

The Role of Evidence in Establishing Awareness for Branded Ingredients

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To better understand the role of scientific and clinical research when marketing a branded ingredient, let's revisit what a branded ingredient is. A branded ingredient has a trusted name. It has a unique logo with a stamp of quality to back it up. It has a unique story to tell. It may have an established reputation and customer loyalty. A branded ingredient is uniquely different from its competitors. It may offer unique or various benefits over its generic counterpart. There is a certain level of quality and superiority that comes to mind when thinking about a brand. Let's look at a well-known household brand. Even though acetaminophen has been first used as medicine in the late 19th century, an average consumer would not be familiar with its generic name. However, people recognize its branded name, Tylenol® as a market leader among pain and fever medications available over-the-counter at every pharmacy, store and supermarket. A brand is familiar – it denotes consumer recognition. Let's look at another example. When the generic name, sildenafil is mentioned, you would probably not be familiar with it. As soon as the brand name, Viagra® is mentioned, consumers recognize it instantly, and they can even tell you what it is used to treat! Tylenol® and Viagra® have indeed reached their stardom. While a large marketing budget, innovative marketing communications and positioning are propelling forces behind these brands, the underlying success of these brands is attributed to the scientific/clinical evidence that backs the product's quality. So before marketing any branded ingredient, there must be an incredible emphasis and investment in scientific evidence/clinical research to build brand awareness and value in order to set it apart from other brands and commodities.

Why is the scientific evidence crucial for establishing brand awareness and long-term success?

Let's consider the target market for branded ingredients. These include: 1. Consumers; 2. Product companies; and 3. Retail buyers. Let's start with the consumer. Consumers and the like need to see evidence that the product or ingredient in question will do what it says it will do. Consumers are savvier during these times of economic recession and they are buying smarter. They are neither blind buyers nor experimenters, but are consciously buying with evidence and price in mind. More often than not, if consumers have not tried the product, they will wait to hear a friend or family member's opinion of the product before making a purchase decision. Consumers are emotional – if they don't feel a connection to your product/ingredient or they don't perceive that the product/ingredient will benefit them, they will not be influenced to buy. Consumers connect when 1. The product/ingredient will meet a need for them and; 2. The product or ingredient is familiar to them. In the May 2009 issue of Nutritional Outlook, CEO/co-founder of Corazonas said that after seeing a respected logo, consumers would feel more comfortable about a product's effectiveness knowing that the science and research was there.¹ There is a certain level of trust and confidence that consumers have when they see and hear a brand.

“There is a certain level of quality and superiority that comes to mind when thinking about a brand.”

Marketing a branded functional ingredient to a consumer is by far the most challenging task for any marketer. Educating consumers on the benefits of the ingredient for them, why they need it, and why they should choose that ingredient brand over another is very important. Successful brand companies will “approach the science from the consumer perspective.”² They will make their clinical studies or science relevant to the consumer. They

¹ Kwok, J. (2009). *The Benefits of Co-branding*. Retrieved June 2009, from the Nutritional Outlook website: <http://www.nutritionaloutlook.com/article.php?ArticleID=2275>.

² Danielson, M. (2008). *Using Clinical Research to Build Brand Awareness*. Retrieved on June 2, 2009 from, Natural Products Insider website: <http://www.naturalproductsinsider.com/articles/using-clinical-research.html>.

will use the data to influence consumers to change their current habits. They will make the data and health claims easily understood. They will explain how the ingredient product works (that is usually done visually) and apply it to the consumer’s daily lifestyle. They will explain how the consumer’s daily life will be improved after taking the ingredient product.

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Let’s take a look at a world-leading hair care product Pantene – Pro-V. A new naturally-based formulation of the hair care line recently launched called “Nature Fusion.” In the recent TV ad, they emphasized all of the above points visually. First they differentiated why this product is just as effective as a salon-grade hair care product. They utilized a female celebrity spokesperson to give the consumer a visual of what soft, shiny and healthy hair looks like after using the product. Most importantly, they visually illustrated the fusion of the new ingredient, the India-derived Cassia plant, with the scientifically-backed Pro-V ingredients used in previous formulations. Also illustrated was a 3 dimensional visual of an enlarged hair strand and how the new formulation “makes fragile hair stronger against damage in 14 days.” If a consumer goes on the product website, the company gives an easily understood interpretation of the science and how it improves the daily life of a consumer, which gives a consumer a clear reason to purchase the product. It says,

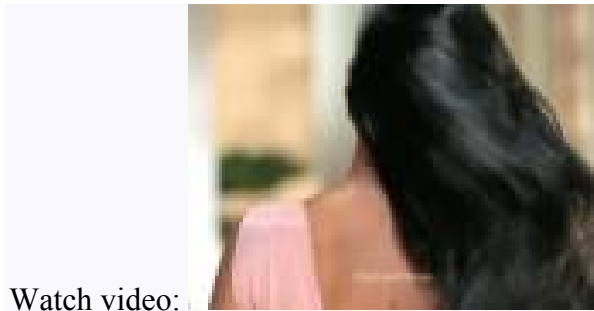
- “Pantene science has found a way to harness the conditioning properties of the cassia plant.”³

³ *Discover why it works with Dr. Jeni Thomas, Ph.D. Pantene Senior Scientist, Procter & Gamble.* (2008-2009). Retrieved June 2009, from Pantene’s website: http://www.pantene.com/en-US/article/nf_science.aspx



- “The gum powder produced from the cassia seed is where those conditioning properties lie.”⁴
- “In developing the shampoo, we used a scientific process to add positive charges to create the cassia polymer, which enables it to adhere to hair.”⁵
- What makes cassia so great in our shampoos is its conditioning abilities. Pantene science has found a way to [to create a shield that leaves hair naturally radiant and protected]... the benefits [of the Cassia Conditioning Complex] are deposited at the rinsing stage. This provides an invisible layer of protection against the friction caused by brushes and combs running through the hair while it is wet. Once dry, the Cassia Complex formula boosts hair’s shine.”⁶

Clearly, the makers of this product, Procter & Gamble captured the essence of branding this product with science.



Watch video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s109425Suzs&feature=email>

⁴ *Discover why it works with Dr. Jeni Thomas, Ph.D. Pantene Senior Scientist, Procter & Gamble.* (2008-2009). Retrieved June 2009, from Pantene’s website: http://www.pantene.com/en-US/article/nf_science.aspx

⁵ *Discover why it works with Dr. Jeni Thomas, Ph.D. Pantene Senior Scientist, Procter & Gamble.* (2008-2009). Retrieved June 2009, from Pantene’s website: http://www.pantene.com/en-US/article/nf_science.aspx

⁶ *Discover why it works with Dr. Jeni Thomas, Ph.D. Pantene Senior Scientist, Procter & Gamble.* (2008-2009). Retrieved June 2009, from Pantene’s website: http://www.pantene.com/en-US/article/nf_science.aspx

Even among ingredient suppliers' largest and highly-specific business-to-business-market, marketing branded ingredients to manufacturers and retailers should not be treated differently than marketing to consumers. Although these groups are less emotionally driven, they value scientific and clinical data so much so that it drives their decision-making. Remember, these markets have a high ethical responsibility to their own consumers to provide products that have been tested, tried and proven to be of high-quality. They may have their own brand identity and loyal customer base that must be protected. Manufacturers and retailers are no less deserving of the same focus, attention and ethical standard than any potential consumer investor. Education of the evidence is key to winning over these markets. Ingredient suppliers must seek to educate both the manufacturer and retailer on the ingredient composition of the brand and on the benefits of such composition over the raw commodity forms. It is not enough to focus on chemical composition, e.g. we have 95% of x in our product.⁷ However clinical data must prove that 95% of x is better and more effective than say 85% or 75% of x in the product.⁸ The data must reveal 1. Why and how the particular ingredient (or combination of ingredients) is uniquely different from their generic counterparts in terms of effectiveness, safety, tolerability and metabolism; 2. The attributes derived from the ingredient or combination thereof; and 3. Evidence to supports its proprietary health claims.

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A known example of such a successful branded ingredient is Splenda® Brand Sweetener (McNeil Nutritionals). Sucralose, the sole ingredient in Splenda® is a

⁷ Dalton, A. (2005). *How to make the most of branded ingredients*. Retrieved June 1, 2009, from Natural Foods Merchandiser website: <http://naturalfoodsmerchandiser.com/tabId/107/itemId/1609/How-to-make-the-most-of-branded-ingredients.aspx>.

⁸ Dalton, A. (2005). *How to make the most of branded ingredients*. Retrieved June 1, 2009, from Natural Foods Merchandiser website: <http://naturalfoodsmerchandiser.com/tabId/107/itemId/1609/How-to-make-the-most-of-branded-ingredients.aspx>.

non-nutritive (no calorie) sweetener. Sucralose has been able to surpass many of its sugar substitute counterparts in its usefulness because it is heat and acid stable.⁹ Extensive scientific and clinical research has shown that sucralose is sweet, safe to use and stable in a variety of food types such as baked foods, tomato sauces and other acidic foods over long time periods.¹⁰ It has been shown to be safe in many clinical studies with pregnant women.¹¹ Maximum daily intakes are well understood.¹² It is safe for use by diabetics and others who are concerned about their sugar intake because of its non-metabolic properties.¹³ In addition, it does not promote tooth decay.¹⁴ The use of sucralose as a no-calorie sweetener has been approved in over 80 countries, including the US in 1998 and Canada in 1991, and is used in over 4000 food and drink products¹⁵, namely soft drink beverages such as Diet Coke. Sucralose has grown to be one of the top sugar substitutes in its class over calorie-containing sugar (sucrose, fructose, etc.) and is helpful in controlling calorie intake (4,8). Sucralose is also marketed as SucraPlus® by Fusion Nutraceuticals.

⁹ Knight I. (1994). *The development and applications of sucralose, a new high-intensity sweetener*. Can J Physiol Pharmacol 72:435-439.

¹⁰ Knight I. (1994). *The development and applications of sucralose, a new high-intensity sweetener*. Can J Physiol Pharmacol 72:435-439 & McGee H. (2004). *On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen*. Scribner, New York

¹¹ ADA Reports. (2004). *Position of the American Dietetic Association: Use of nutritive and nonnutritive sweeteners*. J Am Diet Assoc. 104:255-275.

¹² ADA Reports. (2004). *Position of the American Dietetic Association: Use of nutritive and nonnutritive sweeteners*. J Am Diet Assoc. 104:255-275.

¹³ ADA Reports. (2004). *Position of the American Dietetic Association: Use of nutritive and nonnutritive sweeteners*. J Am Diet Assoc. 104:255-275.

¹⁴ ADA Reports. (2004). *Position of the American Dietetic Association: Use of nutritive and nonnutritive sweeteners*. J Am Diet Assoc. 104:255-275.

¹⁵ Splenda® No-Calorie Sweetener Fact Sheet, Retrieved from, the Splenda website:
http://www.splenda.com/page.jhtml?id=splenda/news/promotions/press/nocal_facts.inc

Unlike manufacturers, retailers usually don't have access to the most-up-to-date scientific/clinical information when making decisions about which brands to carry.¹⁶ So suppliers must take full responsibility for showing evidence that their branded ingredient does something better than a placebo. Taking these steps will 1. Increase the likelihood of selling success; 2. Show the company's commitment to science, ethics and integrity, characteristics they can't risk to compromise (although, customers should take the utmost precaution to mitigate risk by doing their own due-diligence), 3. Build a lasting relationship based on trust.

Co-branding opportunities imminent with clinical research

Co-branding partnerships are inevitable when a company is convinced of the value of a product's scientific and clinical evidence and recognizes dedication to continuous research. Scientific evidence builds credibility. Scientific evidence builds trust among all potential investors of cobranded products. Consumers feel better knowing that a product contains a branded ingredient that they recognize, value and trust. They feel confident that the health claims of the product are accurate. Product manufacturers are extremely attracted to ingredient suppliers that can provide insurmountable evidence about their products. With so many companies not having validation for their product's health claims and little to no capital to invest in scientific/clinical research, they actively seek co-branding partnership opportunities with ingredient suppliers who are known and trusted for having done solid research. Product manufacturers are aware that consumers are more likely to purchase a product and purchase it for a higher price with a valued ingredient prominently shown on the packaging. Medical and healthcare professionals are more likely to support and educate consumers on cobranded products if they have been won over by solid product research. Retailers are more likely to carry a brand that has been proven with evidence and differentiated among their raw commodity forms. Evidence inevitably translates into increased sales, brand awareness, loyalty and not to mention a sustainable competitive

¹⁶ Dalton, A. (2005). *How to make the most of branded ingredients*. Retrieved June 1, 2009, from Natural Foods Merchandiser website: <http://naturalfoodsmerchandiser.com/tabId/107/itemId/1609/How-to-make-the-most-of-branded-ingredients.aspx>.

advantage. **To simply put, clinical research helps sell brands.** Evidence is the tool companies need to establish credibility and set their brand apart from competition. Partnerships formed based on trust will inevitably lead to co-branding. For long-term success, we can bet that a partnership is far more likely to happen with a supplier that has been dedicated to getting solid and up-to-date research. Let's take a look at a successful co-branding venture accredited to solid years of scientific and clinical research.

Corazonas Heart-Healthy Potato chips®, which launched in early January 2009, is a groundbreaking and truly innovative example of a co-branding venture. Corazonas®, which means “heart” in Spanish, teamed up with Archer Daniel’s



Midland (ADM), the makers of a branded ingredient, CardioAid®, to produce the first brand of healthy potato chips of its kind that has been clinically proven to “reduce low density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL) by up to 15%” without compromising the great taste of classic potato chips despite having 40% less fat than classic chips.¹⁷ CardioAid® is a brand of plant sterols.

Numerous scientific and clinical studies dating back more than 30 years have shown that plant sterols reduces low density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol,¹⁸ have a decreasing effect on the absorption of dietary cholesterol,¹⁹ and reduces LDL-, HDL-cholesterol, apolipoproteins, and triacylglycerols when added to reduced-fat margarine spread.²⁰ According to the CEO and co-

¹⁷ Cosgrove, J. (2008). *Good-For-You Snacking: Corazonas' cholesterol-reducing potato chips are actually heart healthy.* Retrieved June 3, 2009, from Nutraceuticals World website: <http://www.nutraceuticalsworld.com/articles/2008/01/online-exclusive-goodforyou-snacking>.

¹⁸ Jones PJ, MacDougall DE, Ntanios F, Vanstone CA. 1977. *Dietary Phytosterols as Cholesterol-lowering Agents in Humans.* Can J Physiol Pharmacol. 75:217-227.

¹⁹ Mattson FH, Volpenheim RA, Erickson BA. 1977. *Effect of Plant Sterol Esters on the Absorption of Dietary Cholesterol.* J Nutr 107:1139-1146.

²⁰ Maki KC, Davidson MH, Umporowicz DM, Schaefer EJ, Dicklin MR, Ingram KA, Chen S, McNamara JR, Gebhart BW, Ribaya-Mercado JD, Perrone G, Robins SJ, Franke WC. 2001. *Lipid Responses to Plant Sterol-Enriched reduced-fat spreads incorporated into a National Cholesterol Education Program Step I Diet.* Am J Clin Nutr. 74:33-43.

founder of Corazonas®, Ramona Capello the venture could not have happened if it wasn't for CardioAid's® strong and extensive scientific/clinical research supporting its cholesterol-lowering claims which ultimately helped establish credibility for the new potato chip brand.²¹ They could not have afforded to do clinical research, so they were able to establish validity with the strong research that ADM had done, said the CEO.²² Corozonas® managed to break ground in leading supermarkets, natural food retailers and club stores available in 5 different flavors.²³ Many other successful co-branding partnerships including Minute Maid Premium Orange Juice and Corowise™, another plant sterol clinically proven to reduce LDL cholesterol came about because of the scientific evidence available for Corowise™.

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To conclude, let's recap what the definition of a brand is. A brand “should be used to convey a product that is demonstrably different from other ingredients e.g. it should be clinically proven [and] has a unique composition...”²⁴ In order to command long-term market success, brands must present several points of differentiation to set themselves apart from being just a commodity ingredient with a logo. The several points of differentiation must include 1. The patented composition of ingredients; 2. The benefit of using the patented form of ingredients; 3.

²¹ Kwok, J. (2009). *The Benefits of Co-branding*. Retrieved June 2009, from the Nutritional Outlook website: <http://www.nutritionaloutlook.com/article.php?ArticleID=2275>.

²² Kwok, J. (2009). *The Benefits of Co-branding*. Retrieved June 2009, from the Nutritional Outlook website: <http://www.nutritionaloutlook.com/article.php?ArticleID=2275>.

²³ Cosgrove, J. (2008). *Good-For-You Snacking: Corazonas' cholesterol-reducing potato chips are actually heart healthy*. Retrieved June 3, 2009, from Nutraceuticals World website: <http://www.nutraceuticalsworld.com/articles/2008/01/online-exclusive-goodforyou-snacking>.

²⁴ Winter, J. (2008). *Banking on Brands*. Retrieved on June 2, 2009 from, Functional Ingredients website: <http://www.functionalingredientsmag.com/article/Business-Strategies/banking-on-brands.aspx>



The evidence that substantiates those claims. If you want brand awareness for your product, you will need to get a hold of good and solid science and clinical research. Some big industry players like Paul Willis, President/CEO of Cypress Systems said in an Oct 2008 Functional Ingredients magazine article that "...several companies can throw a boatload of money behind a branding campaign, but at the end of the day, the brand and product must have a proven value in the marketplace."²⁵ V.P. of Sales and Marketing for Natraceutical Group, Kristina Williams, said that "consumers and manufacturers want to know more details regarding efficacy and scientific substantiation."²⁶ Take the example of the successful players in the branded ingredients industry. They "have a clear focus on their customers' needs, invest in incredible clinical research, use the best ingredients and manufacturing processes, and support key distribution points by teaching consumers why and where to buy"²⁷ Are you ready to jump on the "BRANDwagon"?

²⁵ Functional Ingredients Staff. (2008). *Hopping on the Brandwagon: The Essentials of branding ingredients*. Retrieved on June 2, 2009 from, Functional Ingredients website: <http://www.functionalingredientsmag.com/article/Business-Strategies/hopping-on-the-brandwagon.aspx>.

²⁶ Functional Ingredients Staff. (2008). *Hopping on the Brandwagon: The Essentials of branding ingredients*. Retrieved on June 2, 2009 from, Functional Ingredients website: <http://www.functionalingredientsmag.com/article/Business-Strategies/hopping-on-the-brandwagon.aspx>.

²⁷ Danielson, M. (2008). *Using Clinical Research to Build Brand Awareness*. Retrieved on June 2, 2009 from, Natural Products Insider website: <http://www.naturalproductsinsider.com/articles/using-clinical-research.html>.