

## TITLE OF CASE STUDY: Slim-Fast “Tummies” Campaign

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The case study can not exceed 5 written pages in 11 point font. The case study should explain the business opportunity and objectives, the research story behind campaign development, a description of the campaign, and proof of business results (please see Entry Kit for more details). *Proprietary data can be disguised.*

*Winners are able to submit an alternate version of the case study excluding sensitive information for use in public communications.*

### **1. Business Situation and Campaign Objectives**

In mid-2000, Unilever purchased Slim-Fast, a brand that had single-handedly started a “meal replacement” revolution in the 1980’s. Slim-Fast had become a dynasty, built upon the iconic, stunningly simple premise of “shake, shake, sensible meal.” That is, until the 2002 Low Carb/Atkins boom rocked the entire weight loss category.

All of a sudden, the revolutionary, clinically-proven approach of meal replacements (or “diet in a can” as some might call it) seemed dated, deprivational and irrelevant when placed next to a once-sinful juicy steak or sizzling bacon and eggs (minus the bread, of course); Slim-Fast experienced **a sizeable loss of its franchise from ‘02 to ‘05**. With sales per SKU slipping year-over-year, retailers started minimizing the brand and by the end of 2004, Slim-Fast’s total **share of shelf had significantly declined**.

To save the “shaken” business, it was imperative that Slim-Fast make a bold statement to dieters, retailers and Unilever shareholders that it was still a vital and relevant brand. In order to achieve this, Slim-Fast needed to distance itself from the dieting conventions of yesteryear. Challenging the notion that Slim-Fast represents deprivation, the brand introduced Optima, a sub-line of bars and shakes **designed to keep dieters satisfied** with great taste and a unique protein blend that controls hunger for up to four hours. Optima was a step in the right direction from a product standpoint, but Slim-Fast’s future depended on its ability to reinvigorate the brand, and that hinged upon the effectiveness of its advertising. The television media budget for the campaign (2005-2006) was approximately \$35M.

In order to save and revive the brand, it became absolutely imperative that Slim-Fast’s communications transform brand perceptions, to restore credibility and persuade lapsed users to reconsider Slim-Fast

### **2. Research Story**

#### **a. Shifting dieting attitudes**

Slim-Fast’s strategy re-alignment began in 2004 with an Attitudinal Segmentation Study conducted by Yankelovich. Slim-Fast had been tracking the size of seven key attitudinal segments of its users over time. The seven segments were grouped into three categories: Health, Appearance and Convenience driven dieters. What the team discovered from this critical piece of research was that, following

the peak of the low-carb boom, dieters' attitudes towards weight loss management were beginning to shift. The appearance driven attitudinal segments, core to Slim-Fast in 2002, had declined significantly by 2004. On the rise were the health-oriented segments, which included dieters motivated to improve their overall health through better eating, rather than shedding pounds primarily to look better. In addition, there was a rise in the convenience driven segment of dieters, who were seeking quick and easy diet-snacks that fit into their busy, on-the-go lifestyles.

#### **b. Culture Scan**


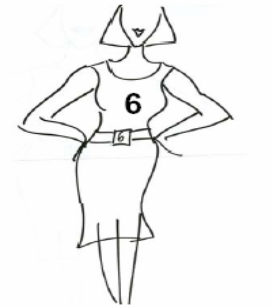


Armed with the preliminary knowledge of shifting attitudes towards dieting, the team embarked on a deep-dive exploratory to uncover the driving factors behind these attitudinal changes. An extensive Culture Scan project began in early 2005. The aim of the research was to create a psychological portrait of the Slim-Fast target and the world around her by exploring her feelings towards dieting, her weight loss behavior and her perceptions of Slim-Fast, as well as looking at a day in her eating life. The team conducted the following pieces of research as part of the Culture Scan:

- In-Home Ethnography: extensive in-home interviews conducted by Ogilvy & Mather among 18 "Practical Optimists" and their friends, all of whom were trying to lose weight. The respondents were non-rejecter, lapsed Slim-Fast users of varying ages (25-50+) with a range of weight loss goals (10-50+ lbs). Prior to the interviews, respondents were asked to complete a booklet of dieting-related questions and creative exercises, in addition to keeping a one week diary of their meals. Each day, respondents were also asked to indicate their mood as it related to their diet (i.e., "I felt low today because...", "I broke my diet when...", "I managed to resist my temptation by..."). Respondents were also provided with disposable cameras to photograph themselves and their friends through their weight-loss journey.
- 10 Expert Interviews: in-depth interviews were conducted with professionals and "experts", including dieting web-bloggers, a weight loss psychologist, nutritionists and personal trainers.
- Picking Slim-Fast Brains: in-depth interviews with call center representatives and dieticians from the 1-800-Slim-Fast phone number.
- Mystery Shopping: visits to supermarkets and mass merchandisers to evaluate the competitive landscape.
- Market Scan: an deep-dive look at the messages and images in books, magazines, films and TV shows, in addition to visits to gyms.

What the team learned after looking at the Culture Scan in its entirety was that, as they began seeing in the 2004 attitudinal

segmentation study, the beauty ideal in America was still young and slim, although the motivation had moved from skinny to "healthy." After conducting an extensive market scan and talking with weight loss experts, it became evident that through admired female "sex symbols" like Beyonce Knowles and Jennifer Lopez, it was becoming sexy to be curvy.

Through projective exercises, the team also learned that women were still at war with their bodies, and appeared to have a size six envy, regardless of age or the amount of weight they had to lose.

CURRENT	IDEAL	CURRENT	IDEAL
			
<p><b>Kelly</b> Late 40s 50lbs to lose</p>	<p>"I feel good and I look good. I feel confident and ready to take on the world."</p>	<p><b>Claire</b> Early 20's 10lbs to lose</p>	<p>"I'm at my ideal weight. I feel healthy and energetic."</p>

As women described the experience of dieting, it was clear that it was rife with extreme highs and lows. However, despite the moments of hope, the lows seem to generally outweigh the highs. As food became measured in points and calories, women expressed feelings of misery and frustration. In their daily food journals, women indicated feeling constant hunger. They tried to balance this feeling of under-nourishment and dissatisfaction by making lifestyle changes and going back to basics. Some were trying to control portion sizes and eat healthier in an attempt to use "substitution" instead of "denial." They turned to this approach because deprivational diets were hard to stick to and reinforced the sense of failure.

In the exploration of Slim-Fast, the team learned that the brand was seen as a rigid way to lose weight in a weight loss culture of flexibility and right-sizing. Most women the team interviewed didn't know about the Slim-Fast Optima plan. Many of these lapsed users appreciated the brand's convenience but felt the Slim-Fast diet (as they knew it to be) was difficult to stick to because of hunger, monotony and taste issues. While women didn't necessarily see the brand as old-fashioned, it wasn't a weight loss approach they wore as a badge of honor like "Zone" or "South Beach" had recently become. Furthermore, the mystery shopper exercise, coupled with the media scan, found that women were shopping

increasingly in the fresh food aisles around the periphery of the supermarket and were missing Slim-Fast altogether. Hence, there was a real opportunity for Optima to address the needs of dieters with its array of product offerings.

### **c. Emotional Territory Research**

Based on the Culture Scan, it was clear that the dieting experience was difficult and disruptive and dieters were in need of a positive weight loss approach, which Optima could provide. The team followed-up the Culture Scan with focus groups designed to explore the emotional territory Slim Fast could own in the diet category. These groups were conducted by a psychologist with the Forbes Consulting Group.

What emerged from this research was the insight that overweight women felt personally responsible for their weight, but at the same time not in control, thus they wanted to take back the control and take credit for their accomplishments. This important idea of "control" was incorporated into the advertising message.

### **3. Campaign Description**

The big idea, therefore, was to make Slim-Fast a champion for every woman's right to define her own ideal body. Slim-Fast was ideally suited to help women achieve "healthy bodies" because its products not only tasted great, but also helped control hunger longer. This was a provocative idea that would imbue Slim-Fast with an empathetic and refreshingly contemporary point-of-view.

The team brought this idea to life through the "Tummies" campaign. "Tummies" features women (and a few men) with *realistic* body types and weight loss goals dancing, as they celebrate their journey towards their healthy weight. Slim-Fast Optima is presented as the partner who helps make dieting doable through great tasting products that satisfy hunger longer.

The creative work broke numerous category conventions through casting, people dancing, and by focusing on the mid-sections of the dancers. Rather than feature size 2 supermodels, a range of body types were cast: plus-sized models (whose weights more accurately reflect the realistic goals of our target), as well as more objectively "thin" people. By making dancing a central theme of the campaign, a genuine sense of confidence in one's own body is conveyed, rather than a gimmicky, time-worn cliché of a testimonial or before-and-after. The television campaign launched in May 2005 and has continued to run nationally on network and cable channels. In addition, a weekly brand tie-in with the TV show *Dancing with the Stars* began airing in September 2006.

### **4. Business Results**

Once in severe and consistent decline, Slim-Fast enjoyed a new sense of vitality in 2006, thanks to "Tummies."

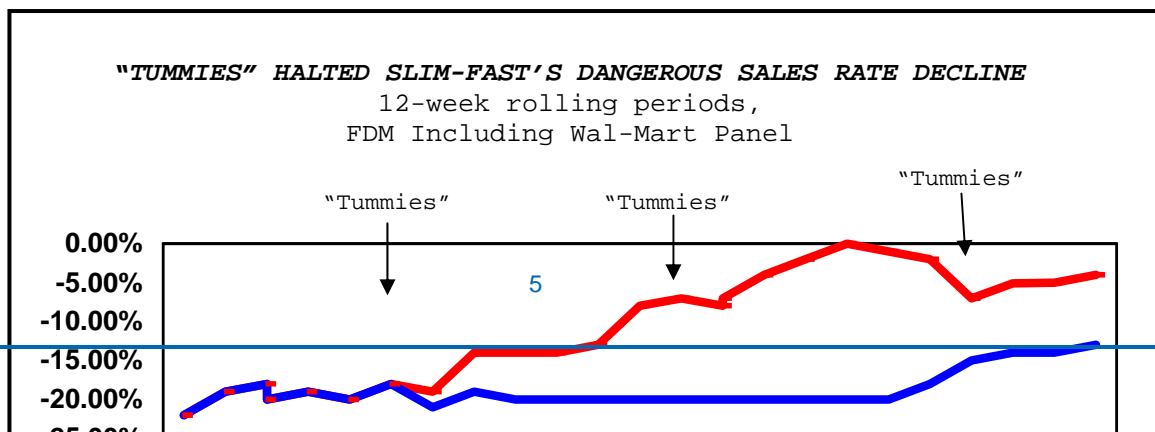
1. Brand perception dramatically improved among new and lapsed users

- Finished television ads were tested via Millward Brown copy testing. "Hello Yummy," the lead execution in the "Tummies" campaign, was the most persuasive ad in the history of Slim-Fast's advertising testing and in **the top 15% most effective of all ads ever tested** by Millward Brown. (Source: Millward Brown)
- In the first six months, Slim-Fast's online website membership registration rose 73%. (Source: Slim-Fast Foods Company)

2. The once ominous rate of decline in sales turned around

- "Tummies" helped drive Slim-Fast Optima's first year retail sales of over \$150 million (excluding Wal-Mart). This was so exceptional that Information Resources Inc. **recognized it as the #1 new product launch of 2005**. In fact, Optima's sales outperformed the #2 new product launch, Budweiser Select, by over 35%. Various business journals and newspapers across the country picked up the story, covering the brand with positive PR. (Source: Saint Louis Business Journal.)
- Optima's sales were so strong that they overcame the diminishing effects of a 25% sales decline (prior year-over-year, from May 2005 to May 2006) that had plagued the Slim-Fast lines not supported by the "Tummies" campaign (Low Carb, Classic and High Protein) to stabilize sales growth. (Source: AC Nielsen.)
- "Tummies" role in halting the rate of sales decline was a significant achievement made all the more impressive by the fact that the number of SKUs Slim-Fast distributed actually decreased significantly from 2004 to October 2006. Amazingly enough, "Tummies" helped bring Slim-Fast back to life, by pulling year-over-year sales per SKU out of the red, to a healthy level by September 2006. (Source: AC Nielsen)
- "Tummies" overcame reduced SKUs and non-Optima range sales to play a major role in **reducing Slim-Fast's rate of decline**. AC Nielsen modeled this financial achievement and projected that between May 2005 and September 2006, **this marketing initiative and campaign generated a huge sales contribution\*** vs. the amount that would have been recorded had the original rate of decline continued. (Source: AC Nielsen)

\* Exact numbers are confidential



In conclusion, "Tummies" truly did bring new life to a brand that was struggling to stay in the game. Slim-Fast's empathy and credibility are being restored by relevant advertising. Consumers are re-engaging with the brand, and that engagement is being translated into sales. Research played a critical role in the creation of the campaign and will continue to be an instrumental tool in refining and evolving the "Tummies" campaign moving forward.