

Media Plan: Huggies Supreme diapers

By

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IDENTIFICATION OF THE TARGET MARKET

The target market for Huggies Supreme diapers are those middle-to-upper class income families—families that have the purchasing power and willingness to use more disposable income on what can be considered necessary items, when lower-priced alternatives exist. The age group in this target market, specifically, would be individuals between the ages of 25 and 35. These individuals would be more informed about child-care—opposed to younger individuals that may not have given childbirth too much consideration—and are more likely to seek out information regarding the safety of products and their respective positive and negative qualities in order to make the best purchase decision. Typically, the focus is on women, opposed to men, since traditionally women have been the ultimate caregivers of children and tend to do most of the family shopping.

In the disposable diaper industry, I believe that women have more influencing power than men do, in general. Women tend to discuss the personal care industry products on a regular basis, and commonly share ideas and preferences during the discussion. There have been many studies which prove, or show, that the “caregiving” attributes of women regarding children are more pronounced and prevalent, than those attributes in their male counterparts; there is some debate on this issue. Today, men are taking a more active role in the development and raising of children; however, this trend is currently very minor, in comparison to women caregivers, in the U.S., today.

COMMUNICATIONS MESSAGE

In the communication process of determining which Response Hierarchy models pertain to Huggies Supreme, I found that the Innovation-Adoption model would best describe the process used; however, due to the nature of the product and its competition, attention must be used in the Cognitive stage to make consumers aware.

Disposable diapers can only create interest if they offer an attractive benefit to the consumer that outperforms the competition. Huggies Supreme diapers use the most technologically advanced, and superior, nonwovens fabric to create a diaper that not only has all the features of the best selling Huggies Ultratrim, but also has the ability for the entire diaper to stretch. This could interest consumers in a number of ways: first, the diaper would actually “grow” (minimally) with the baby so one would not have to purchase the next larger size diaper prematurely which ends up creating gaps and leaks; secondly, the stretch makes the diaper less constricting and restrictive while providing greater comfort; and lastly, the stretch allows for the “heavy” diaper to actually give a little and not be pressed against the child’s body which provides better rash protection.

These benefits have enough interest-creating features as to entice the consumer to evaluate, mentally, the attributes in order for them to take some action and move into the trial stage. This is a very low-cost trial and with the addition of coupons and promotions, the trial phase can be equal to in cost, or lower, to the currently purchased product—whether it is a branded competitor or private-label competitor.

Finally, the Adoption will take place once the proposed and guaranteed benefits have been tried and proven. Yet, again, this will only happen if the perceived, and/or actual benefit is equal to or greater than that of the competition.

COMMUNICATIONS MIX

Huggies Supreme really uses the rational appeal, along with an emotional appeal, in order to sway consumers. Rationally, they promote the better quality and features that do not exist in other brands. Emotionally, they portray the health, comfort and well-being of the child—which is highly emotional to most caregivers.

Advertising:

Kimberly-Clark uses a % based advertising budget that has typically been, and is projected to be, approximately 15% of sales, corporate wide (Carathers, Wheeler, & Wezniak, 2002). We do find that in 2002, Huggies increased its advertising budget in the first quarter by \$50 million. This was “divided fairly evenly between increased advertising, coupon and other promotion expenses to support Huggies and Pull-ups”(Neff, 2002). This was done to counter Proctor and Gamble’s release of a similar product.

Within the advertising goals of Kimberly-Clark’s Huggies Supreme, we find that they want to inform and persuade. The process is to inform the consumers of the “new and improved” features of the diaper and then persuade the consumer to try and ultimately switch to Huggies Supreme. Once these two areas are conquered, word of mouth tends to be highly beneficial. The media types used in the communications effort are magazines, direct mail, email, the Internet, and television. There are also many informal message boards (MBs) that are full of factual and preferred data that does have an effect on the purchases made by members of the MBs.

In the realm of social responsibility, Huggies Supreme—being a diaper—does not promote any direct social responsibility, or irresponsibility. Advocates of a “green” planet make the case that all disposable diapers have negative impacts on society. On the other hand, the technological advances can be seen as socially responsible because this promotes cleanliness and health.

Sales Promotion:

Within sales promotion, a variety of tools are used to promote the sales of Huggies products. Some examples are, coupons, free samples, a risk-free guarantee of satisfaction, and, at times, prizes—in the form of contests, giveaways, etc.

Public Relations:

When Huggies Supreme was unveiled, Kimberly-Clark used trade magazines and its website to indicate the newest features of the diaper. PR was used in conjunction with Yahoo! Health in order to promote this new product, as well as the entire Huggies line. This is a “joint effort [which] delivers high-quality parenting information to [the] web’s leading site”(Yahoo! Inc., 2002). This can be seen as a form of sponsorship, yet with the help of Yahoo!, and its affiliates, a tremendous amount of PR is available. Huggies has also been recognized by INDA, Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry, for their development and use of the new material used in Huggies Supreme.

Direct Marketing:

Direct marketing is used through mail and email for the purpose of informing customers, and/or sending coupons. Email contains newsletters and links to various sites promoting not only Huggies, but also sites aimed to inform parents on most issues. The information found on the Huggies website is somewhat limited in the technical aspect, due to the fact that they closely guard their patents and product ideas. Yet, the website, like the emails, provide useful links to sites that more information can be obtained.

All the communication types are used quite effectively in providing the message of Huggies Supreme. The household and parenting magazines are its main source of advertisement. Direct mail and email are usually obtained through permission marketing that allows for Kimberly-Clark to send health information and coupons, along with any new product information to your mailboxes with the idea that these consumers, which have requested the information, will use the information and items sent to purchase Huggies products.

REFERENCES

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