

WILD FOR LIFE

For publication

TrueStart

DBA Design Effectiveness Awards entry – October 2019



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FROM NICHE SPORTS SUPPLEMENT TO MAINSTREAM NATURAL ENERGY DRINK

In 2018 TrueStart came to us with the ambition to grow their brand from a niche sports supplement to a challenger brand that could take on mainstream natural energy drinks. In order to do this they needed to extend distribution far beyond the sports focused retailers that then listed TrueStart (Wiggle, Sigma Sports and a number of independent bike shops) and break into mainstream retailers, such as Whole Foods, who at the time were not open to listing the brand. Ambitions also extended to breaking into the on-trade category as a further diversification model.

THROUGH REPOSITIONING, REDESIGN AND RANGE EXTENSION

Prior to the redesign TrueStart's portfolio comprised of instant coffee and energy bars, in order to break into the mainstream natural energy market, we needed to shift the perception of TrueStart (from sports supplement to everyday energy drink) and give the brand the stretch to feasibly extend into ready to drink (RTD) cold brew coffee, nitro machines (in the on-trade), beans and beyond.

IN AN ALREADY CROWDED CATEGORY

Cold coffee was already a saturated category – therefore, gaining listings with some key distributors was no mean feat. Conversely, in the on-trade, the presence of cold coffee wasn't understood or expected, so the challenge was to create a role for the brand in that environment.

BY REFRAMING THE BRAND STRATEGICALLY AND VISUALLY TO BE 'WILD FOR LIFE'

(NOT SPORT PERFORMANCE FOCUSED)

The solution was to create a brand strategy that focused in on adding energy and excitement to everyday life ("Wild for Life") and then bringing this to life via a bold and impactful brand design. The rebrand delivered disruption on shelf across the full portfolio, whilst creating an engaging and energetic brand world that has since enabled the business to extend into the on-trade and also to open their own café bar.

BEFORE



AFTER



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



RESULTS OVERVIEW

- Breaking into mainstream retailers that previously would not take such a niche sports brand, for example Whole Foods, Booths and Harvey Nichols, and supplying offices including 'REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA', whilst retaining previous listings in sports specialists
- Annual turnover doubled within one year of redesign, growing from 'REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA'
- Sales up 500% in August 2019 vs August 2018
- Doubled listings from 300 to 600 in the first year of the rebrand (against a target of maintaining existing number of listings)
- Top selling cold coffee brand in Whole Foods every week since launch
- Sales at Ocado have increased 5x in value since the rebrand (2018 - 2019)
- Successfully launching in on-trade, which now accounts for 25% of the business

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW



BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

- Shift perception of TrueStart from a sport supplement brand to a natural energy brand
- Break into mainstream retailers, beyond the existing sports-focused retailers, with Whole Foods as the prime target
- Grow distribution, maintain existing number of listings (300) but increase the diversity of these
- Maintain sales during a period of significant positioning change
- Establish a presence (however small) in the on-trade environment

THE CHALLENGE TO SHIFT INTO THE MAINSTREAM NATURAL ENERGY SPACE

The TrueStart brand and its range was originally created as a selection of caffeine-based sports supplements. These sports supplements focused on the functional benefit of a sustained and stable caffeine lift, not a sharp spike then crash in energy levels. The product delivered this via carefully selected coffee beans and pre repositioning their line was “TrueStart not a false start”.

In 2018 when we first started working with TrueStart, this original positioning and brand design was starting to limit the brand’s growth. Listings were largely limited to sports-based retailers (such as Wiggle, Sigma Sports and independent bike shops)

and they were struggling to break into more mainstream retailers.

The primary objective of the redesign was to reposition TrueStart from a niche sports brand to a mainstream natural energy brand, that offers the energy needed for everyday life not just extreme sports.

SCOPE OF WORK

Prior to the redesign TrueStart offered instant coffee, coffee beans and bars. The new brand design needed to work across a much wider product offering.

Post the redesign TrueStart have added RTD cold brew coffee (in 3 x flavours) and nitro machines for the on-trade to their portfolio, as well as opening a café bar in Bristol.

The scope of work for the brief included:

- Brand strategy: refining the brand positioning, creating the brand strategy and manifesto
- Brand identity redesign
- Redesign of full portfolio at the time including instant coffee and coffee beans
- Design for innovation and new launches
 - Ready to drink cold brew coffee across 3 variants plus SRP secondary packaging
 - Ready to drink cold brew multipack
 - The world’s first biodegradable coffee capsules
 - Nitro machine
 - Ground coffee retail packs
- Creation of brand world (including activation guidelines and master assets)

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

THE BUSINESS

TrueStart was founded in 2015 by entrepreneurial couple Helena and Simon Hills. They were searching for a coffee that gave a boost without setting their hearts racing as they trained for triathlons alongside busy jobs. After discovering that the caffeine in coffee is both varied and unpredictable, they developed the first coffee in the world to provide a boost with no crash thanks to a stable caffeine content. The brand quickly established itself as a respected brand within the fitness industry.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

The desire to reposition TrueStart as a mainstream natural energy brand (rather than a niche sports brand) was driven by the founders' belief that this would allow them to break into mainstream retailers, for example Whole Foods who, to date, wouldn't consider the brand.

The business believed that in the long-term there was more scope for growth through reaching the mainstream retailers, the key challenge was to break into the mainstream whilst still maintaining business size – with such a radical shift in positioning the business didn't expect to be able to grow immediately.

The founders also believed that there was an opportunity to grow their presence in the on-trade, bars and nightclubs. This meant the brand redesign needed to be broad enough to span two distinct consumption occasions.



CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

The logo for TrueStart me up is displayed on a blue brick wall background. 'TRUE' and 'START' are in large, bold, dark blue block letters. 'me up' is in a white, lowercase, cursive script font, positioned below 'START' and slightly to the right. A thin white horizontal line is drawn under the 'me up' text.

A RAPIDLY GROWING BUT CROWDED MARKET...

Project Iced UK 2019, World Coffee Portal's annual analysis of the UK's rapidly developing iced beverages segment, reveals iced beverage sales grew by 14.3% in 2018 to £395m worldwide.

Although the market is in relative infancy, it is experiencing rapid growth. The redesign needed to deliver standout and impact on shelf within the already established and crowded RTD cold coffee category. Jimmy's, Minor Figures, Sandows, Rebel Kitchen, Starbucks, illy, Grenade 'Killa Coffee' were all already in market, competing for shelf space and consumer attention.

As a small challenger brand coming into an already saturated market we needed to create a design that delivered attention grabbing standout at shelf.

Another hurdle for the brand was its unique positioning, as both a cold coffee and an energy drink.

There was no other brand like TrueStart in market and as such we were essentially attempting to create a new category. For the re-brand to be successful it would have to be able to communicate this unique product difference succinctly and yet be familiar enough not to be rejected.

... AND A CHALLENGING NEW CATEGORY TO BREAK INTO

The ambition to move TrueStart into the on-trade should also be regarded as a bold ambition for the brand. Hot coffee is in decline in the on-trade. Many bars and clubs are removing their hot coffee machines, and many others are hardly used. Similarly, beyond hard-core energy drinks like Monster and Red Bull, there were no natural energy or cold coffee options to speak of in the on-trade.

This meant that the new brand had to convince members of the on-trade that coffee cold coffee with an energy kick had a role to play in that environment. No mean feat.

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

STRATEGY

We worked with TrueStart to create a new brand positioning in order to shift perceptions from that of a niche or specialist sport supplement to an everyday natural energy drink. This was the critical first step in reframing the brand in order to open up opportunities for growing distribution through breaking into mainstream retailers and increasing overall listings.

We recognised that the mainstream consumer was a “give it a goer”, who wants to live life to its fullest, grab opportunities and could be found embracing this attitude at music festivals. Building on this we established the benefit for TrueStart as allowing consumers to have the energy to live every day to its fullest and therefore moved the brand positioning from “TrueStart not a false start/ performance coffee” to “Wild for Life”.

The new positioning tapped into energy and caffeine usage in a more everyday and emotive way than the previous functional message.



WILD
- for -
LIFE

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

BRAND IDENTITY

We created an iconic and bold new brand identity, symbolising the new positioning of “Wild for Life” via showing a pair of legs diving in headfirst. This identity system works flexibly depending on the variant or key message that is being communicated. The overall aesthetic is inspired by the world of festivals, one of those key moments whereby diving into life and embracing the day is commonplace – and a more accessible and mainstream aesthetic than that of performance sport.

PACK DESIGN

The bold styling of the pack design (particularly for RTD cold brew coffee) and loud colour palette creates strong disruption and standout at shelf, vs the expansive competitive set who overall opt for more muted tones and stripped design. The new design system works confidently across a broader portfolio from RTD cold brew to nitro machines in nightclubs/bars and stands out in a mainstream environment, as well as amongst the traditional sports drinks that TrueStart had competed against since launch.

We used bold graphics and bespoke structure for the shelf ready pack design, so that these could be used for attention grabbing instore activation and impactful shelf presence, without the need for spend on additional POS.

BRAND WORLD

We created brand activation and tone of voice guidelines with moving and static flexible assets that helped the brand live boldly in multiple spaces (both on trade and off trade/night and day).

KEY FACTS

LAUNCH DATE - 24TH JUNE 2018

DESIGN FEES - £27K

REDESIGN £25K

BRAND WORLD £2K



RESULTS

In summary, the redesign has enabled TrueStart to double overall annual turnover within one year, growing from 'REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA' and 'REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA'.

SHIFTING PERCEPTION OF TRUESTART FROM A SPORT SUPPLEMENT BRAND TO A NATURAL ENERGY BRAND

The proof that we have shifted TrueStart to a natural energy brand can be seen in the shift in distribution from sports-focused establishments into more mainstream retailers, as mentioned previously.

TrueStart have also been approached by a major music festival to become a key sponsor and they have been approached by Bacardi to collaborate on a coffee/tequila proposition – both of these pieces of evidence are testament to the effectiveness of the new everyday “Wild for Life” positioning, which was brought to life through the new design, and would simply not have been possible had we not successfully shifted perceptions.

BREAKING INTO MAINSTREAM RETAILERS BEYOND THEIR EXISTING SPORTS FOCUSED RETAILERS

Prior to redesign, TrueStart had never managed to get into Whole Foods – their prime target as they sought more mainstream distribution. Not only is TrueStart now listed with Whole Foods, but the rate of sale and growing list of mainstream distribution outlets is a testament to the rebrand's effectiveness.

New listings have been made at: Booths, Harvey Nichols, Ocado, Revital, Eurostar, Thunderbird, Eat 17, Hisbe and As Nature Intended. The brand also now supplies products to offices and working spaces such as 'REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA', Runway East and Origin. Not only this but they have managed to retain previous listings such as Wiggle and added David Lloyd clubs to the list, which demonstrates that the rebrand has not alienated the original consumer base.

It is important to note that while TrueStart wanted to get into Whole Foods, they had not set any sales ambitions for when they had achieved this, however the brand has been the **top selling cold brew in Whole Foods every week since launch (2018)**. Overtaking Sandows, Minor Figures, Jimmys and Califica. This is a huge achievement considering the more established nature of the competition mentioned earlier and due to the fact that TrueStart had only been on promotion for 4 weeks. Furthermore, the brand maintained the top spot before and after this promotion.



“WE HAVE A LOT OF LOVE FOR THE SPORTS AND PERFORMANCE SECTOR, BUT WE KNEW OUR OFFERING HAD SO MUCH MORE POTENTIAL. THERE ARE GO-GETTERS OUT THERE LIKE US WHO WANT TO LIVE LIFE TO THE FULLEST AND THAT IS WHO WE ARE TARGETING. RIGHT FROM THE START, THE AGENCY TEAM UNDERSTOOD WHAT WE COULD ACHIEVE AND KNEW HOW TO GET US THERE.”

HELENA HILLS
Co-Founder and CEO, TrueStart

RESULTS

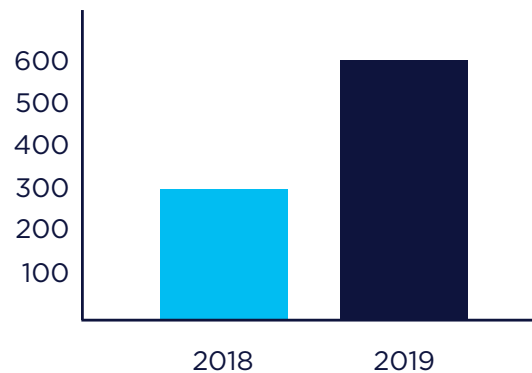
GROWING LISTINGS AND DISTRIBUTION

As well as breaking into mainstream stores, TrueStart were hoping to maintain their existing number of listings. Their previous level of distribution was 300 and they were looking to maintain this. However TrueStart is now **available in 600 outlets and counting**.

As well as the retailers and on-trade mentioned above, TrueStart is now also distributed via Bidfood, Bewleys, Nectar, Tree of Life, Oliver Kay, Youngs Wholesale and Diverse. TrueStart is now available on nine campuses at Birmingham University and the brand is also in conversations with a national forecourt chain. This increased distribution, which outstripped expectation, can be seen as a result of a successful shift from niche to mainstream.

You can now find TrueStart Cold Brew Coffee in shops, bars and restaurants all over the UK and beyond - even as far afield as Taiwan.

NUMBER OF LISTINGS



RESULTS

MAINTAINING SALES LEVELS

TrueStart's founders felt that with such a radical shift in positioning, the best the brand could hope for in terms of overall sales levels was maintenance during the first year of relaunch. However, since the redesign launched the brand is on track to double overall annual turnover within one year, growing from 'REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA'. Over 125,000 cans of cold brew were sold in the first 6 months since launching and **sales were up 500% in August this year** (2019), compared with August last year (2018).

Whilst much of the increase is due to the increase in distribution (which in itself is thanks to the redesign), specific retailers demonstrate how the re-brand had a direct effect on sales. In **Ocado sales have increased 5 x in value** from before and after the redesign. And in Whole Foods, as previously mentioned, the brand has been the **top selling cold coffee every week since launch**.

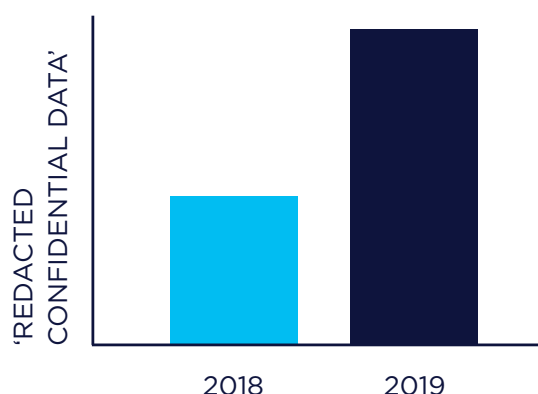
Sales in the first 5 months of the rebrand were equivalent to sales for 12 months of the previous year (this more than doubled TrueStart's baseline sales) due to a strong pipeline and repeat purchase rates.

BREAKING INTO THE ON-TRADE ENVIRONMENT

TrueStart had zero expectations for breaking into the on-trade. They wanted to establish a presence, but any growth was a bonus. The brand is now on-trade with Fullers, Butcombe Brewing Co, Hippo Inns, The Stable, Harbour Hotels, Revolucion de Cuba and Hyatt Regency. On-trade now accounts for 25% of TrueStart's business, and based on the strong growth of the rest of the brand this is a significant achievement.

The success of the re-brand in positioning TrueStart for new occasions can also be seen as they have been approached by Bacardi to create a signature serve of TrueStart x Patrón Tequila which is now available in Revolucion de Cuba bars all over the country. They are also currently in talks with a major airline who is interested in taking their signature serve.

ANNUAL TURNOVER



RESULTS

BEYOND MEETING THE ORIGINAL BUSINESS OBJECTIVES...

A growing core team

The growth of the value of the business since redesign has already created jobs for two new employees in Bristol and they are currently looking to hire a further Assistant Brand Manager, Business Developer and Regional Student Ambassadors.

Ethics and sustainability credential

As part of the redesign we moved all TrueStart SKUs into 100% recyclable packaging, which complimented the business's passion for sustainability. Due to increased demand and distribution, TrueStart have also created jobs for 10 women in Malawi who upcycle their used coffee sacks into beautiful handmade bags, this is in partnership with the Cycle of Good charity.

OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

- The brand had little to no other marketing activity in the period since the redesign. Less than £5,000 was spent on other marketing activities.
- The only other influencing factor was the price promotion that TrueStart were on for one month during the initial launch period in Whole Foods. However, as previously mentioned TrueStart's success as the top selling cold coffee in Whole Foods has been maintained both before and after the sales promotion period.

DATA SOURCES

- TRUESTART INTERNAL DATA
- WORLD COFFEE PORTAL - PROJECT ICED UK 2019

