
Maintaining Market Dominance



By Amitava Chattopadhyay , INSEAD Professor of Marketing

Consumer tastes are changing rapidly. For leading brands to stay on top, meet their aspirations.

In 2004, Dove kicked off an advertising campaign that became world famous. The “Campaign for Real Beauty” changed the rules of marketing and challenged popular perceptions of beauty as unrealistic. In response to studies that showed only a small percentage of women described themselves as beautiful, Dove aimed to transform anxiety into confidence.

The campaign’s advertisements, videos and workshops portrayed women of all shapes and sizes, encouraging them to be comfortable in the skin they’re in. It was called one of the top three campaigns of the century by AdAge. Dove’s sales rose from \$2.5 billion to \$4 billion in the 10 years after the launch of the campaign.

What entrenched the campaign and gave it staying power was that it discarded the traditional notions of advertising; peddling products based on product attributes alone. It created a mission for both staff and customers to rally behind, galvanising them in a common purpose.

Such approaches are now spreading to other industries, helping brands to become established, but also to revitalise their offerings in times of decline.

The case of Peter England

Peter England, owned by leading menswear firm Aditya Birla Nuvo, has become a household name in India. As we describe in our [case study](#), Peter England became the fastest apparel brand in Indian history to reach 1 billion rupees in sales and one of the most trusted brands in its category by providing aspirational apparel to India's burgeoning middle class. When it launched in 1997, it focused on positioning its high-quality shirts for young Indian men at the early stages of their career, striving for success.

1997 print ad:

The truth has never been more fashionable.

The honest-to-goodness Peter England range is now available in a stupendous array of styles. At an absolutely honest price: from Rs. 345/- to Rs. 445/-. Wear one. And discover true style.

PETER ENGLAND
The honest shirt.

Rs. 345/- to Rs. 445/-

FOR TRADE ENQUIRIES CONTACT: P.C.M. ENTERPRISES, HYDERABAD. PH: 2464993. FOR COASTAL ANDRA: SUJAY MARKETING, C/O MOHAN TRADERS, VIJAYAWADA. PH: 422678/233. SECUNDRABAD: DENIM FASHION, DIGJAM, A.S. ABDUL KHADER, ROCHA AGAIN, MAHAVEER TEXTILES (EXPORT), SAMROCK GARMENTS, SHIRTS & SHIRTINGS, REDGUN, BARGAINS, HI-FASHION, ENGLISH CHANNEL, CAGANOVA, ESQUIRE. PUNJAGUTTA/AMEERPET: MEENA BAZAAR EXCLUSIVE, DIGJAM, SUJOU NDH, BLUE BLOOD, THE ESPLAINADE, SHIVA GARMENTS. ABIDS/ KOTI: BIG SHOT GOLD, MEENA BAZAAR, DAYALS, CHERMAS, SUMANGAL (JATHANTH), AMARDEEP. NALGONDA X ROAD: DHAAGEY, LAKDI-KA-POOL, ANUTEX. KACHIGUDA: REDGUN. HANUMAKONDA: MEN'S CLUB, KHAMMAM: G.V. TEXTILES (P) LTD. TIRUPATHI: PASUPATHI TEXTILES. NIZAMABAD: SURESH GARMENTS. COSTAL ANDHRA: YIZIANAGARAM. M.S. JAIN ENTERPRISES. VISAKHAPATNAM: M.F.KHAN & CO., SKAL, READYMADES, INDRADEEP, MIRACLES MEN WEAR, INDIAN GARMENTS, NEW DENIMITE PLAZA. KAKINADA: DECENT COLLECTIONS, MR. SHOP, DIGJAM, CLUB COLLECTIONS, YOUNG LOOK. RAJAHMUNDRY: DEVI SONS. ELURU: AMBKA DRESS. VIJAYAWADA: MANHAR, SUMANGAL, TIPPY TOPSY, COTTON VALLEY, NEEDS A.C., DEVEE DRESSES, ROOMMS. YAX & YAX: DEVI MENS CLUB. GUNTUR: MENS TOUCH, TOP SHOP. LAKSHMI DRESS. DURGA MENS WEAR. MELLORE: KINGS COURT, MODERN STORES. WALK-IN-STYLE: HI-FASHION WEAR, SANDHYA RANI MENS WEAR, VARIETY FASHION POINT.

It was the first apparel brand in Indian history to leverage television advertising. Its messages centred on honesty, international quality and sub-premium pricing to court aspiring consumers who wanted to dress for success but found premium brands too expensive.

But despite meteoric growth, its performance in the second half of the 2000s slowed. Peter England had steadily expanded into new categories, especially premium apparel, under the sub-brand of Peter England Elite and party wear, under Peter England Party, to both cater to consumers who aspired to higher grade, higher priced apparels and those drawn to the emerging clubbing culture. But these extensions didn't resonate. The brand was deemed by customers to be frivolous, forfeiting its original value of honesty.

Injecting purpose

With sales in decline, Peter England had to change tack. Rivals were increasing, its pricing had remained constant and manufacturing costs were rising. On the positive side, Peter England was still the most trusted brand in its category, but its positioning was considered out of date. New generations of young men began to look at Peter England as a brand of their fathers' generations. It therefore repositioned itself as an "enabler brand", aiming to make young men more confident about pursuing and achieving their aspirations through honest efforts and hard work.

Like the Dove campaign, the new positioning was injected into all areas of the marketing mix, with investments in R&D to create cutting-edge fashionable designs and the setting up of exclusive and multi brand outlets with more modern shopping environments. This also enabled improved data collection about demand so the firm could better plan manufacturing.

The nationwide advertising campaign was launched under the umbrella, "The Beginning of Good Things", across television, print, outdoor and digital media, initiating another phase of accelerated growth in revenue and profitability.

Current print ad:



Enabling success

With its new campaign the Peter England brand was not only helping the young Indian man to dress well, it had become a facilitator of success. Its celebrity model, Siddharth Suryanarayan, embodied global success with hopeful, bright expressions in the ads. This aligned the organisation behind its customers' ambitions.

Few places are changing faster than India and this case serves as a reminder that no brand can sustain its success without closely monitoring and understanding such changes. Merely having a foreign-sounding brand name is becoming less effective at convincing the next generation in emerging markets.

The new generation of consumers sees success as multidimensional, aspiring to be achievers in many respects, not just career but also in social life and health. In some respects Peter England has hit the sweet spot, with India's average age expected to be 29 by 2020. But massive changes are still taking place. Young people in India, and to some extent around the world, have greater expectations and are increasingly frustrated by the perception that social change is taking place too slowly.

Urbanisation is also changing the fabric of society across emerging markets. By 2030, 590 million Indians will live in cities, making the urban market more

important. This may mean even more change for Peter England. Premium could yet become the key market for apparel players and apparels that make urban life more fulfilling are likely to experience strong growth.

Change is the only constant for consumer goods, but a purposeful brand positioning, which empowers both customers and employees, can ensure a brand transcends the ups and downs of social change. Perhaps that's one reason Johnnie Walker's 16-year old "keep walking" campaign lives on.

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