

INTRODUCTION

This is a story about the power of storytelling. It's a story about a big, invisible gum brand named Extra that was on the verge of being forgotten. It had no meaning. No one cared about it. It simply existed. That is, until we started telling stories that made people smile, reflect and cry. While our strategic journey seems simple now, it was a messy process and it took us several years to crack the code.

Throughout this paper, we've highlighted the details of our story that should not be shared publicly. So anything that is **highlighted grey in green type** is not for publication and should be redacted. Thank you for reading our story and respecting our privacy.

What was the situation?

Extra was experiencing pervasive and steady declines. In fact Extra had been declining ██████████ ██████████. In its heyday, Extra enjoyed the #1 position in the category and was a vibrant part of pop culture. But by 2013, Extra had fallen to third place and was down ██████████ compared to the prior year.²

Like the myriad of competitors in the category, Extra was battling for ownership of functional benefits, like clean, fresh and flavorful. Extra was very healthy when it comes to product quality, product offerings, distribution and price. People knew of the Extra brand, but they **had stopped thinking about Extra**.

At first blush, it seemed the solution was to develop a new campaign grounded in the brand's original launch positioning from the 1980's, "long-lasting flavor enjoyment." The problem was, it didn't work. Rounds of creative development and testing showed that while the ads around "long-lasting flavor" were great at informing consumers, there was nothing that pulled them into the brand and made them *desire* it.

How did we approach the problem?

Instead of debating different positioning or propositions, we took a giant step back and revisited what we knew about how advertising really works in this category.

Like most impulse categories, we knew that purchase decisions in the confectionary category were made in under two seconds and that 95% of these decisions were made unconsciously. Through our partnership with the Ehrenberg Bass Institute, our understanding of this dynamic deepened and we learned that only the first two to three confectionary brands to unconsciously pop into your head at the checkout lane even have the chance to be considered for purchase.

Our discussions around the robust Ehrenberg Bass data reinforced our belief that what pops into people's heads at this critical moment are brand stories (not propositions, benefits or reasons to believe). Furthermore, the brand stories that have the best opportunity to seed themselves in our unconscious mind are stories that make us *feel* something. This was an "ah ha" moment for Extra. **This was the moment when we evolved from relying on a pure product story to investigating ways to build brands by telling emotional stories with the power to be remembered at the moment of truth.**

¹ Nielsen, "Wrigley Monthly Reporting," Total Extra Dollar Sales % vs YA, YE 8/12 & YE 8/13

² Nielsen, "Wrigley Monthly Reporting," August 2013.

So we decided to diverge from category convention and stop relying on rational product benefits to carry our marketing. We sharpened our strategic focus on the power of emotional storytelling in brand equity work as a means to make Extra more memorable.

What were our objectives?

We don't put stock in claimed data, and we don't look at increases in purchase *intent*, or brand *perception*. We look at a few key things: Did we reach people at scale? Did the people we reached with advertising buy more Extra than those who we did not reach? Did the overall effort result in a net positive sales lift for the brand?

Those beliefs led us to our objectives for this campaign:

1. Generate a significant amount of reach and evoke an emotionally charged response from consumers. We needed to get Extra seen, felt, and remembered.
2. Deliver emotionally impactful advertising that results in a significant [REDACTED] lift in Extra gum purchases among those exposed to the ads (vs. those not exposed).
3. Reverse the overall brand sales declines and get Extra back to positive sales velocity³.

Who were we trying to reach?

Based on internal research, we knew that most everyone (13-49-year-olds) enjoys chewing gum; they just weren't buying it. To uncover big universal truths that would resonate with the masses, we dug into a new research study⁴ that shed light on consumers' need states relating to gum. **We identified a motivation area of "connections," that suggested one of the major benefits of gum was for the social aspect of sharing it with others.**

While this was true of all users in the category to an extent, some consumers found this benefit more motivating than others. These people could be young or old, introverted or extroverted, but they are especially caring and thoughtful. To them, nothing is better than the joy that comes from meaningful human connections and real shared experiences.

³ Sales velocity is defined as the number of units sold per distribution point.

⁴ "U.S. Gum Growth: Consumer Demand Spaces." Boston Consulting Group, 2012.

What was the big idea?

When you give a little extra of yourself, you get so much more in return. This sentiment was captured best in our campaign tagline: “Give Extra, get extra.”

What was the insight that led to the idea?

After decades in market, we were aware that sharing was an inherent part of our product experience. Now that we had focused on a strategic audience who cared about sharing, we saw things coming together and wanted to push our insights to the next level. In order to give our new positioning a unique and credible foundation we needed to understand more about why sharing truly mattered.

We studied the science behind it and worked with experts, like “happiness guru” Tal Ben-Shahar, who explained “one of the best ways to raise levels of happiness is through giving.” We learned that small gestures related to connecting, giving and sharing—a knowing glance, a smile, a helping hand ... even something as simple as sharing a stick of gum—are scientifically proven methods for increasing happiness.⁵ **We experience joy when we share the good things in our lives with others.**

How did the idea come to life?

In 2013, Extra launched a new brand campaign that set out to create an emotional connection with people. The insight at the core of the idea was that “when you give a little extra, you get so much more in return.”

First we created an emotional piece of storytelling that beautifully depicts the meaningful connections that people get when they give something as simple as a stick of Extra gum. In a :60 film called “[Origami](#),”⁶ we showed the bond created between a father and daughter through the simple act of sharing a stick of Extra. We brought the idea to life with paid media in TV, online video, print, online banners, and social media.

Then in 2015, Extra followed the highly successful “Origami” film with a new take on the idea. “[The Story of Sarah and Juan](#)”⁷ starts with a boy meeting a girl in a high school hallway, but we quickly move to glimpses of their relationship growing over time. We see their first kiss, their prom, managing a long-distance relationship, even an argument. In each vignette, we see Sarah offer Juan a stick of Extra. In the climax of their story, Sarah is surprised to find that all along Juan has been sketching their moments on the inside of each wrapper. He has them in an art gallery, as an elaborate set-up to the final sketch, a proposal.

⁵ Personal interview; Ben-Shahar, Tal. *Being Happy*. McGraw-Hill, 2010.

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxZu-6jewL4>

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLpDiIVX0Wo>

The entire story is told over the course of a two-minute film. We created :15 versions that focus on individual vignettes and :30 and :60 versions that show condensed versions of the full story. But we knew that the full two-minute version was the most emotionally resonant. We wanted as many people as possible to see the full version before seeing the shorter versions in mass media. So we launched the full-length version online with paid media support two weeks prior to the television and cinema premiere to maximize exposure.

There is no dialog throughout the story, so the music plays a key role in setting the tone and advancing the narrative. We chose a former “American Idol” contestant, Haley Reinhart, to sing “Can’t Help Falling in Love,” and filmed Ms. Reinhart in the studio singing our new arrangement. Her performance captured the emotional weight of our story, so we edited it together with the story from the commercial to create [an additional piece of branded entertainment](#).⁸

What were the results?

Our new strategic approach sparked a dramatic turnaround for the brand. In social media channels, consumers celebrated Extra for telling such beautiful and emotional stories. Major news outlets lauded the brand for getting the nation to cry over a gum ad, and our two-minute brand film has been viewed over 100 million times. But most importantly, Extra reversed an extended decline in sales.

Objective 1: Generate a significant amount of reach and evoke an emotionally charged response from consumers. We needed to get Extra seen, felt, and remembered.

Results: The film quickly became a national news story and generated massive amounts of social conversation. Ellen Degeneres tweeted about it to her 53 million followers (unpaid), people began posting their own gum wrapper sketches, and some even produced parody videos to capitalize on the popularity of video. In social listening, we’ve seen over 530K tweets about the commercial⁹ and the total potential impressions of those tweets are over 750 million.

Shortly after we first posted the video to YouTube, a page called Love What Matters on Facebook reposted it. The video captured peoples’ hearts, and quickly became a phenomenon. Within the 48 hours it had over 40 million views. This post from Love What Matters – that was not a paid promotion - so far has garnered 88 million views, 1.3 million likes, and 1.47 million shares.

In December 2015, YouTube viewers voted “The Story of Sarah Juan” as the Ad of the Year in the “Gives You The Feels” category.¹⁰

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZeU7S2xKpA>

⁹ Crimson Hexagon social listening analysis, December 2015

¹⁰ <https://youtubebeadsoftheyear.com>

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¹¹ Nielson, "Wrigley Monthly Reporting," December 2015



What did we learn?

Instead of playing to people's heads with messages about flavor or function, we realized that it was far more important to win over their hearts with powerful storytelling that infused the brand with meaning. In a cluttered category that relies on quick impulse purchases, we needed to tap into consumers' emotions to have our brand subconsciously remembered, and thus more often chosen, at shelf.

TOTAL WORD COUNT (EXCLUDING FOOTNOTES AND GRAPHS): 1,986