



It's Me Time

Melitta reintroduces Canadians to its premium coffee

After 10 years of building its brand image through event sponsorship, Melitta Canada Inc. is set to wow Canadian coffee drinkers with a \$1.85 million advertising campaign that launched in February. The campaign, which targets women age 19 to 54, includes radio, television, Internet and print ads.

Ian Buckingham, director of sales and marketing in Toronto, says that the time was right to launch the campaign because over the last five years the company had “doubled its business.” Melitta went from having a 1.7 per cent share of Canadian retail coffee sales in 1998 to having a 3.5 per cent share in 2004. Its product was in about half of retail grocery stores five years ago versus 86 per cent today, he says. The company also recently launched its Estate Whole Bean Coffee (for which it was named a finalist for the Canadian Grand Prix New Products Award in the category of Beverage) and the innovative Freshness Valve, which allows roasted coffee beans to be packaged hot. It also has coffees representing different regions of the world, including Africa and South America.

“We felt the time was right; we had fixed the distribution, we had really improved our portfolio,” says Buckingham. “So now it was time to increase consumer awareness.”

Alan Middleton thinks there might also have been some pressure to advertise. Middleton is professor of marketing at the Schulich School of Business at York University in Toronto, but about 12 years ago he headed up the ad agency whose client was Melitta Canada. He hasn't seen the creative, but has read about the campaign and says that for the total industry, \$1.85 million “actually isn't very much,” but for Melitta it is substantial. He adds that other coffee manufacturers have been spending that much every year. As for why Melitta's launching it now, he suspects that with more and more specialty coffees moving in, “there's more and more shelf pressure in grocery stores.” Grocery stores stock product

that sells and with many specialty coffee companies spending millions of dollars per year on their brands, Melitta may have been forced to take a look at its approach.

“So I think this is a defensive, as well as offensive move,” says Middleton. “A defensive move to maintain its distribution and offensive in the sense that they really haven't talked about the quality of Melitta coffee for a long time.”

Melitta is also a premium-priced product, adds Middleton, so in order to maintain that price the company has to justify it – especially since Canadian consumers tend to buy and stock up on coffee only when it's at a discounted price.

Before the ad campaign Melitta had been developing its brand image in other ways. Buckingham says Melitta twice sponsored the Nation's Cup, a women's golf event, and still sponsors the HSBC Stars on Ice. It's the title sponsor of the Toronto Curling Association's bonspiel, which is called The Melitta Sunshine Bonspiel. And it also sponsors the W (Women's Television Network) show, “Me, My House and I.”

For the new campaign, Melitta is purchasing four event vehicles that will be “cafés on wheels” and will serve coffee at places such as ski hills and grocery store parking lots and will hit events

such as film festivals. The vehicles and the radio campaign will focus on four markets: Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal. The television spots will focus on specialty channels, such as W, Prime, Deja View, Mystery and Cool TV.

For the creative, Melitta turned to consumers and found that the biggest draw of the at-home coffee experience was all about time to themselves. “Again and again we heard, unlike with the chocolate or wine experience, the coffee experience they said was about time,” says Buckingham. He adds that “it's a ‘me’ campaign. The tagline is ‘when it's time for me, it's time for Melitta.’”

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