



news

The Diageo way of Brand Building

The Diageo Way of Brand Building (DWBB) began in 1999 as a major initiative to achieve world best practice in marketing for Diageo, following the merger of Guinness and Grand Metropolitan.

The problem/opportunity

DWBB brought together some of the best senior practitioners from UDV, Pillsbury, Burger King and Guinness who selected the top marketing processes for a common, Diageo-wide marketing toolkit.

A full time team of 'DWBB Process Owners' created 'Learning Guides' containing the toolkit for each process.

Although user-friendly and beautifully produced it became clear that moving the organisation from a preoccupation with finance to being both bottom-line driven and consumer led would require a real culture change.

To be successful DWBB would need to involve everyone in Diageo using the same new tools - and using them consistently well.

The solution

A team from Coverdale was invited in the autumn of 1999 to advise on how to embed the common processes across the Company.

We recommended that DWBB offer a learning event which would:

The objectives were:

- To shift from a finance-driven to a consumer-led organisation
- To develop Diageo-wide brand-building processes that would deliver profitable organic growth
- To deliver profitable top-line growth through consumer focus
- A Diageo way of working which encourages consumer insight, innovation and risk-taking
- Efficiency and effectiveness through a common marketing process and language.

- pull together the existing processes into one
- give people time and space to focus more clearly on the processes
- energise people
- deliver the essential learning within a four day event
- develop the behaviours necessary to make the DWBB marketing processes work

The aims of the learning events were:

- To energise teams so they could lead the new ways of working to create growth
- To practise the core Diageo Way of Brand Building processes and inspire people to use them
- To stimulate further development of skills and behaviours needed to make DWBB happen

The design

The learning events were designed around four principles:

- The practical application of knowledge to real brands
- The need for "discovery", not "telling" - people learning what works experientially
- The importance of linking technical skill with the development of behavioural skill
- People learning from each other

The event included:

- Applying the tools to a brand
- Behavioural aspects of implementing and supporting the processes
- Low risk opportunities to practise using the tools
- Practical exercises
- Case studies
- Short inputs

The consumer focus was developed by getting teams of people to work on a non-Diageo brand of their choice during the course of the week. Teams used the other participants for 'consumer research'.

Delivering the programme

In order to fully embed the DWBB processes across Diageo, the learning events were designed to be run by Diageo's senior marketers

Coverdale developed facilitator manuals and a series of two-day facilitator training events to prepare the facilitators with the skills and confidence to run the highly experiential programmes.

Rob Malcolm, Diageo President of Global Marketing Sales and Innovation, works as a facilitator on two programmes per year, and has challenged his senior team to do the same.

Over 500 facilitators have been trained in Europe, Asia Pacific and the Americas.

Rolling out the programme

Coverdale supported the DWBB Team to run the first Pilot 5-day Learning Event in Boston USA, in November 1999.

It was enthusiastically received by the participants and this helped to gain commitment from the Diageo Executive to the idea of a rollout of learning events across the world – a significant investment.

Indeed, the entire Diageo Executive Team, including the Chief Executive, attended a learning event early in 2000.

Extending the programme

The company now recognised the potential for DWBB as an effective vehicle for organisational change and decided to extend the learning events beyond the marketing function to cover all senior managers.

By July 2003 3,827 people had attended the event.

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The Diageo/Coverdale relationship

The impact of the Diageo Way of Brand Building stems from both the technical qualities of the tools and the way these were delivered – a partnership between Diageo's marketing know-how and Coverdale's expertise in communicating.

During the development phase a 'war room' was set up where the designing and discussion could take place in an open setting. It was a genuine team effort, described later as "open, creative, fun and provocative".

Part of Coverdale's role was in giving guidance, feedback and coaching to individuals. As one team member expressed it: "I got a lot of coaching, guidance, gentle redirection - planting the seeds because you wanted to get the best out of what we were trying to do. It was very encouraging; it boosted my confidence that I could deliver this and set me on my way in the right direction. "

The Coverdale Team remained part of the project for over two years, with a phased and gradual withdrawal as part of the overall strategy.

Success factors

The Diageo Way of Brand Building has been a sustained and resounding success across the whole organisation. Bringing Coverdale in at just the right moment was a key factor, which enabled DWBB to switch track from in-depth theory to real skill development and culture change.

In the British Brands Group Lecture 2003, President of Global Marketing Sales and Innovation Rob Malcolm listed some of the key factors which led to the success of DWBB:

- Enrol top management on the journey.
- Make it output and growth orientated. There is nothing that will embed this more than by seeing it work and saying 'hey, this stuff really does work'
- Train it yourself internally. If you do not live and role model the values, the tools, the

language, and the culture and nurture it, you cannot expect anybody else to.

- Make it simple or it won't happen.
- Make it creative and fun and engaging, so marketers not only get it but they feel great about it.

The benefits

"We estimate the corporate commitment to DWBB in investment terms over the past four years to be in the order of £35m. That includes the cost of the days invested as well as all the programme and training costs. That is a very big commitment, but one we feel that has an almost immediate payback. As a percentage of the total investment in marketing, advertising and promotion, that number is actually less than one half of 1% of that asset. If we increase the efficiency of efficacy of our marketing programme by only 5% per year, the payback is virtually instantaneous." Rob Malcolm, President of Global Marketing, Sales and Innovation, Diageo.

After the creation of Diageo, Guinness and UDV were integrated into a single business at market level. Having a common technical language and a common approach and behaviours helped ensure this was successful. Senior people could move without difficulty from Guinness into the Spirits business and vice versa. In global brands like Johnnie Walker people found that "Wherever I go in the world, people understand".

The Diageo Way of Brand Building changed the language of the business. People talk about things in a different way. Its language has become embedded in the business.

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What the client says

“Coverdale has helped us bring our own world-class brand building tools alive through learning events that have been high quality, exciting and memorable. Having a common approach to brand building, consistently taught across the world has secured our position as a builder of world class brands. More than 6,000 of our people, including the whole marketing function, our advertising agencies and commercial partners, have completed the full interactive learning experience designed for us by Coverdale. By doing this we are steadily building and embedding sustainable marketing disciplines across the organisation and into the very fabric of how we do business. Coverdale has been a significant partner in supporting this global change.



As part of the Diageo Way of Brand Building, Coverdale has designed and helped run facilitator training events for our senior brand managers/builders who, in turn, have led the training our own people. This approach has brought us two direct benefits - a huge network of Diageo Brand Builders who are competent to coach and train others within the company as well as much deeper and broader brand building skills in the hands of our most influential and capable managers. This has helped to lock in place our ability to make our great brands even greater” **Rob Malcolm, President of Global Marketing, Sales & Innovation**

“The contribution of the Coverdale team was vast. When the DWBB Team came together, we had a disparate set of processes, but no commonality of approach, or sense of how we could move from that set of information to a powerful experience people would learn from. What the Coverdale team did was to challenge our thinking about what we were trying to achieve, what it would look like, and how it would benefit the business. They got us to break down barriers around ‘it can’t be done because we haven’t done it that way before.’ We were so locked in to the technical aspects - Coverdale helped us think about the learning journey and see it needs to be engaging, interactive. They also gave us lots of guidance about really practical things like the balance between the spoken word and the presented word.” **Jennifer Morris, DWBB Capability Development Manager.**

“We needed Coverdale to work out how to create a holistic programme and how to really embed it into the organisation.” **Michael Harvey, Global Head of the Diageo Way of Brand Building.**

“The design of the Learning Events stands head and shoulders above anything else I’ve had to do with. It was all very practical so it was easy for participants to go back and do things differently – and that’s what they did. In Australia, for example, all the team did the Learning Event together, so they went back after the Learning Event and redid their Brand Plans using the DWBB tools. They found it perfectly easy to use the tools, due to the experiential nature of the course, and the cycles of practice at increasing levels of risk.” **Mary Shayler, Director of Organisation Development, Diageo.**

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