revolved around the introduction of diamond-shaped Shreddies. What's the difference between a square shape and a diamond shape you may ask - the answer is nothing. It's the same shape turned sideways.

By playing with the idea that Shreddies had somehow been "transformed" into a new, diamond-shaped version, which even tasted better, the campaign became a good example of how to use fun, creativity, and customer engagement to help invigorate an older and "tired" brand.

Please note that while the brand promoted diamond-shaped Shreddies as somehow superior because they were diamond-shaped. In reality, there was no difference in taste or texture - but the consumers got the joke and saw it as a fun promotional exercise.

Key Elements of their Promotional Mix

They used videos and TV ads to initially show that Shreddies had accidentally gone from square to diamond in a mishap in the manufacturing process. And although management was alarmed at first, they then decided that diamond-shaped Shreddies might have some marketing potential.

These ads were need supported by later videos and TV commercials that showed humorous situations where consumers interacted with the "new" diamond-shaped cereal, acting as though it were a luxury product.

And they used the clever tagline "Change the way you look at cereal", because that's all consumers were doing - by turning the Shreddies slightly it went from square to diamond and vice versa.

The product packaging was also a major part of their promotional mix, with the product being rebranded as Diamond Shreddies.

And, of course, social media played a big part as well. Shreddies ran a poll on Facebook to ask consumers whether they preferred the taste of the square or diamond shaped Shreddies. Diamond won, but only by a small margin.

So it seems that consumers liked both - and that's what the brand did next - they brought out a "Combo" pack, which contained both square or diamond shapes.

As you could imagine, all of this fun, playful and interactive brand building achieved a lot of earned media, with the "rebranding" campaign being picked up in online media, and my bloggers, YouTubers, and other influencers.

Did the Campaign Have Any Impact?

One would think that because the product didn't actually change, that there would not have been any noticeable impact on sales. But... sales of Shreddies improved by 18% as a result of the "new" shape.

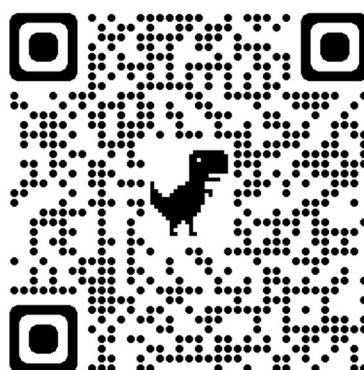
And that's where you come in... please review the following videos and then answer the questions at the end.

Shreddies Case Study Videos

1 = TV Commercial - Highlighting the Initial Manufacturing Mishap

2 = Overview of the Shreddies Campaign

3 = "Pretend" Focus Groups - Used as Part of the Promotional Campaign



Student Discussion Questions

1. Outline the main marketing goals that the Shreddies brand was trying to achieve with this campaign?
2. Why do you think that this campaign was able to increase sales by 18%, given that the product really did not change? Try to identify 3-4 main reasons.
3. Do you see any risks in this style of humorous campaign for the Shreddies brand?
4. Why do you think that the brand went for a fun campaign, as opposed to making substantial product improvements to this "tired and bland" cereal?