

LIVING *life* BOLDLY

For publication

Pipers

DBA Design Effectiveness Awards entry – October 2019



EXECUTIVE *summary*

DRIVING GROWTH IN A CHALLENGING AND DECLINING CATEGORY

Pipers are a premium crisp brand, established in 2004 when three farmers joined forces to produce great tasting, quality crisps using local potatoes. But in 2016 growth from their main distribution channel (independents) was slowing, so they decided they wanted to target larger convenience retailers and innovate beyond just crisps – they wanted to launch a new better-for-you snack called Crispeas.

Both targets came with challenges. Firstly a Kettle Chips rebrand in 2016 encroached on the Pipers visual style and strategic positioning, which made the convenience space highly competitive (both to gain listings and maintain sales). Meanwhile, launching the Crispeas range felt like a stretch for the brand due to its strong heritage in indulgent crisps.

Whilst the crisp market was still incredibly large, maintaining growth was a challenge in itself, as overall volume in the category was down with the premium players in particular struggling.

And, whilst the growth in 'better-for-you' snacks was clear, premium crisp brands had struggled to innovate in the sector. Kettle Chips had, in the past year launched and subsequently had to de-list their Kettle Chips Bites product which had failed to ignite consumer and retailer interest.

BY BRINGING NEW MEANING TO THE BRAND BEYOND PRODUCT AND PROVENANCE

The answer lay in defining a new meaning for the brand, shifting from a focus on provenance and crisps, and moving to an emotive narrative of **'living life boldly'**; an idea that would resonate with both the core range and potential innovation by focusing on consumer enjoyment and echoing the boldness of flavour across the Pipers portfolio.

We used the strategy of 'living life boldly' to re-imagine the 'Piper' that sat at the heart of the identity, transforming him from an enigmatic character on a potato field to a Dionysian character, that was proverbially 'getting the party started'.

BEFORE



AFTER



EXECUTIVE *summary*

RESULTS OVERVIEW

- Pipers managed to speed up growth, seeing 10% volume growth after the re-design. This was primarily down to a 3% value sales growth, selling an incremental 400,000 (volume units) packs of crisps to a value of £223k
- Distribution grew from 12,500 outlets in 2017 to 14,000 outlets in 2018 - an increase of 12% overall
- The brand was also able to enact a 3% price point increase across the whole range
- The new Crispeas range, which successfully launched in June 2019 under the Pipers brand has already been taken up by Co-Op and Benugo and delivered £59k and 188,000 packs since launch.



CASE STUDY *overview*



BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

- Gain wider distribution
- Increase growth rate
- Maintain rate of sale in existing listings
- Re-position the Pipers brand beyond crisps to allow for future innovation

THE BUSINESS

Pipers was founded in 2004 by 3 farmers who wanted to make great-tasting, quality crisps from local ingredients. As an independent brand, which had proudly rejected supermarkets and mass retailers they had achieved incremental growth in that period – growing from nothing to a £10m business in 2016.

However, by 2016, growth had slowed and, in order to diversify the portfolio, and enable growth, the founders were considering launching a Crispea snack range (snacks made out of peas) to target the growing better-for-you segment. They also wanted to grow their distribution channels, expanding beyond smaller, independent retailers into the more challenging space of larger convenience retailers – securing larger accounts and driving penetration.

Through a re-brand Pipers believed they would be able to unlock further distribution, include a better-for-you range and grow sales volume to meet their ambitious targets of growing turnover by £7m by 2020.

CASE STUDY *overview*

THE CHALLENGE TO DRIVE GROWTH AND CREATE THE ENVIRONMENT TO INNOVATE

The requirements to achieve the business goals were challenging. The growth targets for the brand were ambitious – with the brand looking to grow by 70% in only four years.

Pipers had never before extended beyond their core heartland of crisps. The integration of a new better-for-you range of snacks required a new brand positioning and packaging architecture. But, more importantly, the brand felt innovating beyond their core would be a stretch as they had such a strong association with indulgent hand-cooked crisps – they were even called Pipers Crisps at the time. They were concerned that consumers and retailers would not see them as a credible player in the space.

Gaining distribution in the convenience space was another significant challenge for the brand.

The convenience space was much more competitive than independents. More problematically, Kettle had recently re-branded themselves in such a way as to encroach on Pipers' traditional heartland. The Kettle brand mimicked Pipers' use of a brand character on pack and, from a strategic perspective, they were alluding more to their local produce. Overall, the design bore more than a similar resemblance from a colourway perspective.

SCOPE OF WORK

- 14 x core crisps & 6 x Crispeas NPD
- Strategy & semiotics
- Portfolio strategy
- Identity & packaging re-design



CASE STUDY *overview*

A CHALLENGING MARKET FOR CRISPS... BUT WITH OPPORTUNITIES ELSEWHERE

Whilst the overall market for savoury snacks is in growth this doesn't tell the full story when it comes to crisps. Crisps do remain hugely popular with consumers; crisps and crisp-style snacks are eaten by 93% of UK adults. However, in the period between July 2018 and July 2019, the crisp market saw a decline in volume of 5%.

This market decline can be seen in more specific terms to have affected the premium crisp category – in 2018 both Kettle chips and Tyrrel's saw a decline in brand of 3% and 1% respectively.

Meanwhile, the better-for-you sector of the market (offering healthier snacking options) was the fastest-growing area of the category with sales up 15% to almost £207m. It was clear to see that while volume was still there for the crisp market, innovating beyond crisps would bring new opportunities and be necessary to future-proof the brand and ensure long-term growth.

However, the challenge in moving into the better-for-you space was also evident. Brands like Pipers, who's core offering was indulgent hand-cooked crisps, lacked the obvious credibility required.

The scale of this challenge is illustrated by Kettle, who had already struggled to move into the better-for-you space. Their Kettle

Bites range, which was an offering within the better-for-you snacking space, was de-listed in September 2018 after extended poor performance.

STRATEGY

The brand challenge was multi-faceted; on one hand, we needed to use the re-brand to help make Pipers more distinctive and compelling in the crisp category to overcome the Kettle challenge in convenience.

On top of that, we needed to re-position Pipers as more than a crisp brand, creating a new meaning which allowed the brand to play credibly in two distinct areas of the market.

The first strategic decision was to remove the word 'crisps' from the Pipers brand name. Now known as just Pipers, this allows the brand the ability to elevate itself beyond a single product offering and take a step towards credibly expanding the breadth of offering within the range.

The second strategic challenge was to move the brand beyond the original product provenance story, which was brought to life on pack with the tagline 'made by farmers' and an illustration of the Piper in the middle of a potato field. Having a brand narrative rooted in the provenance of the potatoes was limiting the ability of the brand to extend its offering but was also open to imitation by competitor.



CASE STUDY *overview*



We needed to create a new brand idea that would allow us to elevate the brand beyond product.

We looked to our consumer to understand the consumption moment better and there was one key insight that under-pinned both occasions, and that was enjoyment. Regardless of whether people were choosing better-for-you snacks or traditional crisps, no consumer wanted to compromise on enjoyment.

We landed on the idea of 'living life boldly' that at once spoke to the enjoyment that consumers wanted and also echoed the boldness of flavour of the products within the range. It was a brand idea that we believed could be distinctive and ownable to Pipers within the competitive set, and would allow the brand to engage beyond the level of product alone.

BRAND IDENTITY AND PACK DESIGN

The strategic narrative of 'living life boldly' inspired the fundamental reconfiguration of the role of the Piper within the brand identity.

From a distant, slightly enigmatic figure in the potato fields we moved the Piper to be the key focus of visual identity and

heroed at the heart of the brand. Re-imagined as a Dionysian character blowing effervescently on the horn, thus we moved away from the brand link to potatoes and product.

Bold behaviour and bold taste were now baked into the brand at the identity level and enabled the narrative to shift from provenance to enjoyment. An idea that could enable innovation and provide distinctive and ownable meaning that could separate it from competition.

BRAND EXTENSION

The new innovation that was launched alongside the updated core was the Crispea range.

With the Piper now established as the hero on the pack (and not constrained in a potato field), the design of the new products focused on identifying a colour palette for the new range and bringing personality to the exotic flavours while visualising the Crispea in an appealing way. With the brand engaging consumers at a masterbrand level, the rest of the pack was free to ensure clarity of navigation and product offering.

KEY FACTS

LAUNCH DATE - JUNE 2018

DESIGN FEES - £60K

RESULTS

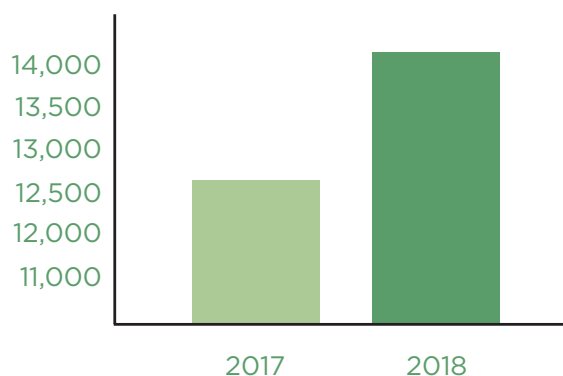


The redesign which launched in June 2018 ultimately delivered success for the brand on multiple levels.

GAIN WIDER DISTRIBUTION

The brand managed to grow distribution from **12,500 outlets in 2017 to 14,000 outlets in 2018 – an increase of 12%**. In particular the key accounts won were Spar, WH Smith & Euro Garages.

NUMBER OF OUTLETS



Furthermore, the new design leveraged more shelf space in one of the brand's key customers; Lincs Co Op, with an additional SKU being listed. This dual siting in-store and greater product offering increased the value of this account from **£147k to £212k** and helped contribute to the overall brand growth.

RE-POSITIONING THE PIPERS BRAND BEYOND CRISPS TO ALLOW FOR FUTURE INNOVATION

The successful launch of the new Crispea range in June 2019 is testament to the repositioning of the brand beyond crisps through the new brand narrative and the heroing of the Piper within the identity.

Crispeas were launched under the Pipers Masterbrand in a way that retailers felt was both credible and compelling. Existing customers Co-Op and Benugo alongside Spar all took the new product range.

The Crispea product **performed well in market in its first 6 months** – meeting the expectations of the market selling on average 11.6 bags per outlet per week.

RESULTS

INCREASING GROWTH RATE IN ORDER TO MEET AMBITIOUS GROWTH TARGETS

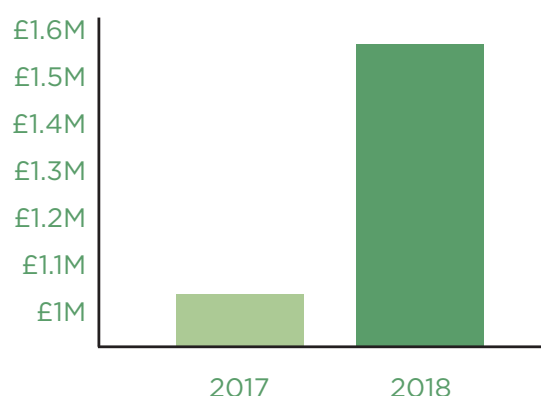
The successful increase in distribution and launch of the Crispeas have seen the brand gain a **3% increase in value sales** during a period in which the core crisp category saw volume decline. In fact, in this period, Pipers sold an incremental 400,000 (volume units) packs of crisps with a value of **£223k**, which demonstrated a **10% volume growth in 2018** for the core crisp sector of the portfolio.

But the growth in sales wasn't just thanks to the increased distribution and the new range – it was also thanks to the core range retaining its rate of sale within challenging market conditions and in the face of strong competition from Kettle Chips. The fact that Kettle Chips saw a decline in the same period should attest to the strength of the Pipers brand.

The increase in value was also driven by a **3% price point** increase across the whole range which the design played a strong role in facilitating.

All this meant that after the redesign, the brand added **+£500k to growth on the previous year**. Whereas in 2017, before the redesign, the brand grew by £1,043,000, in 2018, post redesign, the brand **grew by £1,572,000** in the same time frame. This demonstrates that the redesign was instrumental in delivering on the objective of speeding up growth and helping to achieve the ambitious targets set.

BRAND GROWTH



RESULTS

BEYOND MEETING THE ORIGINAL BUSINESS OBJECTIVES...

Successful sale to a large multi-national

The re-design which launched in June 2018 ultimately delivered success for the brand by helping facilitate a sale to Pepsico in March 2019. This was an outcome of the brands' strong CAGR growth, away from home distribution points and growth potential. The role of the brand in delivering both the strong growth and growth potential have been made clear in the above results.

A growing team

The overall company growth driven by the success of the redesign and innovation launches has resulted in the number of people being employed in the company rising from 86 to 99.

OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

- The brand spends no money on media, so the re-design was not supported with communications.
- In the period following the redesign the marketing budget has increased slightly from £569k to £610k.
- There were no other significant price promotions or marketing activity that played a role in the growth either before and after the re-design.

"IT REALLY DOES HELP ANCHOR THE BRAND IN STORES, CREATING ALMOST 'A SHOP WITHIN A SHOP' "

SARAH WILLIAMS
Head of New Product, Design
and Marketing

DATA SOURCES

- MINTEL - 3 CRISPS, SAVOURY SNACKS AND NUTS UK 2017
- KANTAR WORLDPANEL, UP TO 14 JULY 2019
- NIELSEN, TO W/E 26 JANUARY 2019
- FOOD MANUFACTURE - CRISP MAKER SLIPS INTO THE RED
- THE GROCER - THE CRISP EXPLOSION