



BOURNVILLE TARGETS THE SWEET SPOT

Cadbury's renewed investment in its dark chocolate brand isn't surprising

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We all hate rejection. This time it is a cocoa bean crying for attention as it is cast off by a cocoa bean expert during a selection procedure. Sounds hilarious? Well, it is the creative route chosen by Cadbury in its latest commercial for Bournville. This is to drive home the message that the dark chocolate brand is crafted from the finest cocoa beans of Ghana (Africa) ensuring no compromise on taste.

Cadbury Bournville, which was relaunched in India in 2009, after a hiatus of many years has focused on legend, pedigree and rituals in its last two campaigns in India. Certain cues - opening the wrapper gently, closely hearing the snap after breaking a piece, taking in the aroma - have been used in previous communication to establish Bournville as a premium brand that has to be earned.

In the new campaign conceptualised by Ogilvy and Mather, the core message of the brand 'You have to earn it' is retained. Only now, the focus is more strongly on ingredients that go into making a Bournville.

Showcasing product interiors is something Cadbury has been chasing more actively this season. For instance, the most recent Dairy Milk outdoor campaign vividly displayed the interiors of the chocolate. Likewise, the Five Star packaging makeover campaign showcased the luscious caramel filling of the bar. "In Bournville's case, the focus on ingredients is to educate consumers on how the quality of cocoa leads to the superior taste of dark chocolate," says Venkatesan Chandramouli, director (strategy

and snacking), Cadbury India.

Cadbury's renewed investment in Bournville is not surprising. Dark chocolate is a fledgling category in India, where Bournville (available at two price points ₹ 30 and ₹ 80) enjoys an exclusive position with hardly any meaningful competition. Arch-rival Nestle has recently launched Nestle DARK CHOCOLATE across the metros at the ₹ 20 price point. Swiss brand Lindt & Sprungli imports a few dark chocolate variants under the Excellence sub-brand but is barely a se-

rious contender because of its high price (₹300 per bar). Some premium imported brands like Guylian, Lotus and Ritter Sport are available but distribution is scattered at select food stores.

Though the dark chocolate segment is only 1.5-2 per cent of the ₹3,500 crore chocolate market, as the market leader ruling 70 per cent of overall chocolate consumption, Cadbury's optimism is not misplaced. With Bournville, Cadbury is going after the adult chocolate eating market and is targeting everyone from discerning consumers who travel abroad, older folks who prefer a stronger taste and youth who are early adopters.

So is the new campaign enough to take the brand to the next level of consumption? Mudra (north and east) executive creative director Nirmal Pulickal feels more attention could be paid to make dark chocolate appear more appetising, rather than slapping the product window towards the end.

Adds Rediffusion Young & Rubicam national creative director N Padmakumar, "the cocoa bean character could have been animated more evocatively to make him a real presence in the commercial." He draws parallel to a

commercial by Thai green tea brand UNIF (part of Uni-President, the biggest food company in Taiwan) which used a similar creative route where a caterpillar and tea picker battle it out for the best green tea leaf.

But experts claim communication can only do so much. The larger task at hand is extending distribution. "The limiting factor for dark chocolate is that it requires a temperature controlled environment which is not available in regular trade stores," says Devendra Chawla, president (food and FMCG), Future Group. Chandramouli is only too aware and claims investments in extending the cold chain facilities are one of the top priorities for the brand. "We are supplying visi-coolers to many outlets to store our chocolates," adds Chandramouli.

Bournville is currently distributed through 30,000 outlets in large cities but industry experts claim it is a brand driven largely by modern trade. Explains an upbeat Chandramouli, "In modern trade, the brand already has a 6 per cent share of overall chocolate sales which is significant for a brand in its early days." However, Nielsen 2011 retail audit data for modern trade reveals that sales have been inconsistent in the last six months.

However, Chandramouli is not losing focus. "To drive sales we are engaging in regular sampling," he explains. Modern trade apart, the brand will continue sampling at unique touch points like airports and corporate offices.

Given dark chocolate is an acquired taste, Bournville has modified the product for India: cocoa content is at medium levels and dark chocolate is available in multiple variants like raisin & nut, hazelnut and almond to reduce the bitter aftertaste.

Though, for now, experts claim the segment will continue to stay niche. "Asking Indians to switch to healthier dark chocolate is as difficult as asking them to convert to soy milk," quips Mahesh Kanchan, vice president (marketing), Godrej Hershey.

But, Chandramouli's strategy is for the long haul.



Venkatesan Chandramouli, director (strategy & snacking), Cadbury India, says globally, dark chocolate is 10% of the overall chocolate market. In India too, the segment will explode