



50 Years of Dove: The Story of a Brand (1955-2005)

(Feature Article for Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide's Intranet)

Brand History

Dove. 50 years ago, it was a beauty bar offering a revolutionary new formula containing 1/4 cleansing cream. It went beyond mere "soap" to enhance the American woman's beauty. Today it is a global masterbrand with products ranging from the original beauty bar to facial foam, to deodorant to shampoo. Its latest campaign sets out to widen and redefine the perception of beauty, to make a positive contribution to women's self-esteem all over the world.

Dubbed "Product X" in early 1953, the Dove beauty bar was a new product in a trifecta of Lever Brothers accounts hard-won by David Ogilvy, then a young ad exec for Hewitt, Ogilvy, Benson & Mather, Inc.

While Lever Bros. announced HOB&M's appointment as the agency for their new product in June of '53, it wasn't until 1955 that the first advertising ran and the message: "1/4 Cleansing Cream" along with Dove's other standard messaging was developed.

And, even though beauty trends and the representation of women have changed throughout the decades, the consistency of Dove's and David Ogilvy's original messages: "1/4 Cleansing Cream"; "Dove Won't Dry Your Skin Like Soap Can"; "Dove is Good for Your Skin" is still selling the brand today.

So in 2005, we celebrate 50 years of Dove's relationship with women. Dove has evolved as a brand in the most revolutionary time in women's history. The body of work not only shows the evolution of Dove as a brand, it also shows how the attitudes of women and their role in society has changed in the past 50 years.

1950s

DOVE PRIMARY MESSAGING DEVELOPED

When David Ogilvy started working with Lever on Dove, he relentlessly interrogated the product people for a point of difference. He discovered that stearic acid, the more technical name for "cleansing cream", was the key ingredient on Dove. In 1955, the Dove beauty bar was launched as a superior product with a real demonstrable point of difference.

At first, the media plan mainly consisted of newspaper "split runs" in various local markets. Television, the era's "new media", was debated as the appropriate medium for Dove.

But, television eventually was incorporated into the media plan and became a powerful way to broadcast Dove's messaging. The work produced in the 50s also shows David Ogilvy's experiments with different television production conventions.

1960s

SPOKESPEOPLE/CELEBRITY APPEARANCES

There were many hidden gems in Dove's early advertising, among them celebrity endorsements. Dove was endorsed by everyone from Groucho Marx, to the dancers on *American Bandstand*, to the cast *Father Knows Best*.

FACE TESTS

Late in the 1950s, research was conducted which concluded the face was the gold standard in skin care. So from 1959-1968, Dove advertising focused on the face and introduced the use of the "Dove Face Test", still using the original strategic focus of "Doesn't Dry Like Soap" and "1/4 Cleansing Cream".

In the late '60s, "real" women testimonials were used for the first time to advertise Dove. More women heard Dove's promise, more women tried it -- and were converted.

1970s

TESTIMONIALS

The use of real women proved to be so strong it was decided the vehicle of the Face Test wasn't needed. The use of real women, with their stories, continued the strategic focus on Dove's non-drying benefit.

THE "LIZ" SPOTS

The "Liz" spots are an extension of the Face Test put in context with "Liz", the trusted owner of a beauty salon. When her customers complain of dry skin, Liz demonstrates the Dove difference.

LATE 1970's - "7 DAY TEST"

The communication of Dove's non-drying effect on skin was further strengthened by a return to real women and the introduction of the "7 Day Test" in the late '70s.

MISCELLANEOUS

There were some one-off spots which did not speak in the voice Dove had adopted by the early 70s but were good examples of the transition of women's roles: in one, she's throwing a hip dinner-party with swinging guests, yet the copy reads: Somewhere between the vacuum cleaner and the kitchen sink. . .

1980s

ONE WOMAN TESTIMONIALS FOR 7 DAYS

In the late 1980s, the advertising evolved to the use of one woman, who not only talked about the benefits of Dove on her skin but also what it did for her self-esteem. A charismatic and memorable beauty named Jean Shy joyfully shared her discovery of Dove's benefits with television viewers. And Dove's "Conviction of Users" real-women testimonial campaign was born. The Conviction of Users campaign, along with the Medical Program, drove the Dove Bar to its first double-digit share -- and market leadership in the US.

1990s

In 1989, Dove was launched in Italy using the "Conviction of Users" campaign, as well as the Medical Program. Successful test markets in France, Germany and Austria followed in 1990. In 1991, Dove began its global roll-out. Between 1991 and 1994, Dove was launched in 55 new countries.

How Dove used real women became a real discriminator for the campaign. The "Switchers" approach to Dove's testimonial campaign was the format that was used for the global launch of Dove. By 1996, Dove had been launched in over 80 countries.

LITMUS TEST

Beauty and science meet. Visual proof of Dove's superiority was dramatically conveyed through the "Litmus Test". The ads were used in nearly all expansion markets 6-9 months after launch, with a powerful and noticeable effect on sales.

1990s/2000s

The global roll-out continues to Brazil, South Africa, Japan and Thailand. In the mid-1990s, Dove's expansion into other beauty products began, introducing body wash, deodorant, shampoo and advanced forms of skincare like nutrient creams and facial foams.

In 1999, Dove was launched in Japan. Within one year, Dove Facial Foam achieved 16% market share, taking over leadership from the long-standing leading brand, Biore.

And in 2000, Dove Hair Care was introduced in Taiwan. It became the number-one shampoo brand within 6 months, with a 15% market share.

OTHER PRODUCTS

In 1995, Dove took its first significant step outside the cleansing bar category with the US launch of Moisturizing Body Wash. In many expansion markets, Body Wash became an integral part of Dove sales. Additional categories swiftly followed: Deodorants: 1997, Body Lotions: 1998, Facial Cleansers: 1999.

2000s

A TIME OF INNOVATION FOR DOVE

After exploring ways to expand Dove's advertising beyond testimonials, the Dove Europe team found a powerful way to use real women for Dove Firming Lotion in "Real Curves". The creative idea is consistent with Dove's celebration of real women -- but in a fresh, modern and impactful way. Eight "ordinary" women, not supermodels, from London participated in a photo shoot proudly showing off their Dove-firm real curves to illustrate that "firming the curves of Size-8 supermodels isn't much of a challenge". Print and TV was developed from the photo shoots.

THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL BEAUTY

The "Real Curves" campaign led to the "Campaign for Real Beauty". CFRB is based on redefining society's pre-set definitions of "beauty". It aims to change the status quo and offer in its place a broader, healthier, more democratic view of beauty. Built around the web, print and outdoor, the campaign offers no product placement, just Dove's philosophy behind women, beauty and self-esteem.

CONCLUSION

Dove's success cannot be attributed solely to what Dove has done, but also to how Dove has done it. From beauty bar to global masterbrand, from optimizing women's beauty to redefining beauty's parameters, Dove's legacy is far-reaching and truly global. 50 years later, Dove has maintained its core messaging, while changing with cultural and generational perceptions of beauty. No matter where they are in the world, Dove's quality ingredients and products give women one thing they want -- the confidence to let their inner beauty shine through. As the mother in one of the testimonials said, "If you look good, you feel good. If you feel good, you do good." If Dove can make more women feel good about their beauty, then it is making a powerful contribution to women the world over.