

4.6.2.



M savers

How a brand embarrassment
became the UK's fastest
growing food brand

COLEY
PORTER
BELL

Design Business Association
Design Effectiveness Awards 2013

Category: 4 Packaging
Sub-category: 4.6 Own Brand - Other
Client company: Morrisons
Design consultancy: Coley Porter Bell
Date: July 2012

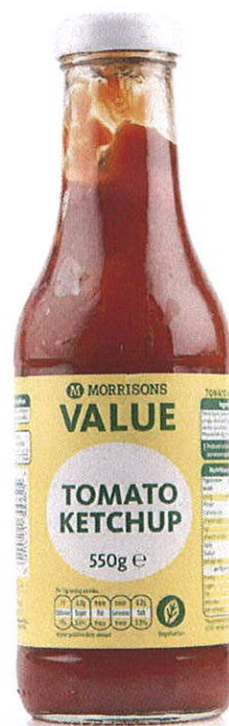
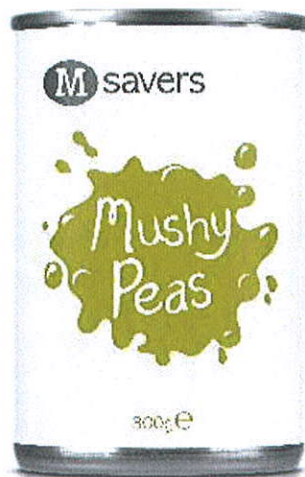
Executive Summary

Morrisons, one of the UK's 'big four' retailers, asked us to redesign their Value range (Morrisons Value) as part of the strategic overhaul of their entire own brand offer. The objective across the brand was to better reflect their revised brand ambition of delivering quality and humanity, bringing the people behind the brand to the fore, even in the Value offer.

Qualitative research carried out by Morrisons told us that shoppers admitted to hiding the value range products in their baskets as the glaring designs seemed to publicise frugality. They left consumers embarrassed at the thought of being seen with the acidic yellow packs from Morrisons or those garish blue and white stripes from Tesco. The research conclusions were blunt: the Value brand was seen to be "pulling down the perceptions of Morrisons' own label and Morrisons".

Inspired by the new brand ambition and values, our approach was to turn the design (and naming) conventions of Value brands on their head. Traditionally, own brand packaging tended to communicate 'down-market'. It implied 'cheap', instead of 'affordable and no-name generic', or 'proud bearer of the retailer's own label'. Value ranges tend to be somewhat utilitarian, using template designs and a cold, corporate approach. Our identity moves away from this, to one which reflects the unique warmth and friendliness of a supermarket brand that is charming, optimistic and thoughtful. This is design for the times we live in.

(300 WORDS)



Project Overview

Outline of project brief

Morrisons, one of the UK's 'big four' retailers, asked us to redesign their Value range (Morrisons Value) as part of the strategic overhaul of their entire own brand offer. The objective across the brand was to better reflect their revised brand ambition of delivering quality and humanity, bringing the people behind the brand to the fore, even in the Value offer.

Specific objectives in creating the new Value brand included:

- > To create a new brand name that would stand out in a crowded and homogenous category;
- > To design a brand identity that would not just make an impact within the Morrisons brand but against the Value brands of the other three biggest retailers (Asda, Tesco and Sainsburys);
- > To communicate the brand's new ambition of quality and humanity;
- > To overcome the negative consumer perception of buying Value ranges and attract new audiences;
- > To increase sales, with minimal cannibalisation of other own brand ranges.

We also had to take into consideration the core objective for the overall rebranding project:

- > To increase their share of own label from 40% to the 48% average of their competitors within three yearsⁱⁱ.



Project Overview

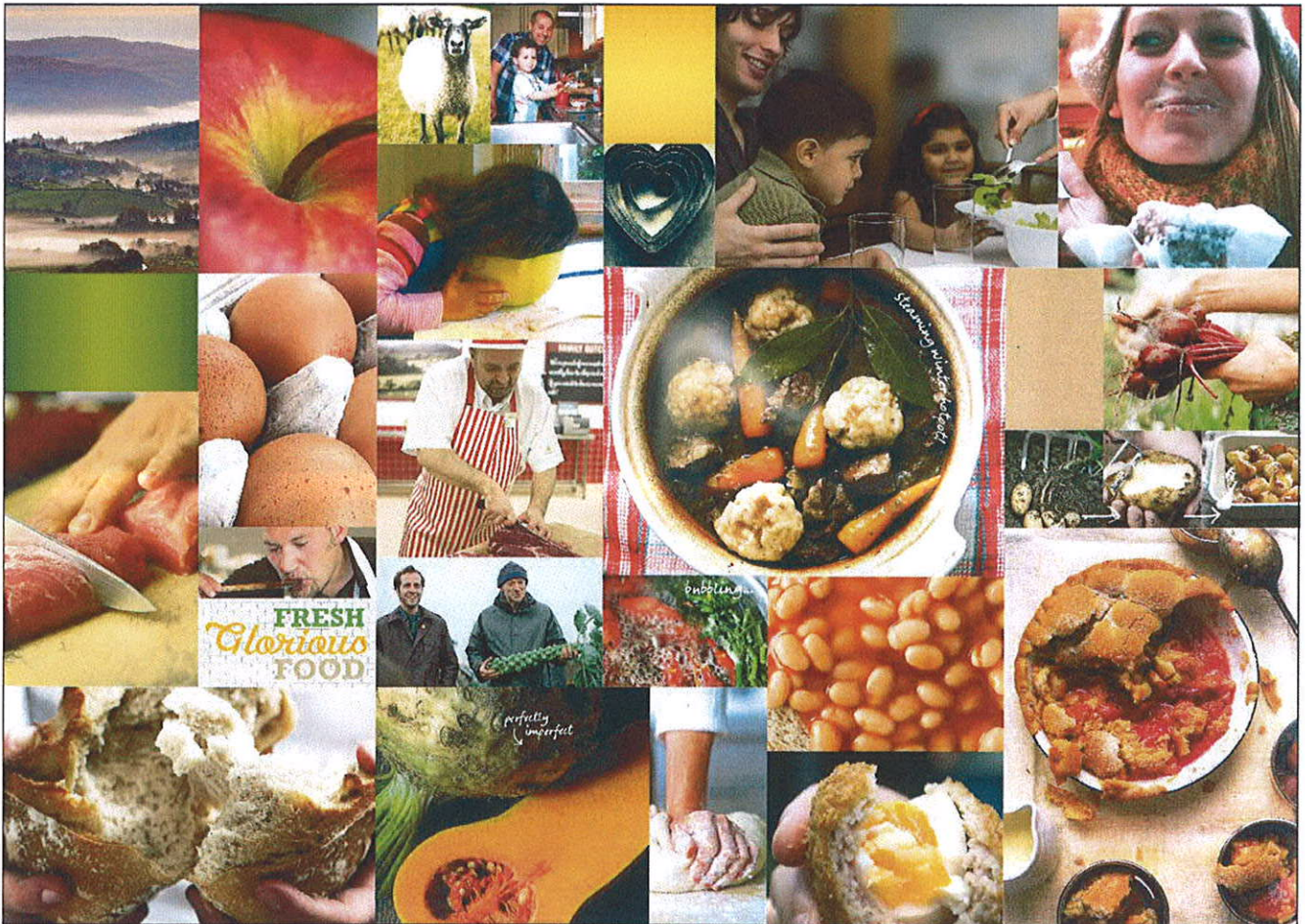
Description

Morrisons started life as William Morrison's market stall in Bradford in 1899. With over 100 years of experience it has grown to become the UK's fourth largest food retailer owning over 400 stores and serving nine million customers every week¹.

The brand is set apart from the competition with its vertically integrated approach meaning they source and process most of the fresh food they sell through their own manufacturing facilities, giving them close control over provenance and quality. They also have more people preparing more food in store than any other retailer.

Although Morrisons had been successful on many fronts their own brand offering was comparatively weak, making up only 40% of their sales mix, lagging considerably behind the market average of 48%. This underperformance was especially acute in the Value range with just 2% vs. a market average of 5%².

As part of the broader project, Coley Porter Bell worked with Morrisons to develop an overarching brand design idea of 'Closer to Food' to reflect their unique vertical approach and amplify their food credentials. There is no doubt that this provided inspiration for the new Value brand giving us an in-depth understanding of the unique personality that urgently needed to be brought to the fore.



Project Overview

Overview of the Market

In times of recession, it makes sense that people seek value for money and look to cut financial corners where possible. In fact in 2011 “nearly half of all adults agreed that low price is more important than brand names”. It is not surprising, therefore that for many people the food shop has become one of the easiest places to tighten the purse strings, trading down to save pennies. It posed a perfect opportunity for own brands: Mintel research found the market for own label food and drink reached £37bn in 2011, a 24% increase since 2006.

However own brands have not always been desirable: “own labels fare particularly poorly in relation to brands in terms of authenticity, accountability and trust: three core areas which retailers may need to address so that their own brand offer becomes more competitive”.

More to the point, although the Value market was well catered for at the time of the brief with Morrisons Value, Tesco Value, Sainsbury’s Basics and Asda Smart Choice (as well as offerings from Waitrose and Co-op), they were incredibly undesirable.

Qualitative research carried out by Morrisons told us that shoppers admitted to hiding cheap range products in their baskets, as the glaring designs seemed to publicise frugality. They left consumers embarrassed at the thought of being seen with those acidic yellow packs from Morrisons or those garish blue and white stripes from Tesco.

Consumer reactions to the Morrisons Value packaging:

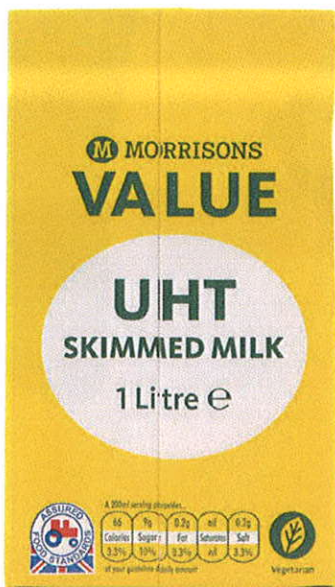
- > Cheap: “Shocking, diabolical, cheap and nasty”
- > Unappetising: “No food values at all”
- > Embarrassing: “There was embarrassment at having it glowing in their baskets – it told the world they were poor.”

The research conclusions were blunt: the Value brand was seen to be “pulling down the perceptions of Morrisons’ own label and Morrisons”.

They did, however, give us inspiration for the future. The existing range ‘Morrisons Value’ stretched across a vast number of categories but lacked any real meaning or vision beyond low prices. Inspired by Morrisons’ new ambition and values, it was time to build meaning into the brand and transform it from one that that screamed ‘cheap’, to one that said ‘value for money, for you’.

Project launch date:
Beginning of January 2012

Size of design budget:
Included rollout of over 200 skus



Project Overview

Outline of the Design Solution

The Challenges

- In designing the new brand, there were a number of challenges to overcome:
- > Shoppers felt embarrassed when buying Value products – we needed to make our focus the value for money benefit and create a brand that was about being smart and savvy rather than just being cheap
 - > The existing design was cold and faceless – we needed to bring the new Morrisons ambition of 'quality and humanity' to life and ensure the new Value brand was a key part of the entire own brand overhaul
 - > As an entry-level brand, Morrisons Value was the least profitable for the business - whilst we needed to increase sales, we had to be careful not to make the brand so desirable that it would be chosen over other own-brands in store
 - > In order to avoid added costs, no structural or substrate changes could be made to any of the packaging options – we therefore needed to create huge change by the use of graphics alone
 - > The entire Value range covers 650 products – we needed to ensure standout across every category whilst retaining a strong family brand feel



Project Overview

Outline of the Design Solution

The Design

Traditionally, own brand packaging tended to communicate 'down-market'. It implied 'cheap', instead of 'affordable, and no-name generic', or 'proud bearer of the retailer's own label'. Value ranges tend to be somewhat utilitarian, using template designs and a cold, corporate approach. Our identity moves away from this, to one which reflects the true Values of the Morrisons brand: quality and humanity. This is design for the times we live in.

Colourful, naively illustrated silhouettes of each product give the packaging a hand-crafted look and are complemented by simple product descriptors in a hand-written style typeface, specifically created for the brand. Printed against a plain white background, the understated label still conveys 'entry level', but looks so fresh and contemporary that consumers perceive it as shopping smartly, not shopping cheaply.

The individual hand-drawn illustrations and typography for each product dramatises the care and attention to detail given by Morrisons even in their Value offering. The result is something charming and optimistic, something that makes you smile. After all, why shouldn't Value products have some magic and engagement?

"One of the most successful elements of CPB's design is the way they have realised the uniqueness of each product through the illustrations that as they say are 'quirky and 'hand-drawn' which are good semiotic signs for 'uniqueness'."

Lawes Gadsby Semiotics, Morrisons' research partner



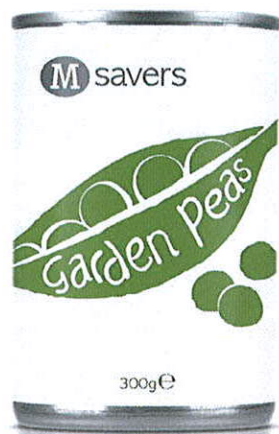
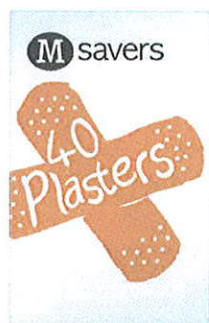
Project Overview

Outline of the Design Solution

The Name

The objective was to find a name that clearly and simply reflected the emotional benefit and was of course ownable against the competition. We wanted consumers to feel welcomed by the brand and to know that Morrisons is on their side, helping them to save money when they need to. The name M Savers ticked all the boxes. Removing 'Morrisons' and simply using 'M' (a familiar logo reversed out in white in a charcoal grey circle) was a decision made throughout all the own brand ranges, creating a quick shorthand to the brand with a strong equity and allowing for maximum simplicity on pack.

(509 words including quote worth 44 words)



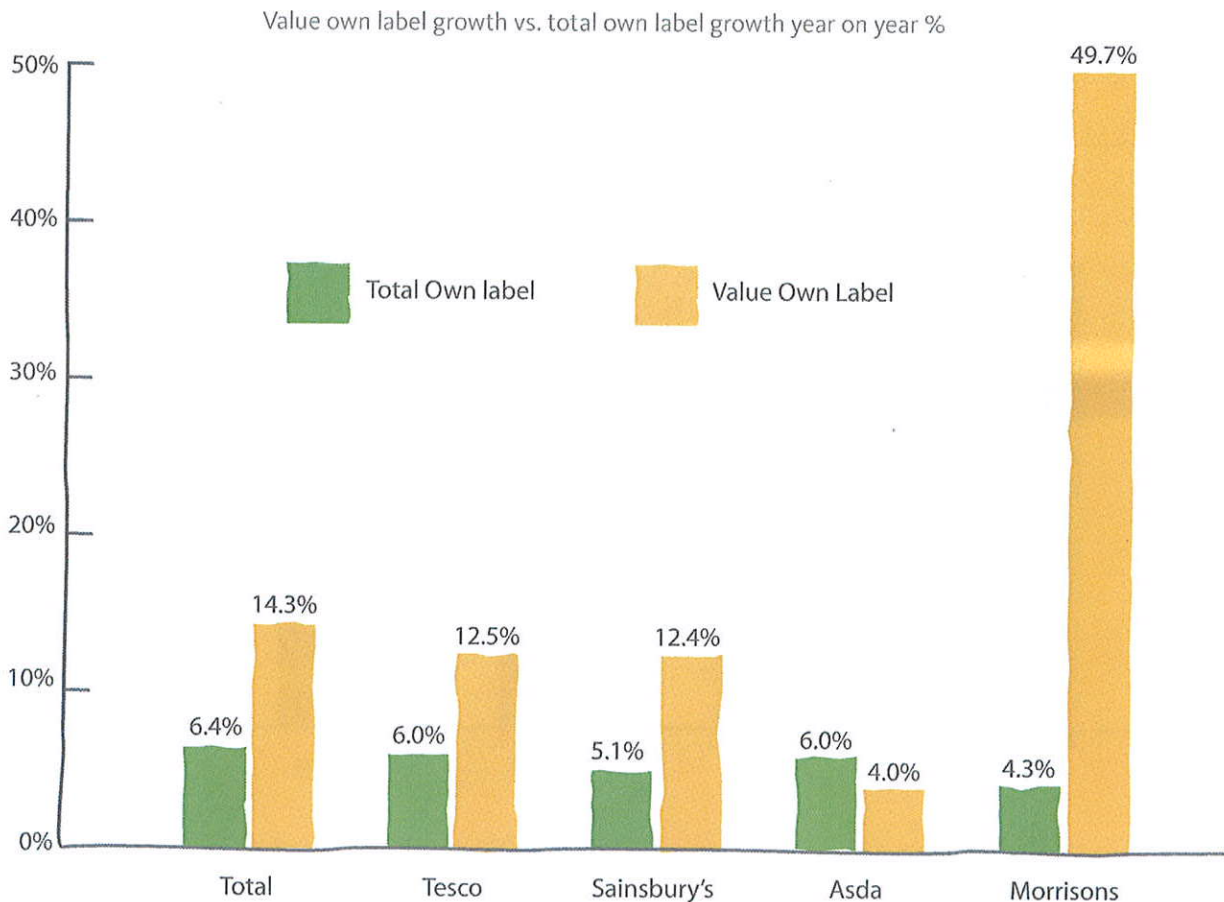
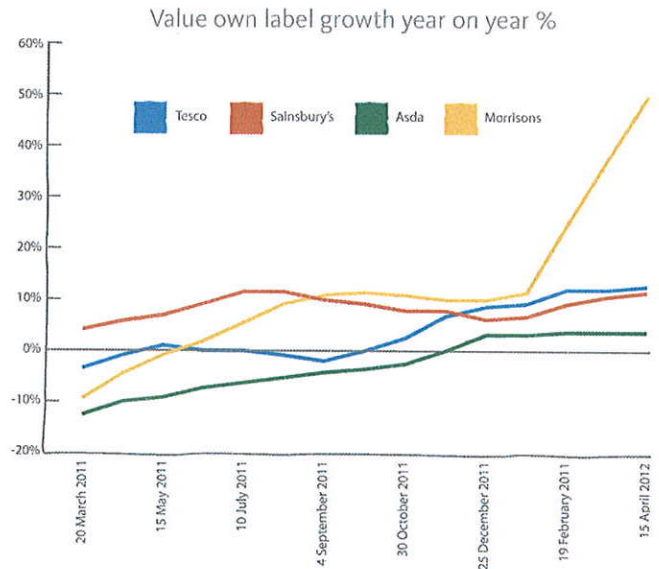
Summary of results

The fastest growing food brand in the UK

As recently published in The Grocer, the 'M Savers range is currently the UK's fastest-growing grocery range^{4x}.

Massive year-on-year growth of 49.7%

Results, as mapped on the graph below, show the huge impact that the launch of M Savers has had in growing the Morrisons Value own brand versus the competition*.



Summary of results

M Savers has been the most important contributor to own label growth in the last 12 months

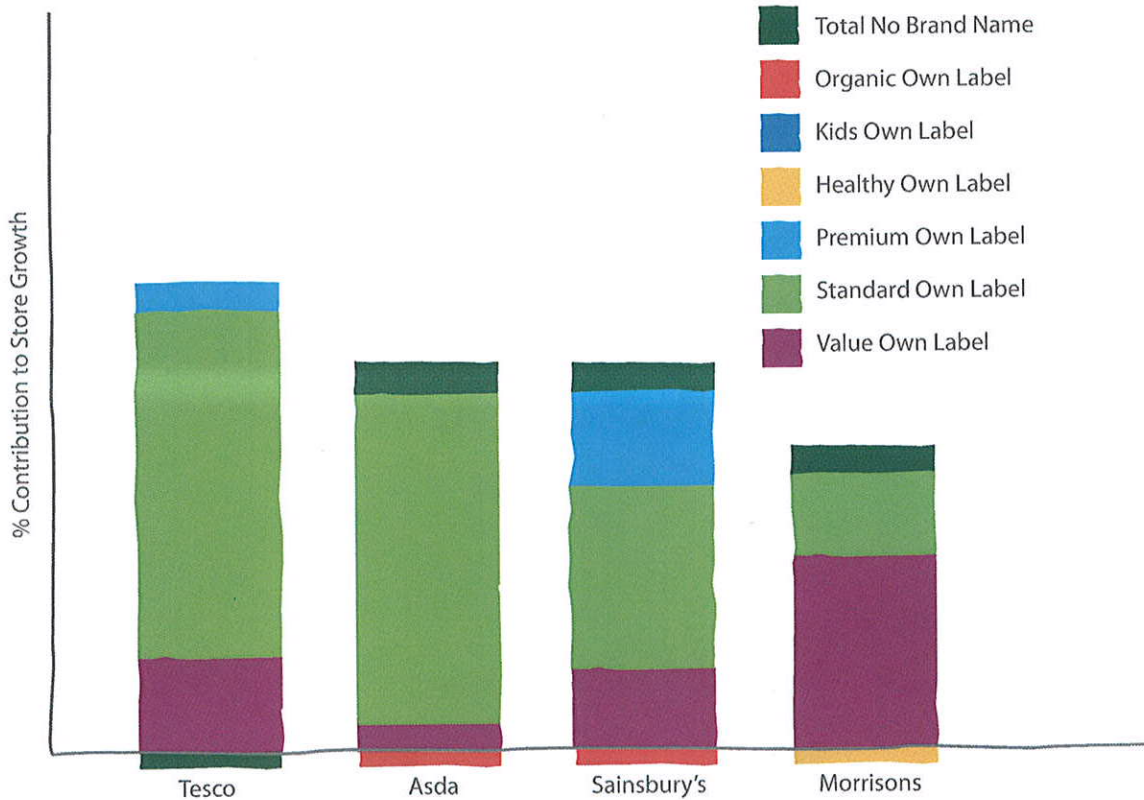
M Savers is by far the most important contributor to own label growth for the entire Morrisons brand and in comparison to the competition^{xi}.

Attracting new target audiences

Morrisons achieved their objective with increases in share across all social classes, with the strongest gains among Es, followed by Ds and C1s^{xiii}.

Minimal cannibalisation

The majority of new sales (51.8%) have come from customers buying M Savers instead of retailers' equivalent ranges or from branded products in store (14.2%). Only 11.4% has come from Standard Own Label^{xiv} which was a key challenge outlined from the beginning.



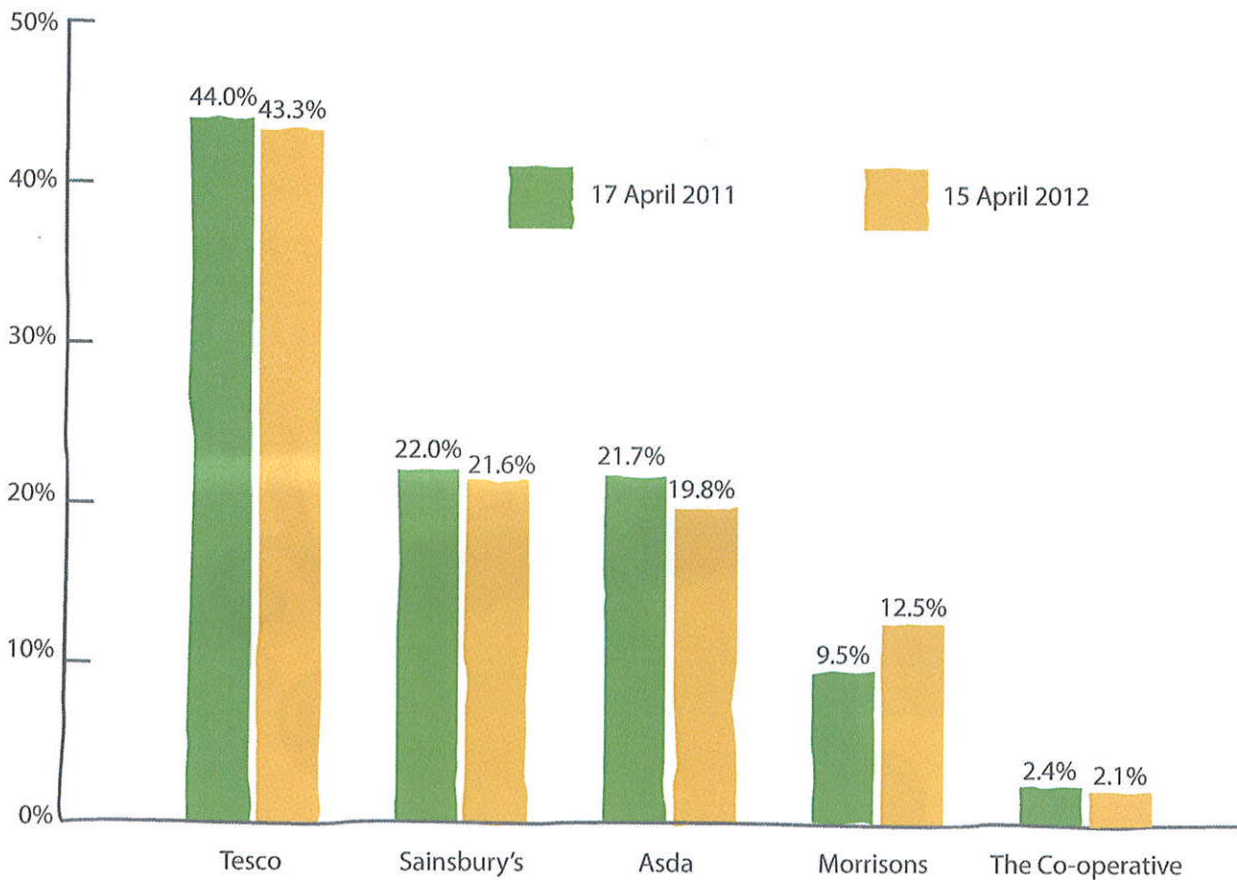
Contribution to year sales growth (%) - Own label sub brand/branded

Summary of results

Bucking the trend – Morrisons share of Value own label has risen when everyone else has fallen

Morrisons has increased its share of Value own label by 3% in the last year whilst all others have declined^{pv}.

Value own label retailer share of ... % - Total grocery 12we



Other influencing factors

Media activity

A targeted campaign took place for 4 weeks, starting 30th January 2012, including TV, magazines, outdoor, digital, leaflets and POS. However, results show that sales increased by an unprecedented 26%^{xvi} in the month before the campaign launched. These were sales made purely on design alone.

It is also important to add that the advertising campaign was a simple communication of the new brand, showcasing the new name and designs, as opposed to a 'big emotion-led' idea. As a result, the design very much remained at the heart of it.



26%
sales increase
pre-advertising

Research sources

- i Wardle & Mclean Research September 2012
- ii IRI Analysis, 52 weeks ending 20.2.10
- iii Morrisons website
- iv IRI Analysis, 52 weeks ending 20.2.10
- v Mintel Budget Shopper, UK April 2011
- vi <http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/news/article-2148561/Mintel-Cheaper-supermarket-label-goods-big-brands.html#ixzz20EUwS6o2>
- vii Mintel, Private Label Food and Drink report UK March 2012
- viii Wardle & Mclean Research September 2012
- ix <http://www.thegrocer.co.uk/companies/supermarkets/morrisons/morrisons-forges-ahead-despite-trading-blips/230060.article>
- x Kantar Worldpanel Value Own Label, 12we 15th April 2012
- xi Kantar Worldpanel Value Own Label, 12we 15th April 2012
- xii Kantar Worldpanel Value Own Label, 12we 15th April 2012
- xiii Kantar Worldpanel Value Own Label, 12we 15th April 2012
- xiv Kantar Worldpanel Value Own Label, 12we 15th April 2012
- xv Morrisons Report Data

