

CAANZ Beacon Awards 2016

Case Study

Agency Name: OMD NZ, BEAT, MediaWorks
Advertiser Name: Frucor Beverages
Gold Beacon Award Category: Most Effective

Jono V Ben

V is a powerhouse brand in New Zealand but faced a concerted pricing strategy from its biggest competitor – a pre-eminent global brand. By leveraging the shared values of V and an existing media property relationship, OMD NZ, BEAT and MediaWorks helped Frucor Beverages create a campaign that tapped into Kiwi culture and became the most successful new product launch in V’s history and won Gold in the Most Effective category in the Beacon Awards.

Background

V is a powerhouse brand in NZ. It is the only country in the world where Red Bull (RB) is not the #1 energy drink of choice but, heading into 2015, there were storm clouds gathering on the horizon.

Socially, the category was coming under increasing scrutiny. Energy drinks were attracting greater criticism due to their ingredients and were seen as an extremely unhealthy energy option, particularly amongst young Kiwi males (the main consumers of energy drinks) who are increasingly concerned about diet, exercise and appearance.

V’s main competitor had instigated a concerted pricing strategy and, as the pre-eminent global brand which sponsors the #1 F1 racing team in the world as well as helping people jump out of space, they presented a tough challenge in the race to win the hearts and minds of energy drinkers.

Campaign Objective

Dropping price wasn’t an option – V needed to grow its share of mind among young Kiwi males. The brand needed something special to protect its category share and rejuvenate the category as a whole.

Campaign Overview

V had built a close relationship with MediaWorks' personalities Jono & Ben (J&B) and the affinity between V drinkers and J&B was apparent. Not only did they both share the same sense of humour, but V drinkers resonated with the 'mateship' that J&B have, along with their intense but inevitably friendly competition, which is also embedded within young Kiwi culture.

The aim was to leverage the shared maverick and witty brand values of both parties to build a deeper, more emotional connection with the audience. This would enhance V's 'share of mind' in a far more tangible and local manner than Red Bull could do. It would prove that nothing compares with local Kiwi wit and banter when it comes to connecting with young Kiwi blokes.

The relationship needed to move beyond tactical integration to a truly deep, commercial partnership. It also needed to give J&B full license to tell the V brand story in their own authentic style, which resonated so strongly with the audience. It required more than simply handing the brand over to J&B.

J&B had to become the brand. And the brand had to become J&B.

Media Strategy

OMD NZ, BEAT and MediaWorks collaborated to create a competition between J&B: which of them could create a more successful V flavour? It provided the perfect competitive platform for Jono and Ben to promote their own products while trying to derail their opponent at all costs. It played on the classic Kiwi 'rivalry between mates', plugged into existing elements of their TV show and meant hardcore fans would need to buy both versions to decide which one to support.

With no creative agency involved, the entire project was driven by the media owner, media and PR agencies. It integrated the media property into all elements of the campaign – from ATL and BTL communications, content, on-pack and the development of the product itself.

J&B engaged with all stages of product development and captured footage and audio from factory visits as content for their TV and radio shows. They also filmed a personalised video message for Frucor clients in grocery and petrol stations, resulting in extra shelf and POS support from retailers.

The fully integrated approach included on pack designs and copy, POS artwork featuring images of J&B (crucially providing cut-through against price positioning of rival brands), branded TVCs, weekly segment during their TV show and on-site physical presence at supermarkets and petrol stations.

The social media campaign quickly moved from paid to earned media, with the public taking up the challenge of photographing their favourite flavour – including a photograph of Richie McCaw holding a Jono V.

Bespoke content created for TV, radio and digital continued the competition story to its conclusion with the loser (Ben) forced to listen to the same Justin Bieber song on repeat for three days. (Viewed as the ultimate punishment for any Rock listener.) In the final J&B TV segment, Justin Bieber appeared in studio to sing the song again.

Results

The Jono V Ben campaign was the most successful new product launch in V's history.

The campaign was so effective it almost doubled growth across the entire category, while catapulting brand growth by a staggering 20% at a time when V's #1 competitor was aggressively using price to buy share.

It turned an existing media property relationship into something extraordinary that resonated with its local audience and in doing so set a new benchmark for how a new FMCG product can be launched in this market.