

TITLE OF CASE STUDY: Good Year

Business Situation and Campaign Objectives

It's fair to say that Goodyear, America's most famous tire company, was facing a bumpy road heading into 2007.

Goodyear faced stiff competition from mass and high-end segments:

- Automotive brands such as Toyota and Hyundai had removed the stigma of buying Asian automotive products, helping previously unknown tire brands break into the American marketplace. These lower-priced Asian brands, such as Hankook, Kumho, Toyo and Yokohama, were accelerating their market share growth. In 2006 alone, Hankook's market share grew a whopping +69%. (Source: Modern Tire Dealer) With so many lower priced brands gaining acceptance, the tire industry risked commoditization.
- At the higher end of the spectrum, Goodyear's competitors had carved out strong brand images among consumers. B.F. Goodrich stood for performance and youthfulness. Despite being off the air for years, Michelin's "baby" campaign firmly associated them with safety. According to Millward Brown brand tracking data, Michelin lead Goodyear in '06 in overall opinion and purchase consideration, and had significantly higher ratings on important attributes such as trusted brand and high quality.

Worse still, the United Steelworkers walked off the Goodyear production lines in October of 2006. For the nearly three months of the strike, Goodyear plants were only able to ship a fraction of their usual orders.

Entering 2007, Goodyear was in jeopardy of becoming another once-formidable American company making news in the business section under the headline: "What happened?"

Goodyear's business objective was to drive consumer demand despite this position of weakness.

Specifically, the Goodyear brand had two business goals:

1. Grow the brand by increasing tire shipments despite the strike, with particular emphasis on selling more higher end tires
2. Drive purchase interest with advertising

In order to drive purchase interest and meet sales goals, Goodyear decided to launch a new campaign with two main objectives:

1. The campaign needed to convey a leadership position to break Goodyear away from the pack of mass/economy tires. Goodyear needed to find a unique, differentiating position to compete at the higher end and sell more higher end tires.
2. The campaign needed to be distinctive and ownable. This was crucial in a category where many brands shared the same "communication codes." The typical tire commercial showed

scenes of “the drive” or a torture test while an announcer ran through a list of buzzwords like “safety” and “tough.”

The Research Story

Research helped Goodyear determine how to accomplish the campaign objectives.

Positioning Generation: Competing at the high end

Goodyear was putting amazing, unique technologies and ingredients into their tires (ie; carbon fiber, Kevlar, TripleTred). We wanted to use these technologies to help build a credible leadership story and drive purchase consideration.

However, initial focus groups with consumers uncovered a major hurdle: the average driver does not care about tires. To them, tires are all the same – just black rubber we only purchase when we absolutely need to. Because it is a low interest category with a long purchase cycle (3-4 years on average), tire technologies were simply boring and irrelevant – we risked consumers tuning out our message as soon as we mentioned tire technology.

We needed to probe deeper to discover how we could make Goodyear’s innovations relevant and interesting to consumers. In qualitative triads we used projective exercises to get a thorough understanding of driving habits, fears, and concerns.

That’s when we discovered the “Get there moment.”

The “Get there moment” is the rare instance when consumers do think about tires. It’s when we absolutely need to get somewhere (ie; when the driving conditions are bad due to inclement weather or a rough road, or when there’s an important event). In these cases, not having the right tire can interfere with getting to one’s destination. Consumers strongly empathize with not being able to “get there”, and they respect a tire that can get them through to their destination. If we put Goodyear’s unique tire technologies into these moments, the innovations became relevant and important. This would help us elevate Goodyear and compete at the higher end of the tire spectrum with a leadership position.

We decided to build our campaign on the following strategy: “Goodyear Innovations help you Get There.”

Branding Exploration: Making the advertising distinctive and ownable

The marketing team set out to find a branding device that could both create a well-branded campaign and be used to help integrate across different media. We explored using one of our decades-old brand icons: either the Goodyear Blimp or the “Winged Foot” icon. The previous Goodyear campaign utilized the “Winged Foot” icon and had the tagline “On the Wings of Goodyear.”

Goodyear management was leaning towards continuing the use of the Winged Foot as the branding device. In the halls of The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company campus, there was a general distaste for the Goodyear Blimp. To Goodyear veterans, the blimp represented early 20th century technology, counter to the innovative message Goodyear wanted to project now. There was talk of getting rid of the blimps all together.

However, in our initial qualitative research, we learned that the opposite was true among the general public. When consumers were asked about Goodyear, they universally spoke of the blimp. They

loved the Goodyear blimp; it represented all-American values and the excitement of sports games. Spotting the Goodyear blimp was like a joyful surprise, which one remembers fondly. It appeared that the blimp was probably the stronger branding device, and we wondered how many consumers actually could recall the Winged Foot!

To better understand the ability of the Winged Foot to brand our new campaign, we conducted an omnibus study of 1500 Americans. We showed consumers a picture of the Winged Foot, and asked them to recall what brand it is associated with. The most common answer was that it was not associated with any brand, at 40%. Only 1 in 5 consumers could identify it as a Goodyear icon, with other consumers believing it was for Nike, Adidas, or FTD flowers. By contrast, the Goodyear blimp was almost universally recognized. What's more, it had emotional power and meaning behind it.

Still, further research was needed to discover HOW to use the blimp to convey our innovation positioning and brand the campaign.

Creative Research: Merging the Positioning with the Branding Device

We began developing blimp campaigns. They were created off of the idea of "the Blimp Perspective." We realized that if the blimp was great for looking at stadiums on the ground, it was also the perfect vantage point for watching people get to a destination on the road. Wasn't it logical that the blimp would see all of the "Get there moments," and have a unique knowledge on how to help people get there?

However, we still did not know how the blimp could talk about these moments, which is where qualitative and quantitative research came in.

We developed four campaigns to expose to consumers in focus groups. Two campaigns did not use the Goodyear blimp at all, as senior management still viewed the blimp as "stodgy" and unable to convey an innovation message. The other two campaigns used the blimp in two different ways.

One blimp campaign utilized sportscasters in the blimp gondola. These sportscasters delivered a "play by play" of how Goodyear innovations were helping consumers "get there" in specific situations. The other campaign actually showed the "get there moment" taking place within the blimp.

Research findings:

- The research confirmed "Blimp Love;" consumers were excited to see the Goodyear blimp in advertising. It clearly helped with branding.
- Consumers found the sportscasters hokey, and the "get there moments" in the gondola confusing.

We changed the campaign to use Goodyear blimp pilots instead of sportscasters. This way, we could create their personalities. The pilots would be ownable by Goodyear, helping with branding and simplifying the story. At the end of qualitative research, we developed this new campaign to test with Millward Brown's "Total Link" methodology.

The next step was quantitative research with Millward Brown. We submitted two campaigns, one with the blimp and one without. (The alternate campaign was called "There." It utilized the winged foot and the Goodyear colors as the branding devices) We tested entire campaigns. Each respondent was exposed to two brand TV, one retail TV and one brand print execution.

The Blimp Campaign met our objectives. It scored significantly above norm on Millward Brown's Awareness Index, which measures breakthrough potential. Utilizing the blimp drove branding, to help

break through the “blur” of tire advertising. The message seemed new and distinctive, while conveying our strategy. It helped drive persuasion, which was our business objective.

Metric:	Blimp Campaign indexed to norm	There Campaign indexed to norm	MB TV Animatic Norm = 1
Awareness Index (Campaign average)	2.0	1.3	1
Branding - Top Box	1.8	1.3	1
Distinctive - Top Box	1.1	0.9	1
“Has innovative tires that get you where you need to go”	1.0	1.0	1
Persuasion	1.3	1.2	1

To confirm the blimp’s presence was not casting a shadow over technology messages in print, we conducted eye tracking among one of our core targets: tire enthusiasts. Because we did not plan to run TV advertising towards enthusiasts, it was important for us to test print separately. We used the Sensory Logic research company for the test. The test was a success; the technology-specific copy was read in its entirety, and the blimp ensured that the print was well-branded.

Goodyear management was convinced; we went forward with the Blimp campaign.

Campaign Description

The campaign launched in February 2007. To create a big splash, we utilized impact units such as 60-second TV, “teaser” and gatefold print. In the TV spot, called “Anthem,” a veteran blimp pilot discussed Goodyear’s history of innovation with his younger, eager co-pilot. Our tagline was “Get there.”™



The advertising budget of \$56.8 million (February 2007 – September 2007, source: Nielsen) was targeted at adults who are primary tire brand decision makers, aged 25-54, both male and female.

The “Anthem” TV spot was followed through the rest of 2007 by product advertising. Each spot highlighted a “get there” moment and a useful Goodyear innovation. These spots included “Snow Day” for TripleTred tires and “Gift Shop” for SilentArmor tires.

In addition, national promotions were advertised throughout the year. Each promotional spot worked similar to the brand spots and inserted the retail offer within the innovation story communicated via the pilots.

Print also featured specific technologies, but has been largely targeted at driving enthusiasts who crave more in-depth knowledge – we show that knowledge in a “view from up here.”

Online, the blimp pilots have a home on goodyeartires.com where they help people determine which tires are best for their vehicle.

We created our own branded content for the first commercial-free NASCAR race, the Pepsi 400. The race announcers referenced the blimp over the track providing aerial coverage, then the producers cut to a “blimp view” of the race. In a branded content window, our blimp pilots talked about Goodyear tire innovation on the track.

Business Results

Thanks to thorough, iterative research, the final campaign produced fantastic results.

The final campaign continues to achieve great scores in Millward Brown testing. It achieves our goal of driving purchase interest (per Millward Brown’s proprietary persuasion score.)

Scores indexed to norm=1	“Anthem”	“Snow Day”	“Gift Shop”	Norm=1
Persuasion	1.3	1.1	1.6	1
Awareness Index	3.0	2.8	2.0	1

Despite competitive pressure, a labor strike and general consumer apathy towards the category, the Goodyear “Get there”™ effort generated astounding sales results:

- The advertising effectively conveyed a leadership message and drove shipments at the higher end: 2007 saw a 50% sales growth over 2006 of the “icon technologies” such as TripleTred, SilentArmor, and Carbon Fiber. (source: Goodyear internal data)
- Goodyear brand grew faster than the industry. (source: Rubber Manufacturers Association) This put Goodyear above its pre-strike level.

