

# Soupline Edition Limitée



**Category**  
4. Packaging

**Sub Category**  
Brand – Non-Food

**Client**  
Colgate-Palmolive  
Services Europe

**Design Consultancy**  
Elmwood

**Date**  
May 2009



# Executive summary



From family commodity



To luxury and lifestyle

## 2.2%

market share from zero

## €15m

extra sales

## limited edition to permanent range

## 80%

distribution

When it comes to fmcg marketing the grails don't come much holier than washing powder and fabric conditioner. An established market across Europe with a history of targeting mums with messages around efficacy and family life, it was nonetheless a commodity purchase. A bold move then to contemplate a luxury limited edition fabric conditioner targeting younger, more affluent single women. This is exactly what Colgate-Palmolive Europe had in mind when they came to Elmwood with a new fragrance as a brief.

Their Soupline brand was already a leader in many European markets. The challenge of introducing a new premium product in a traditional and static market, where trust and reassurance were key, required vision, strategic thinking and creativity. It had to trade on the reassurance of the existing family brand without damaging it, it had to command a premium price without being inaccessible, it had to create a new category without cannibalising the first.

Without advertising support, the new Soupline limited edition fabric conditioner successfully created a new category across Europe, luxury limited fabric conditioners. They quickly generated a 2.2% market share from zero and €15m worth of extra sales, attracting new consumers to the brand in target markets, from Belgium, the Nordics and France to Italy and Greece - with no detriment to existing brands. This represented completely new market share for Colgate-Palmolive, underscored their position as leaders and innovators and shifted perceptions in a notoriously difficult market.

The results? What should have been a fast-rotation limited edition product and short-term retail release became so popular among consumers that retailers asked for it to become a permanent range. In addition, the new products were deemed so inspiring that the two Soupline limited edition fragrances launched gained up to 80% of distribution in hyper and supermarkets in some key European countries.

# Project overview

## 1. Outline of project brief

When Colgate-Palmolive asked Elmwood to create the packaging for a new limited edition category in the European fabric conditioner market, their objectives were:

- To create additional sales through an innovative new Soupline product targeting younger fragrance switchers and competitive users.
- To generate an additional 2% market share
- To target a new audience of younger, more affluent women, living on their own and more interested in indulgence and treating the senses. They had grown up with Soupline in their family so didn't need to be convinced of its efficacy but felt the brand didn't particularly represent them.

Colgate-Palmolive's European Centre for Innovation decided to introduce a test series of limited edition products for the Soupline brand of fabric conditioner. Elmwood designed two limited edition packs for launch across continental Europe.

The initial brief was to create label designs for two concentrated Soupline fabric softeners – Pure Nature and Oriental Scents. Colgate-Palmolive had chosen Elmwood to do this work, without a pitch, because they wanted a fresh approach capable of launching a groundbreaking product within the category.

The two fragrances were to be launched in a new PET bottle format, unique to the limited edition range that was smaller and more exclusive in feel, to fit with the younger, less family orientated target market.

## 2. Description

Colgate-Palmolive's Soupline is the primary fabric conditioner brand in continental Europe. For a category that had been developed around the needs of the housewife from the start, this new concept marked a real departure.

# Project overview cont.

## 3. Overview of the market

The European fabric conditioner market is traditionally family-oriented and populated with well-established brands, of which Soupline is a leader in many local markets.

Visually the category is dominated by pastels, floral cues and softness imagery such as clouds, towels, babies etc.



Challenges/obstacles:

- The different cultures, tastes and values of the markets to which the product had to appeal, from Scandinavia to Northern and Mediterranean Europe.
- The traditional family values upon which the category had been built over many years and the trust in which it was held.
- To convince retailers across Europe to give over space on their main fixture for the 'risky' new product.
- Converting consumer habits with, and perceptions of, fabric conditioner from a monthly commodity purchase to a more frequent luxury purchase.
- To create an entirely new market for the new limited edition that would add new sales without cannibalising existing sales from the core range.

## 4. Project launch date

July 2007

## 5. Size of design budget

£45,000

# Project overview cont.

## 6. Outline of design solution

### 1. A fragrance as a brief

Colgate-Palmolive came to us with a fragrance (rather than a product) as a brief. Based in Paris, they had always worked closely with fragrance houses and understood that fragrance is about creating an emotional world. It was this insight that formed the startpoint for the new limited edition range.

### 2. Trends-led

For the first time, here was a fabric conditioner brand that was trends-led. Efficacy and softness were at its core but this was much more about creating an emotional pull. We brought our knowledge of international and European trends to create a positioning and creative brief for the new range.

### 3. A revolutionary design

To appeal to the younger and more indulgence-orientated target consumer, the design adopted the minimalism and simplicity of the personal care categories. It had to push the rules of the category yet still communicate the values associated with fabric conditioners ie. trust, fragrance and softness. We retained the all-important fragrance, softness and care with flower and butterfly motifs but set them against a clean white background to give a sense of space and a more premium look and feel.

Within the traditional and visually cluttered fabric softener category, the clean, minimal pack with no mention of cleanliness was revolutionary. It not only lightened up supermarket shelves but stood out on them.

### 4. A recessive logo

The Soupline logo, which is dominant across the rest of the portfolio, became less prominent. It was there but recessive giving customers reassurance but signalling a step away from the existing family brand with an exciting new fragrance only available for a short time.

### 5. A new bottle format

A new, smaller, more 'precious' pack format was developed in keeping with its new fashion-led, premium positioning.

### 6. A precedent-setting launch

Such was the credibility of this category-breaking approach to the packaging design that it was able to secure a launch in Parisian fashion temple, Galleries Lafayette. The equivalent of a Fairy Liquid launch in Harrods, this coup secured its position as a fashion brand with cachet and mass market appeal.



# Summary of results

# €15m

extra sales

## new category

## limited edition to permanent range

### Increased sales

The new limited edition range generated an increase in net sales of €15million.

### Increased marketshare

As the table below shows, the resulting share of market for Soupline limited editions achieved an average 2.2% of what was a static category, without any detriment to the overall parent brands share. In some stores this was as much as 6%.

### Creation of a new category

The new category brought affluent new consumers to the brand and has given Colgate-Palmolive a lucrative new market to exploit.

### The making of a best-seller

So successful was the Oriental Scents limited edition that it quickly became the second biggest seller of the entire Soupline range.

### Strengthened relationships with retailers

Such was consumer demand for the new limited editions that retailers wanted the new products to stay on the fixture (beyond the six-month shelf-life) and become a permanent part of the range.

### Reinforcing market leadership

This creative new approach underlined Colgate-Palmolive's role as leaders and innovators in the market, shaking up and setting new standards in what had been, for many years, a traditional and highly conservative sector.

### The future

The success of this project has led to us working further upstream. We're now working on the development of the fragrance itself, briefing the fragrance house, in line with market trends as we take the limited edition range forward along with developing a naming strategy which works hand-in-hand with the design to position the new products.