

# Keeping the love alive: How to breathe new life into an icon

**It used to be so simple. Big brands advertised on big media. Big stores stocked them. Everyone got big bucks.**

But then social media and the availability of big data meant that the more niche players out there were able to gain traction. The broad-brushstroke approach of established brands suddenly looked a bit tired, and they slowly started to realise they were going to have to work a lot harder if they wanted to stay in the game.

That's been happening with varying degrees of success across the board ever since. Some of the most loved brands of today have been around for a very long time but they still manage to ride the zeitgeist. Look at Pepsi Max and Doritos, two brands that have remained culturally relevant over time, responding, diversifying, and growing. (Doritos famously dropped the name from its logo, tapping into the 'anti-marketing' mood of Gen Zers, for example, and Pepsi Max put social media at the heart of its campaign and made itself more relevant to Millennials.)

Mars Wrigley partnered with Straight Forward Design on Skittles' first-ever 'giant' sub brand, which needed to strike the right balance between differentiation from the core brand and celebrating this new, unique product.

If you're a brand manager of an established product or service, a few key questions that you might be asking yourself are: "How do we keep people's interest piqued? What can we do to attract new consumers?"

Curating brands so they remain modern and relevant without losing what it is that people love about them in the first place is the key, especially with iconic or legacy brands.

But working with foundation brands and evolving them to keep consumer interest buoyant requires a specific and nuanced approach because it involves protecting the integrity and

values of the original brand, while creating something new and exciting at the same time. It's a bit of a balancing act.

To build excitement and gain traction, Straight Forward Design created a quirky influencer pack – a brightly branded box houses a series of Skittles-centric props to accentuate the big and small aspect of the Giants versus the original-sized product.

In today's fast-paced and multiplatform environment, it's crucial that people are able to find a product easily, understand immediately that it's part of a core brand they already know and love – and then be given new reasons to connect.

It makes good business sense to keep delighting and engaging your customers. This might be via whimsical and fun sub-

brands, or highly covetable limited-editions, or holiday-specific roll-outs. Whatever the strategy, evolving the core brand for a new product is about hitting a sweet spot, especially with an established brand that's already loved by so many. Treat it with due diligence and respect while you're working on generating a buzz.

You'll know when you've succeeded because you'll have created something that feels like a natural but exciting progression. Consumers old and new will be getting enthused, and you'll have kept an old favourite in the game for a little longer.

*Mike Foster is creative director and co-founder*

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