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## The Healing Process Needed for Gatorade

Feb 3, 2009 5:12 PM, By Erik Hauser

There is always something to be said about the level of connection that consumers have with brands. There are obviously various types of connections for various reasons – some very rational while others extremely emotional. Often brands must undergo facelifts in order to maintain their relationships in good standing with their core consumers. Being seen as dated, or out of touch with consumers' current needs is the ultimate kiss of death.

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We are all keenly aware that the enhanced drink category has become hyper-saturated and it would probably be safe to assume that Gatorade has been losing market share. Some of the market share that they lost would come back as trends fade while some would be gone for good. The question is: What does Gatorade need to do to keep their current market share while retaking what they've lost?

For years Gatorade, for the most part, continued with business as usual and really didn't make any bold moves. In essence, the Gatorade brand remained static and allowed the competition to lure away on their consumer base with a myriad of claims – some legit while others should be looked into by the F.D.A. Gatorade was extremely slow to react.

When Gatorade did react they seem to have overshot the mark by coming out with a totally revamped look that has left consumers baffled. There is such disconnect between the current look and feel of the brand and what it used to be – it's quite schizophrenic. I actually watched the game with some people whose families were pretty heavy Gatorade consumers. They, much to my surprise, said that the last time that they went to buy Gatorade were so confused by the new look that they purchased a competitive brand. They weren't sure that it was the same beverage. There was no supporting advertising campaign to say that the ingredients hadn't changed. In essence, the people didn't think it was Gatorade.

What should be done here? In my ever so humble opinion I feel Gatorade needs to undertake a massive campaign that takes the product directly to the people so that they can begin to fill the huge gap that was created with their major brand overhaul. They need to get people to understand that it's the Gatorade that they've always loved just with a new look. That is how Gatorade can heal the big wound that they inflicted on themselves. Once they get everyone on the same page then they can proceed in their new direction.


Just one man's opinion.

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