

MaltEaster®

MaltEaster® Bunny Easter Treat

How MaltEaster® bunny grew the Self-Eat category through design

Category

4.1 Branded - Food

Client Company

Mars Chocolate UK

Design Consultancy

Matter Studio
Brandhouse
Kinneir Dufort

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Executive Summary:

The Easter Self-Eat market had been dominated by one brand with little variety available to consumers. Contributing to the overall growth of the segment, Mars Chocolate UK introduced the Maltesers® MaltEaster® in 2009.

MaltEaster® is a brand-driven three-dimensional shape that was developed through concept exploration that decoded the semiotics of the season and balanced these with the well-recognised attributes of the Maltesers® brand. In addition, the final character had to translate into a moulded, cream-filled chocolate form, which successfully overcame technical challenges that had previously blocked similar new product development (NPD) projects. This unique, fun and novel treat was designed to maximise shelf standout through both the graphics and the structure of the Shelf Ready Packaging (SRP), which presents each MaltEaster® bunny neatly upright driving consumer impulse purchase.

Five years after its launch, the MaltEaster® range still has steady year-on-year growth both in CSV and portfolio range, commanding more in-store shelf space and giving consumers even more ways to enjoy the season through unique and fun product propositions.

The success of the Bunny has resulted in a range that has grown the category both within the season, through MaltEaster® sharing and gifting formats and as a direct result, into an additional season with the Merryteaser® Reindeer product launched for Christmas 2013.

The unique and ownable design of the MaltEaster® bunny has meant that it has become the hero and icon across the range and in-store display and in media.



MerryTeaser® Reindeer



MaltEaster® Shelf Ready Packaging



Project Overview

1. Outline of project brief

The challenge was to introduce a proposition for a new occasion to grow the penetration of Maltesers®, already the bitesize favourite. Given the dominance of one confectionery player in Easter self-eats, there was an opportunity for a new product to provide consumers with 'A treat for me at Easter'. It was crucial to find the right balance of brand, season and novelty and also ensure it was all delivered in an 'ownable' chocolate moulded shape that leveraged the core principles of the UK's third biggest chocolate brand, Maltesers®.

The brief:

Design a unique and emotive brand-driven chocolate self-eat treat that celebrates Easter and fits with the Maltesers® brand.

Work within the current manufacturing capabilities and infrastructure within Mars Chocolate UK yet ensure impactful design is delivered alongside the highest quality appearance and eating experience.

Objectives:

- ❁ Disrupt the market, and drive growth in the Easter Self-Eat category with a new product development that is novel and unique.
- ❁ Leverage the UK's third largest chocolate brand - Maltesers®.



Unique.

Novel.

Undoubtedly Maltesers®.



Project Overview:

2. Overview of Market

The Easter Self-Eat market had previously been relatively small with one dominating player. MaltEaster® was a catalyst for a shift in consumer behaviour and growth; the size of the total market increased by 40% to over £29m by 2012 as other self-eat products were introduced.

The Easter season is driven by novelty, fun and sharing and gives consumers a reason to treat themselves, their family and friends.

Mars Chocolate UK saw an opportunity to grow the market by broadening the choice and delivering a unique product from the Maltesers® brand that consumers know and love.

Existing Easter Self-Eat products were simply engraved chocolate shapes, which lacked the novelty and emotive engagement Mars was aiming for. MaltEaster is a three-dimensional character with a complex form, designed to be produced within existing Mars' manufacturing constraints that not only brought the brand to life, but delivered the unique Maltesers® experience.

This season is traditionally driven by value and deals. However, MaltEaster® was able to hold its Recommended Retail Price (RRP) throughout Year One; an approach almost unheard of for seasonal NPDP.

3. Project Launch date

MaltEaster® was launched in January 2009.

4. Size of Design budget

The design budget for MaltEaster® was small with no support from advertising or additional point of sale (POS) in Year One. Mars Design, the internal design management function at Mars Chocolate UK, drove efficiency through the project by collaborating with the external design agencies, co-manufacturers and internal partners; translating a small investment into a successful design proposition.

Once the success was proven, the proposition was supported above the line using the product as the hero and icon. Return on Investment was achieved within three months.



MaltEaster®

Outline of Design Solution:

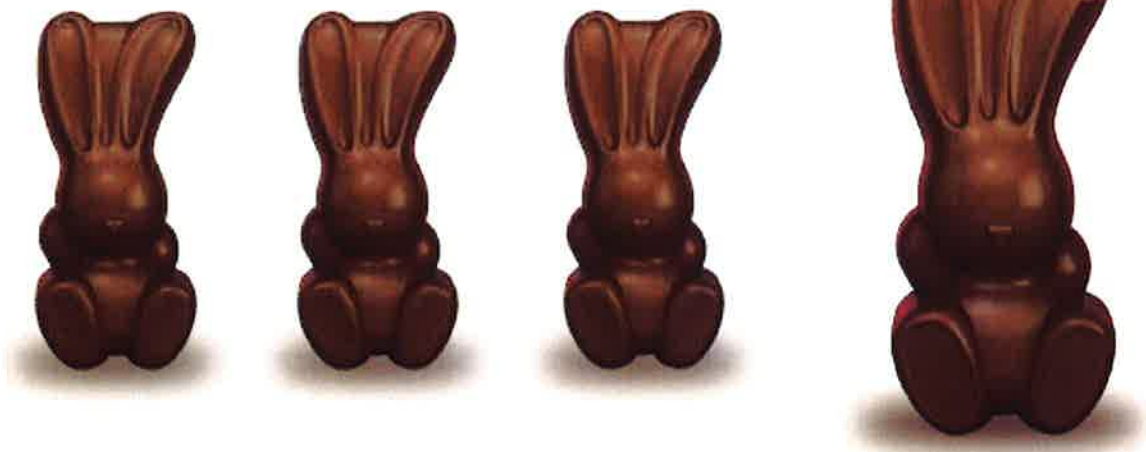
A close collaborative relationship between Mars Design and Mars' co-manufacturer, ensured the overall design intent was translated right through to the production line. It allowed clear line of sight of every implication on both the aesthetics and production speed and quality.

Complex forms can cause serious issues with trapped bubbles, inferior chocolate coating and exposed product inclusion. The execution of the design resolved these issues to ensure the products would meet Mars' high quality standards.

The primary and secondary display packaging were also key. Bold branding and an 'ownable' name ensured consumers recognise the product and remembered it, while the SRP made sure each bunny was presented ready for purchase; a concept new to the market, which led to a high rate of sale.

This was the first time Mars Chocolate UK had taken the Maltesers® Brand into a different format and it was crucial that consumers recognised the link back to the core brand that is loved and trusted. To enable this Mars Design developed a set of design values and guidelines that have informed range extension, in-store display and media, with the bunny design heroed throughout.

The Maltesers® MaltEaster® bunny is considered 'Best in Class' by Mars Chocolate UK and has inspired future projects.



MaltEaster® Mini Bunnies were created using the guidelines developed with MaltEaster® Bunny and introduced to the market in 2012



Summary of Results:

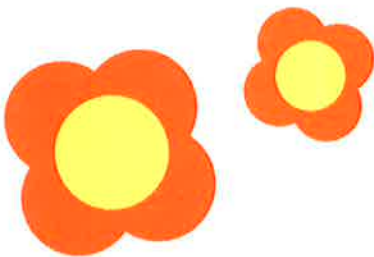
1. Increase in Sales

MaltEaster® has shown rapid growth from Year One with a steady and secure hold on the segment. This has now given room for range extension to support the growth and penetration of the brand and proposition.

2. Increase in Market Distribution

The designed proposition, packaging and case design has meant that the MaltEaster® bunny has been successfully distributed across all channels, from the larger supermarkets to the smaller independent outlets, with growth year on year. To enable such a wide distribution, the case was optimised to comply with shelf depths and space at till points, driving more consumer impulse purchases by being in the right places.

3. Impact on consumer behaviour



The
bunny brought
in 246,000 new
customers to the
Easter Self-Eat
segment



4. Increase in Market Share

By Year Three, MaltEaster® had contributed to the exciting growth of the Self-Eat segment engaging the trade and igniting a wide range of seasonal options for consumers.

The MaltEaster® share grew hugely within three years.

5. Other Influencing factors

Around 2009, the seasonal self-eat segment was in growth. By launching during this time, the MaltEaster® bunny was able to 'ride the wave', driving the growth even further and faster.

As a company, Mars had previous successful seasonal executions which demonstrated to the trade that we could deliver good seasonal propositions for consumers and our customers. This meant that conversations with buyers regarding in-store optimal space for the MaltEaster® bunny were easier to engage in.

The launch of the MaltEaster® was supported through trade press that used the iconic bunny design as the key piece of communication.

Sources:

Neilson Scan Track, Iri Worldwide SIG Extended Snack Outlet.

MaltEaster[®]



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