

Freshness in the head and good for the throat

Hard candies have clearly lost relevance in consumer behaviour for a long time. Only clear differentiation and effective staging lead back to success. An essay by Florian Klaus and Dr. Uwe H. Lebok from K&A BrandResearch.

The golden 1970s were a land of milk and honey for hard candies compared to today.

Due to the then still over presentations.

of the most attractive confectionery With the limited choice of sweets in the retail trade, the limited choice in everyday consumption in western societies and less seasonality, the practical sweets were present virtually everywhere. Small, packaged, non-melting, flexible and convenient for togo, they were considered an all-rounder. As the confectionery market changed, the and numerous differentiated

However, interest in sweets or hard caramels, the official name of the category, declined during the second half of the year.

Among the younger generations, the "incidence" declined and the wow factor often fell by the wayside. The former advertising of Werthers Rechte is a good example of the zeitgeist of the category since the 1980s. Nostalgic and tried and tested like grandfather's, when young people were still attracted to folk festivals, children's carousels and circus attractions.

were enthusiastic. The brand made the best of the situation, today it too uses much more

'Astonish' to reach new target groups.

However, immersed in contemplative nostalgic sucking, the whole category lost touch with a society that rather demanded quick and biting consumption. Moreover, the prolonged (sweet) sucking in the mouth also reinforced the character of unhealthy consumption, with the impatient biting of hard candies even evoking the image of the "seal puller" and the dentist as a later judge. With the advent of smartphones and the behavioural automatism of using devices and apps when bored - even in a social, analogue society! - and apps, sweets and chewing gum have lost yet another access point to everyday life. The Covid crisis and its measures have recently further accelerated this situation. Impulse purchases, for example, which

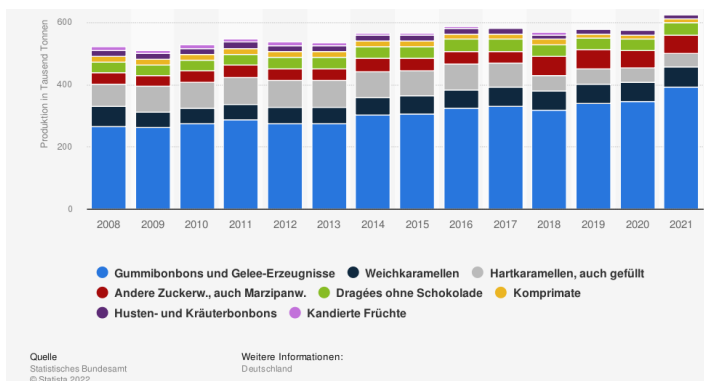
enormously important for these categories, are even less relevant because of the masks and the reduced social situations.

Successful sweets are "Context Heroes"

In this unfavourable situation, brands that have succeeded in positioning themselves with consumers in a distinguishable and occasion-related way have been able to hold their own better. Because just "having something in your mouth" or sucking on it out of boredom is clearly too little today. Even though many people may have developed an almost compulsive behaviour to overcome boredom, the occasions for consumption have become increasingly contextualised and differentiated in recent years. This has led to the emergence of different, differently accentuated areas of use. Consumers, however, need a context-specific mental impulse to buy a product intuitively in these environments.

Above all, sweets with more or less strongly communicated functional benefits can justifiably be called "role models" in order to assert themselves well in a category that has almost fallen into oblivion. In this context, Nimm2 is certainly an example of successful simple positioning without a bloated marketing declaration and yet successful diversification. The brand has succeeded in mentally linking sweets and vitamin-rich products as a pleasure product (and before the Health Claims Regulation).

den. The multi-sensuality of the Nimm2 MouthFeeling from "Biting and



The statistics show that the production of sugar confectionery has shifted further to the disadvantage of hard caramels, cough and herbal sweets in the past decade. (Source: statista.de)



Photo: Eduard Edel Bonbon

Running into it" acts as a pleasure booster, which has been successfully transferred to laughing gum. Just like Nimm2 with its two components for hard candies, Nimm2 also achieves a perceived demarcation with consumers for fruit gums: fruit gums are the category, but laughing gums are more fun. Another leading hard candy brand in recent years comes from Switzerland and uses similar aids as Nimm2. The Ricola brand stands for Swiss Alpine herbs, whereby herbal sweets alone are worth more to consumers than standard sweets, which is communicated through humorous and attention-grabbing advertising. Humour, in turn, is an important factor for astonishment, along with personal relevance, and helps to make the brand positioning easier to emotionally relate to. The less energy people have to expend on understanding a brand's meaning, the easier it is to achieve top-of-mind awareness, or "mental availability" as the renowned marketing professor Byron Sharp.

Good gut feeling and
good reputation
increase
the likelihood of purchase

The strongest brands in practically every category are therefore those with the highest mental availability. If awareness also contributes to a good gut feeling or combines the so-called "fame", fame in the sense of a good reputation, then the likelihood of purchase is high. Ricola has managed to establish itself mentally as a brand.

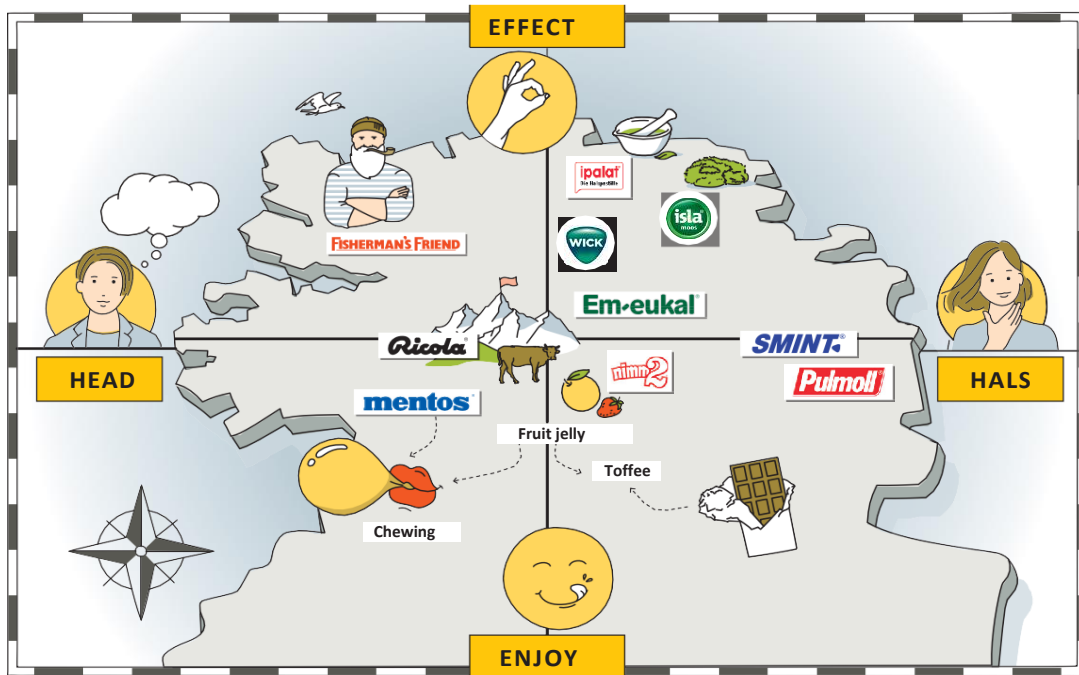
The brand has to establish itself as a brand that is talked about thanks to effective advertising with a fame effect and which at the same time consistently highlights and penetrates central brand assets in such a way that it appears unique (distinctive) to consumers. If a brand has a handful of distinctive brand assets and stages them effectively, it is much easier to address consumers in a memorable way.

Associations with Switzerland and herbs add functionality to Ricola's appeal. Switzerland generally stands for the highest quality, and herbs are associated with natural healing power and herbal medicine. The latter mechanism is also used by a direct competitor, Ricola.

Benefit: Emeukal. The focus on medicinal herbs (including menthol), the pharmacy context of the brand history, the sender Dr. C Soldan as well as the assignment by consumers in the direction of "good for the throat and voice" provides the brand with a distinction with taste and functionality. In the cold seasons or when colds and coughs are more frequent, even prolonged sucking - which is otherwise a common practice - mutates.

Knockout criterion for Hard Candies angle suddenly becomes a contextual advantage. Because what stays in the mouth longer when you have a cough or a sore throat also relieves the symptoms better. Compared to





Mental map of the candy scenery - how brands position themselves with consumers in a distinguishable and occasion-related way.

Ricola, the Emeukal sweet is psychologically more strongly associated with effects and physical complaints. At this point Direct exchanges are also created The company is also working with the pharmacy brand ipalat, which lives from the effect of primrose root on the voice, or with Isla Moos.

Consumers need
new occasions

It's not easy to turn the established positioning of a brand into a new one with few Assets recalled by means of Line extensions into new occasions. Too many line extensions can sometimes even lead to the brand core being diluted, as in the case of Isla Moos, where many (colourful) flavours colourfully blurred the green (healthy) core of the brand (=Island).

On the other hand, Emeukal achieved a small "Dyson effect" with the introduction of gum drops as a diversification. This offered consumers a faster option in addition to the hard candy variants: Consumers can enjoy instant freshness and a throat-soothing effect, so that they can quickly get back to their daily routine.

Fisherman's Friend has positioned itself mentally in a completely different way, namely as a brand that offers maximum freshness. Pastille shape and the years of pene

The communication, which focused on the strength or pungency of the products, led the target group to expect not only the elimination of bad breath, but above all freshness, which moves from the mouth and throat via the nose "to the brain" and there mental freshness, genuineness, Smartness increases. Also mentos Chewing sweets with (some) effect are continuously working on new variants, such as chewing gum, and a usage position suitable for everyday use.

An impressive
example of
success

But where to find new occasions if not to steal them? First of all, 'standing' is not a far-fetched option. Even the daily routine of consumers cannot be extended at will, the number of contexts that can be occupied is naturally finite. So it is often a matter of appearing to people as the most obvious solution for a more or less generic moment. For this, intuitive codes can be linked to one's own brand image by creatively taking up a brand asset that is as distinctive as possible and often needs to be restaged. This is what happened in the case of the famous Mucosolvan mucus monsters, which are a very typical leading symptom of the entire category.

for a brand. However, when it comes to defining the right, effective codes and developing guidelines for creative solutions, the brand's internal view or marketing gut feeling rarely helps.

Everyday psychological market research, which focuses on the life

circumstances and the 'real life' of the target The best way to get involved in a group, on the other hand, is to provide valuable templates. Instead of lazy rounds of questioning, interactive, creative workshop settings such as K&A Psychodrama® real knowledge about the auto mised behaviour of people. This is how you find the signals that the autopilot in the confectionery buyer's head orients itself to. With such insights or with solutions developed in CoCreation sessions, it is dramatically easier to conquer existing contexts for your own brand or to establish new ones.

Who would have thought, for example, that after years of unsuccessful attempts, a new variety of Fisherman's Friend could be created that would quickly become one of the top varieties? Seen through the lens of context marketing, a supposedly banal Fisherman's Friend Spearmint is an almost ingenious step into everyday boredom-free phases: Chewing gum in modern. -

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