



Refreshing a US Icon

Irish Spring

Category 4. Packaging

Sub category 43. Branded - Other

Client Colgate-Palmolive

Design consultancy Elmwood

Date June 2014



elmwood

Executive summary

Irish Spring, the iconic bar soap and body wash brand, has been keeping US and Canadian males fresh since 1972. Owned by Colgate-Palmolive, Irish Spring is seen as a truly masculine brand having built an awareness through 'legendary fresh' advertising campaigns of the 1970's, 1980's and early 90's

+30%

Sales increase

+57%

Sales increase in one major retailer

Market share decline turned round to growth

With a strong heritage in bar soap and famous for its deodorizing quality, Irish Spring has evolved over time to include a line of body wash products to attract a younger target.

Launched in 2007 Irish Spring Body Wash has maintained a 3.0% share in a very competitive marketplace but has failed to grow and capture the coveted millennial (born between 1982 and 1993) male audience due to strong support from mega brands like AXE and Old Spice.

Without a strong point of distinction with the key millennial audience, Irish Spring was increasingly seen as marginalized.

Against this background, Colgate-Palmolive sought to reinvigorate Irish Spring through a body wash redesign. Central to the strategy was to target the 18-34 year old male, leveraging its heritage to deliver the freshest body wash on the market.

At the same time Irish Spring increased its pack size to match AXE and Old Spice (from 15oz to 18oz), also increasing price accordingly (from \$3.50 to \$4.00).

Given the challenge of a stalling market share and brand saliency, allied to increasing product volume and price, the key project performance objective at the outset was to stem the decline of market share and to increase the growth of Irish Spring body wash in line with the male body wash category growth of 3.6%. Launched in July 2013 the redesign of Irish Spring not only maintained market share but increased the rate of sale by 30%. In fact, in one major retailer sales showed a 57% increase over a 5 week period. This was all achieved without additional above the line marketing or promotional support.



Previous design



New Design

Project overview

Outline of brief

1. Stem the sales decline, and achieve +3.6% growth in-line with category growth
2. Bring market share points back above 3.0
3. Successfully increase price point, without losing share
4. Improve impact and presence on shelf

Market Share

	2011	2012
#1	AXE	OLD SPICE
#2	OLD SPICE	AXE
#3	Irish Spring	DOVE MEN
#4	DOVE MEN	Irish Spring
#5	SUAVE	SUAVE
#6	DIAL	GILLETTE
#7	GILLETTE	DIAL

Description

Irish Spring, is an iconic bar soap and body wash brand, in the US and Canada. Owned by Colgate-Palmolive, Irish Spring is seen as a truly masculine brand having built an awareness through 'legendary fresh' advertising campaigns of the 1970's, 1980's and early 90's.

With a strong heritage in bar soap and famous for its deodorizing quality, the Irish Spring brand evolved over time to include a line of body wash products to attract a younger target.

With plans to increase the pack size from 15oz to 18oz, to bring them in-line with their competitors, and the addition of a new formula of '24-hr freshness', the brand needed to communicate their intention to be taken seriously.

With no advertising support, the pack was going to need to work even harder.

Overview of market

The US male cleansing market is currently worth \$1.2billion, and had historically been dominated by bar soap, within which Irish Spring is the number one selling brand. Over time, the fashion has slowly been switching to body wash (now accounting for 53% of sales), driven by major marketing efforts from brands such as AXE and Old Spice (the top two brands) and the 18-34 consumer, who account for 40% of the body wash spend.

Whilst Irish Spring's body wash line had initial success in encouraging its loyal bar soap consumers to switch or add body wash to their repertoire, without above the line marketing support and product innovation it

was losing ground to market power players AXE and Old Spice, both of whom invested heavily in targeting the key millennial male audience.

By 2012/2013 Irish Spring's body wash share was falling, dropping from the #3 to #4 position, with market share falling from 3.2 to 2.9 points.

Brand awareness within the category was also low, with just 5% recalling Irish Spring as "first mention of top body wash brand that comes to mind", ranked 6th behind, AXE 22%, Old Spice 15%, Dove for Men 14%, Suave 9% and Dial 7%.

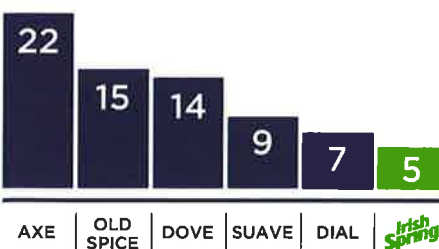
With a heritage in a large, but declining, bar soap category and without a strong point of distinction with the key millennial audience, Irish Spring was being increasingly seen as marginalized. In tests Irish Spring body wash was ranked as having low shelf visibility with only 9% of shoppers actively considering it in a shelf test vs. an industry standard of 35%, finding it difficult to shop the variants and being considered a brand for 'older people' and 'boring'. They needed to get back above the 3.0-point market share mark, and start growing alongside the category to hold their place.

Project launch date
July 2013

Size of Design Budget
\$155,600

Brand Awareness

2011





**Irish
Spring**
BODY WASH

24
HR
FRESH

ORIGINAL

FEEL CLEAN
& FRESH

Outline of design solution

Irish Spring, although an iconic brand, had lost relevance with the key 18 to 34 year old target market. It had become seen as 'my dad's brand', being rooted in its bar soap heritage. However our research identified that Irish Spring was seen as authentically fresh against the competition of AXE and Old Spice.



AXE specifically was seen as overpowering and without true freshness credentials, this presented a clear opportunity to upgrade the AXE user to an authentic 'real man's brand' in Irish Spring.

While both AXE and Old Spice were referenced through their advertising, Irish Spring was referenced through its distinctive, manly smell and freshness qualifications. The natural aspect of the brand and rugged masculinity gave a starting point to develop a distinct point of view that dramatized the outdoor nature of Irish Spring in a contemporary and relevant way.



As a starting point to the design process we immediately looked at the equities of the brand and saw how we could re-envision these for a more contemporary 18-34 year old audience.

Precious Green

Irish Spring has a strong equity in green, stemming from the inferred Irish heritage. The dark green of the previous design however had reduced the visibility of the brand on the shelf and increased the perspective that the brand was 'old' and 'outdated'.



We set about creating a 'precious green' approach, creating a clear highlight and focal point for the eye through the centre of the pack that 'shined' off the shelf. This approach was heightened by switching from the previous clear plastic PSL label to a metallic substrate that brought a sense of modernity and pride in the green. The result was a significant improvement in shelf standout that drew consumers attention to Irish Spring at the crucial point of sale.

Allied to this we also worked with the packaging supply chain to enhance the structural material and brighten the color to give the bottle a luminous freshness and shine on shelf.

Natural Power

Irish Spring, has the power of nature at its heart. Unlike AXE and Old Spice, which are fragrance-derived freshness, Irish Spring brings the promise of natural freshness. The design solution sought to amplify the power of nature through macro natural imagery. Illustration was carefully commissioned to capture the energy, beauty and freshness of nature and provide a compelling promise of reinvigoration.

Iconic Freshness

The new Irish Spring formula has a promise of 24hrs of freshness. The creative approach sought to make this freshness iconic through the creation of a shield device that broke through the imagery to deliver fresh protection and power.

The overall impact of the pack was much improved from shelf, with a confident bold simplicity and single-minded message of natural freshness, and a pride in the heritage of the green that made it distinctive from the private-label upstarts and busy branded competitors.



Outline of design solution



Outline of design solution



Summary of results

1. Stem the sales decline, and achieve +3.6% growth, in-line with category growth

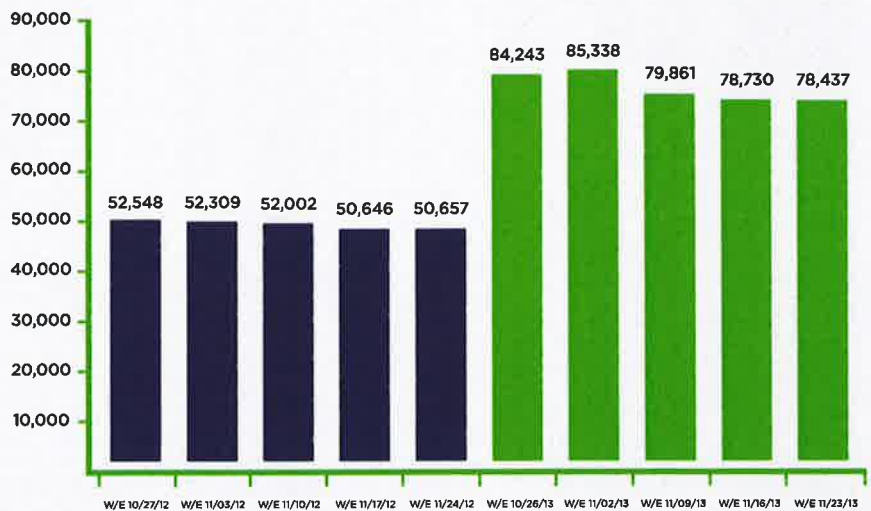
Since re-launch, baseline rate of sale of Irish Spring body wash has increased by 30%, without any above-line or sales promotion.

In one key mass retailer, like for like sales showed an average

+57%

volume increase over a 5 week period, with no promotion.

Volume sales



2. Bring market share point back above 3.0

Irish Spring body wash has moved from its declining position of 2.9 point share, into 3.2, performing better than key, big budget, competitors Old Spice and AXE.

3. Successfully increase price point, without losing share

Irish Spring have been able to increase its price point from \$3.50 to \$4.00, an increase of 12.5%, whilst still growing market share.

4. Improve impact and presence of ISBW on shelf

+30%

Increase in overall sales, without any above the line support or sales promotion – purely from shelf presence.

Market Share

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	YTD 2014
Male BW	30.8	33.3	34.4	34.1	34.0	33.1
Irish Spring	3.2	3.3	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.2
Old Spice	7.6	7.9	8.2	8.2	8.3	8.2
Axe	8.9	7.9	7.7	7.3	7.5	6.7
Dove Men	0.0	2.7	3.4	3.8	4.1	4.8
Dial for Men	2.5	2.6	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.2
Gillette	1.5	1.7	2.1	1.5	1.1	0.8

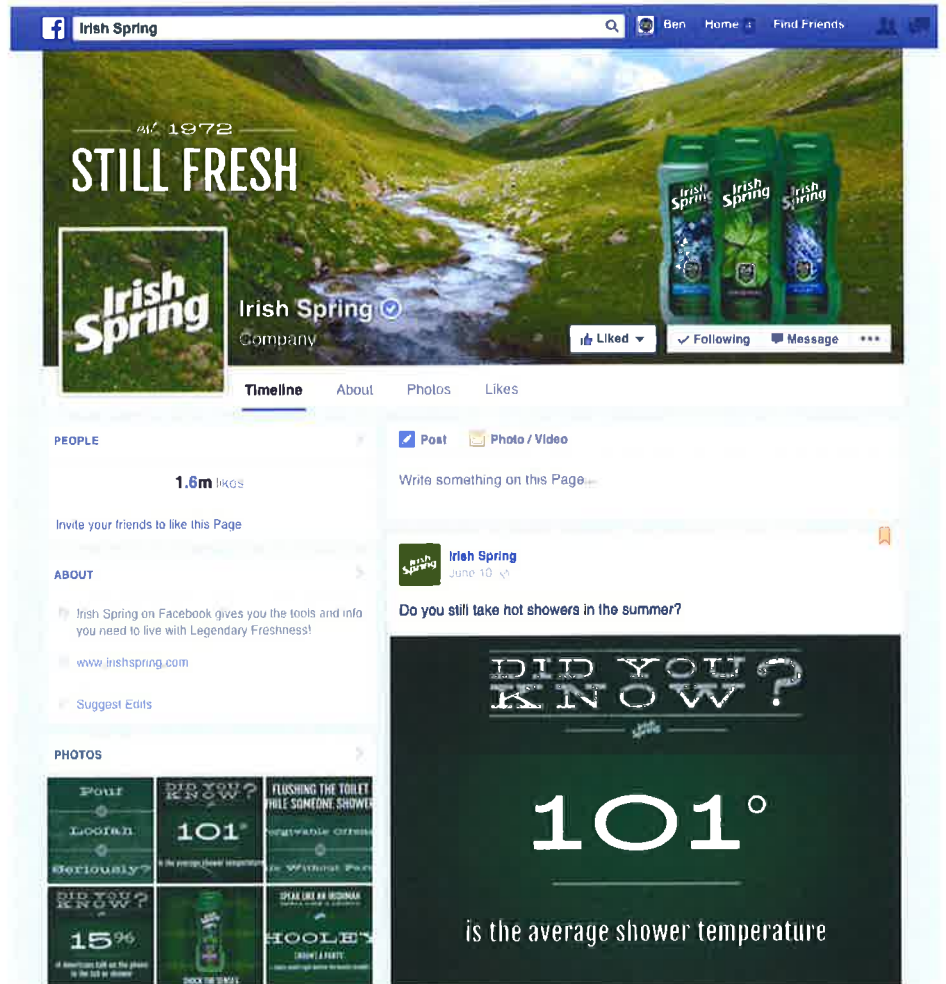
Summary of results

“This is the most impactful packaging change I have worked on in my career. We were able to maintain the essence of the brand and the iconography while modernizing it and connecting with that younger millennial target. We saw strong baseline improvements soon after shipping the new artwork. The strongest results were almost immediate at our biggest customer. Not only did we see rate of sale improve but the buyers were incredibly complimentary of the improvements and the impact these changes had.”

Kimberly Curtis.
Senior Brand Manager
Colgate-Palmolive

Other influencing factors

No advertising or sales promotion took place during the period of sales quoted. The only media we used to communicate the new packaging was our Facebook page where we have 1.6 million fans.



Whilst the new 24-hr freshness formula added a USP to the category, it was dependent on the pack design to communicate it - specifically reinforced by the freshness cues built into the design solution.

Research Resources

All information has been provided by Colgate-Palmolive.

