

# Unilever sells ice cream to Eskimos

By Jason (Frich) Frichol

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Recently I stumbled upon one of the best ideas I've seen in store this year that drives a new consumption occasion. Okay, so I'm guessing one takes a Magnum, pops it into a mug, turns on the microwave, stirs with ice cream stick and *voilà*, instant hot chocolate heaven. As exciting as this new idea is, I need to question why the execution fell short?



Now, before we unpack the execution, let's revel for a moment in the sheer genius behind the idea. In their book, [The Shopper Marketing Revolution](#), [Mike Anthony](#) and [Toby Desforges](#) state that the foundation of consummate shopper marketing in their [Total Marketing](#) model must always begin with the identification and targeting of consumption opportunities.

In order to drive consumption, one can acquire new consumers, get existing ones to increase purchase frequency or use larger quantities for each or new usage occasions. If you can just tick two of these, you're on track for explosive growth. With the Magnum initiative, Unilever definitely has hit two of the above. What's more, we need to give them extra kudos for attacking their main ice cream competitor in another category - hot beverages.

So, when it comes down to the execution, I have to ask why the primary shopper message [was a competition?](#) Where was the communication showing the actual application? I was also unsure in terms of how do I do it? How many minutes are needed in the microwave? What size mug is needed and do I have to add anything else, like milk or water? I also wanted to ask the teller for more information, but the positioning of the execution was right by the till and with a long line behind me, I

didn't want to be the source of further shopper angst.

With so many concerns, the shopper messaging and design execution leave a lot to be desired. The message hierarchy is not strong enough in terms of a call to purchase, which is the primary objective in store and then relaying the shopper benefit. I also question if a microwave is a powerful enough incentive to drive interest and whether it was even needed? Excuse the pun, but here's some food for thought: how about offering the consumer a mug with every purchase? This could mean you'd have immediate trial and a point of presence in the home acting as a constant reminder. Another thought to ponder is, where was the shopper education that could have been easily relayed in milliseconds using simple sequential semiotics and colour?

Lastly the use of colour, shape, form and other elements do not drive valuable exposures, which catch attention, driving impressions and conversions. I could go on and on, but for me this is another great example where consumer-led design and messaging falls rather flat in store.

After I left the store, I still had the desire to try out this novel offering but alas, I couldn't find any information on the website nor on social media. In today's shopper reality, these are two fundamental gaps in the path to purchase continuum. And at the time of writing this post I still couldn't find anything.

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 more than ever before.  
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I don't know if there were regulatory or budget constraints that contributed to my critique, but actually, let's give a big **BRAVO** to the thinking behind the idea and don't worry, *winter is coming...* again.

## ABOUT JASON (FRICH) FRICHOL

My passions are shopper marketing, consumer packaging, visual merchandising, ideation, bankable innovation, integrated marketing, tangible ROI, and execution efficacy. My motto is, "Passion and persistence will get you everywhere." I strive for simplicity, practicality and information frugality.

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