

Give celebrity tie-ins a genuine face

Cindy Champness, head of marketing at beauty brand Jelly Pong Pong, says well managed celebrity collaborations are worth their weight in gold

Celebrity consciousness is so integrated with consumers' lifestyles these days that all brands need to consider it as part of their marketing strategy. Nothing beats an association with somebody famous. For a beauty brand, it means that when consumers buy a product, they instantly have a piece of that person in their bathroom.

Jelly Pong Pong is a brand that doesn't take itself too seriously. Instead of high-tech product language, our brand values are about being lighthearted and sassy. Our lip and cheek cosmetics, for example, have humorous names, such as 'sleanderella' and 'no breakfast'. Any celebrity collaborations have to fit with these brand values.

As a small and fairly young firm, celebrity partnerships are a way for us to become high profile. We already use high-quality ingredients and interesting packaging, which people can see in our flagship store in London's Covent Garden. But a famous person can help to boost our marketing strategy further.

We come up against big-name brands with massive marketing budgets, so we are keen to use a creative approach to marketing that

leverages not only our celebrity connections but also a grassroots campaign using PR and word of mouth to tell people about Jelly Pong Pong. You have to think very carefully in any partnership about who you are going to collaborate with, and how. If you get this right, you can be everywhere and 'go mainstream'. It is a way of taking the company to a new level.

Genuine issue

For us, a recent collaboration with a member of the pop band Girls Aloud, Nicola Roberts, ticks the right boxes. There will be a lot of people who say this is 'just another collaboration' but we think the partnership stays true to our brand because it focuses on the functional benefits of our product. It is credible because it addresses a specific issue that Nicola faces. A natural redhead, she has skin so fair that she can't find a foundation to match her colouring.

Aside from being one of the members of a hugely successful girl band, one of Nicola's ambitions is to have her own skin-care range. So we worked with her to produce a limited edition range comprising foundations, concealers, eye shadows, lip glosses and blushers.

We also documented Nicola's skin dilemma in a film, screened on mainstream TV channel ITV in the UK, that showed her visiting several department stores to search in vain for a make-up product appropriate for her complexion. By showing the project in an editorial programme and giving it an educational, as well as an endorsement slant, we drew attention to the functional benefits and credibility of this celebrity collaboration. The experience also demonstrated the real problem that many people with very pale skin have. There doesn't seem to be a product that caters for them. As many women will say: if you are not comfortable with your base make-up, you can't be comfortable with putting on other stuff.

Reaching fans

By producing this range with Nicola, we hope to introduce Girls Aloud fans to the Jelly Pong Pong brand, as well as targeting existing customers. A celebrity endorsement also signals to the wider cosmetics market that we are evolving and gaining ground in the sector.

Although we are working with a celebrity, to get the message out we have also stuck to our grassroots approach. The artwork for the range has been done by Japanese illustrator Mari Kubota and as part of the packaging strategy, we have produced posters that aim to be something consumers will want to take home and use as decorative objects.

Like the strategy to match ourselves up with a celebrity, we understand that teaming up with an illustrator is not a unique move, but we have consciously attempted to execute it in a way that creates a point of difference for the brand.

We are also trying out other ways to be different from other make-up brands, working with creative agency Stitch. We have used Kubota's illustrations on taxis and devised a 'rip and run' campaign, where people will be encouraged to tear off a poster from a batch of prints deposited strategically around London.

While celebrity culture might engage them, consumers are savvy and question what messages brands are pushing at them. You have to think about things from their point of view. We think our marketing works because it comes across that the collaboration has Nicola's stamp all over it. It's all about being functional and fun. ■



Copyright of Brand Strategy is the property of Centaur Communications and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.

Disponível em: <http://www.ebscohost.com>. Acesso em 25/6/2008.