



## **Aquafresh Kids Toothbrushes and Teether**

Category:  
6.1 Product consumer

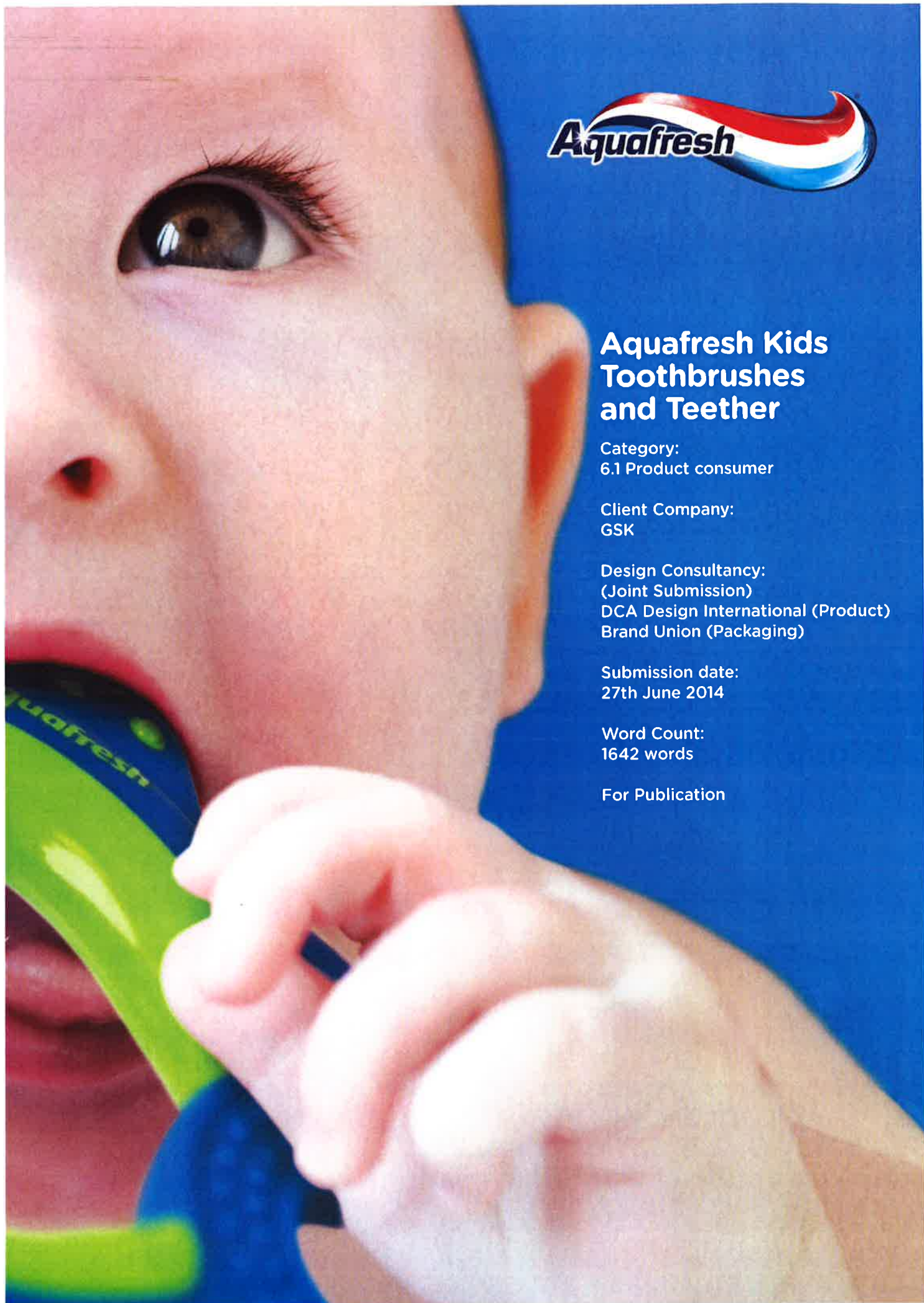
Client Company:  
GSK

Design Consultancy:  
(Joint Submission)  
DCA Design International (Product)  
Brand Union (Packaging)

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For Publication



## Executive Summary

The challenges facing parents to ensure the oral hygiene of children are unprecedented. Recently published UK data shows that on average 4-10 year olds are exceeding the maximum recommended daily intake of sugar by more than a third.<sup>1</sup> In the US tooth decay is the most prevalent chronic disease for children, accounting for 1 in 4 cases nationally.<sup>2</sup>

Much of this sugar is not coming from the classic sweets and sugary drinks, which many parents know to avoid, but from 'stealth sugars' (often added to processed foods to enhance flavour lost with fat content). Dietary patterns and packaging formats are also having an impact: 'little and often' fruit juice packs are increasing exposure to cariogenic acids both in infants and toddlers.

In response to this growing risk to children's health, and increasing commercial pressure from category competitors, in June 2013 GSK staged a complete relaunch of Aquafresh for Kids. The new range included brushes, pastes, mouthwash a teether. Aquafresh is the first global oral care brand to launch a teether. In so doing, the brand has created the first ever range of products designed to build and support healthy oral care behaviours right through to adulthood from before even appearance of the first tooth.

The relaunch has been a huge success. Commercial data evidences the increasing reach to parents and children: sales of the Stage 1 and 3 brushes (for 0-2 and 6-10 yr. olds) rising 40% and 37.5% respectively. The range as a whole outstripped category growth by 12.5%. In parallel, a substantial teether business has been established: growing a steady 3.3% within a market shrinking approx. 10% per annum. The relaunch has served to re-establish Aquafresh's credential as the first choice for family oral care.

This success has been achieved through exceptional and innovative product and packaging design: a collaboration between GSK Global Design, DCA Design International (structural lead), and Brand Union (packaging lead).

295 words

Source:

1. 14.7% vs. 11% RDA of all food energy from sugar  
- UK representative sample 2008-2012, published as part of National Diet and Nutrition Survey by PHE (Public Health England) - 14 May 2014

2. Center for Disease Control and Prevention:  
[http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/factsheets/fl\\_caries.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/factsheets/fl_caries.htm)





## Project Brief



PREVIOUS RANGE

Originally launched in 1973, Aquafresh had long been one of the world's leading oral care brands, with strong presence in US, UK, Middle East, South Africa, and Australia etc. By 2011 its leadership position had been compromised by fierce competition in the Family Oral Care category from Colgate, Oral B (P&G), and Signal (Unilever). Accordingly, to recover the loyalty of parents, brand-owner GSK decided to focus their strategy on strengthening their proposition for kids, with a complete range relaunch of Aquafresh for Kids.

GSK would retain the three-stage approach (corresponding to different stages of oral development for 0-2, 3-5 and 6-10 year olds), but would additionally develop and offer a teether, to recruit parents to the brand early – before even the first tooth. Targets were ambitious: to improve reach to families, the brand needed to see a double-digit sales uplift with concomitant increases in margin and share.

The design objectives were also ambitious: a complete range redesign conceived, tooled, productionised and rolled out within 18-21 months, as well as the new-to-GSK teether product (with additional regulatory approvals) within the same timeframe. In October 2011, GSK engaged DCA Design International as Global Lead Structural Design Agency to partner in design and development work. The work was completed on time within the allocated budget, including three rounds of concept development, technical development to create A-surface data, and subsequent packaging development by Brand Union for the entire range.

239 words



## Commercial Objectives

### Overall program objective

Increased share: recruit new users (adults and children) to the Aquafresh brand

### Brushes

Increased sales volume (Yr 1: >+10%) and marketshare  
Increased margin (revised solution must be COGS neutral)

### Teether

Effective entry into oral development teether market, supporting brand's oral hygiene credential  
Increased presence/distribution of AQF beyond oral care aisle.

## Design Objectives

In order to stand out at point of purchase, celebrate the brand's winning innovation features and capture the brand promise, DCA was required to respond to three key insights across all three brushes:

- ✓ Design should balance relevance for both the child (ie. engagement) and for mums (ie. reassurance).
- ✓ Pack and product design should be visually intuitive at fixture, demonstrating relevant features/benefits to drive trial
- ✓ New designs should both celebrate the 'flex zone' (an existing structural equity), and align with the new 3D visual brand language (VBL).
- ✓ Range should be visually coherent, creating continuity and demonstrating evolution across the different sub-stages

160 words



## The Solution

### Stage 1



At project kickoff, GSK had already identified a tripartite head configuration, designed to access all the surfaces of the tooth at once; this left the neck and the handle to develop.

Initial qualitative research showed the existing handle design tested extremely strong in the eyes of both brand and competitor users: appraised as both aesthetically suitable and ergonomically appropriate (mums do most of the brushing themselves at this stage, but imagine the baby doing so autonomously).

To better the existing design, therefore, DCA preserved the form factor and proportion of the existing brush, but explored characterisation to create a more explicit tool for storytelling - appreciated by mums who confessed to often relying on distraction to ease the bathroom struggle.

The octopus character emerged from the existing handle form, and created a strong link through to the Stage 2 brushes. With mum's approval sealed, all that remained was to express all eight tentacles through a two-shot mould, and pack for POS to balance an efficacious head feature with a loveable smirk.

170 words



## Stage 2



The initial brief for Stage 2, did not involve characters at all. A 'stamp and reward' concept was initially developed and tested, but found wanting by mums because it not only structured toddlers' autonomous relationship with their brush, but also gave them a means to cheat. By comparison, the existing set of animal characters were seen to engage children's imagination without compromising mum's authority.

New characters were therefore what was needed, but with the competition all licensing existing well-know franchises - strong, believable characters would have to be created from scratch.

Four new characters were therefore created, selected to help mum tell teeth-related stories, and overcome toddlers' resistance to brushing. Executions of the new cast of animal characters were unanimously preferred as offering both a more premium perception and a positive role model than existing designs. A further finding revealed that naturalistic colours are considered important for storytelling with crocodiles, sharks and tigers... but not bunny-rabbits!

155 words





### Stage 3

The brief stated that the Stage 3 brush needed to be a 'bold' and 'cool' to kids aged 6 years +, but little definition existed around what this really looked like. We also knew that as kids become 'tween'-agers, mums seek to make the most of their children's own preferences at shelf to get them brushing, so identifying the right aesthetic would make a real difference to effective oral care.

The key to designing for tweens was diving into their world. Research explored the appeal of current toy trends (eg. Moshi Monsters), and the limit of their relevance: mum required a brush fun and innocent enough to engage, but not so toylike as to distract. (A fine line existed between a suckerfoot and a catapult).

The favoured 'Irregulars' concept was considered to get this balance just right. Its strength lay in its simplicity: inspiring a child's imagination while appealing to their not-quite-adult sense of style; parents imagined alternative names rather than new problems.

163 words



## Teether



In contrast to the brushes, the new Aquafresh Teether had no design precedent to build upon. The ambition was to bring Aquafresh's dental health credentials to the category's youngest initiates.

The multi-zone teething ring was identified as an emergent category trend: teething babies promptly reject simpler products, forcing parents to carry a whole repertoire. Accordingly, initial two-dimensional development and testing identified the final 'four-sided ring' design as an instant hit with a credible point of difference around gum cleaning.

Design development had to balance many requirements: reaching every area of baby's mouth to relieve gum pain throughout the whole teething process, without creating a choke risk; being easy to grasp in any orientation, without creating entrapment; combining hard and soft, matte and gloss, concave with convex, to create sensory distraction as well as safety-proven physical reach.

Additionally it was possible to repurpose the flex-zone for the teething category, and structurally connect to the kids brushes to come. The result is a unique multi-functional product, with first-to-market cleaning efficacy.

168 words





The Aquafresh Kids range launched in June 2013 with huge success.

## 1: Increased brush sales volume, share and margin performance

Aquafresh has now re-established its presence within kids toothbrushes. While the category experienced flat value growth comparing the 12 weeks after launch with the equivalent period the previous year, the sales volume for the Aquafresh Kids range grew 13% during this period. The new design brought families back to the brand, as evidenced by 0.3% share growth in equivalent period.

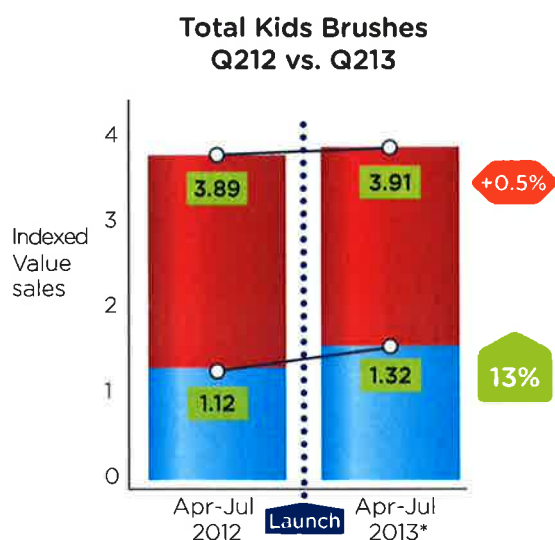
The biggest winners were the 'Stage 1' and 'Stage 3' brushes.

The 'Milk Teeth' brushes (0-2 year olds) experienced 40% growth in the given period, with concomitant increase in share. The 'Big Teeth' brushes (6-10 year olds) experienced 37.5% growth in the same period.

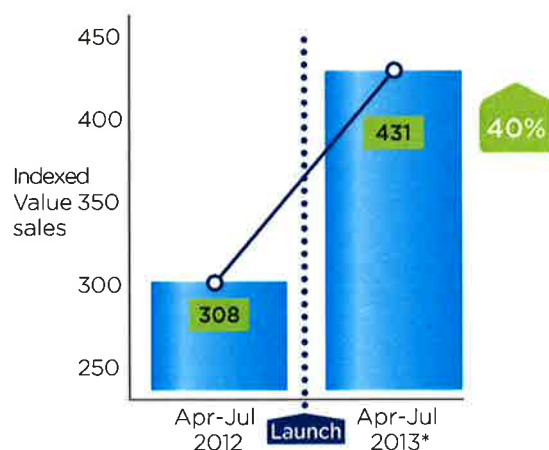
Given COGS neutrality, and an organic increase in price point following the relaunch, these increased volumes have contributed to increased profitability for the brand. They have also brought the brand to a broader audience, the relaunch drove a sharp increase in downloads of its Nurdle World 'Brush Time' smartphone app to make brushing for toddlers more fun.

Sources: Nielsen Scantrak sales data

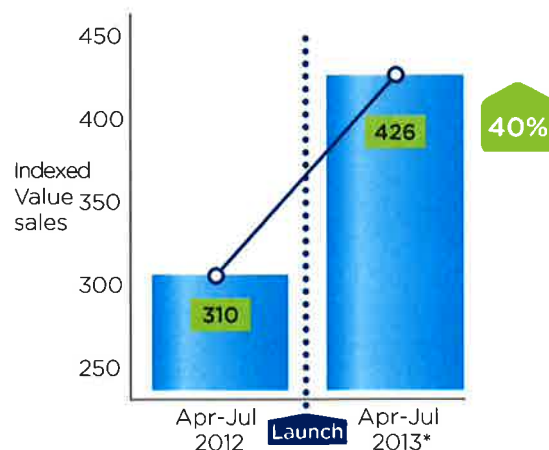
161 words



### Stage 1 'Milk Teeth' Brushes Q212 vs. Q213



### Stage 3 'Big Teeth' Brushes Q212 vs. Q213



\*12 wks after launch

Category **Aquafresh Kids**



## STAGE 1

## STAGE 2

### STAGE 3

## Teether

### 2: Effective entry into the teether category, to recruit families to the brand early.

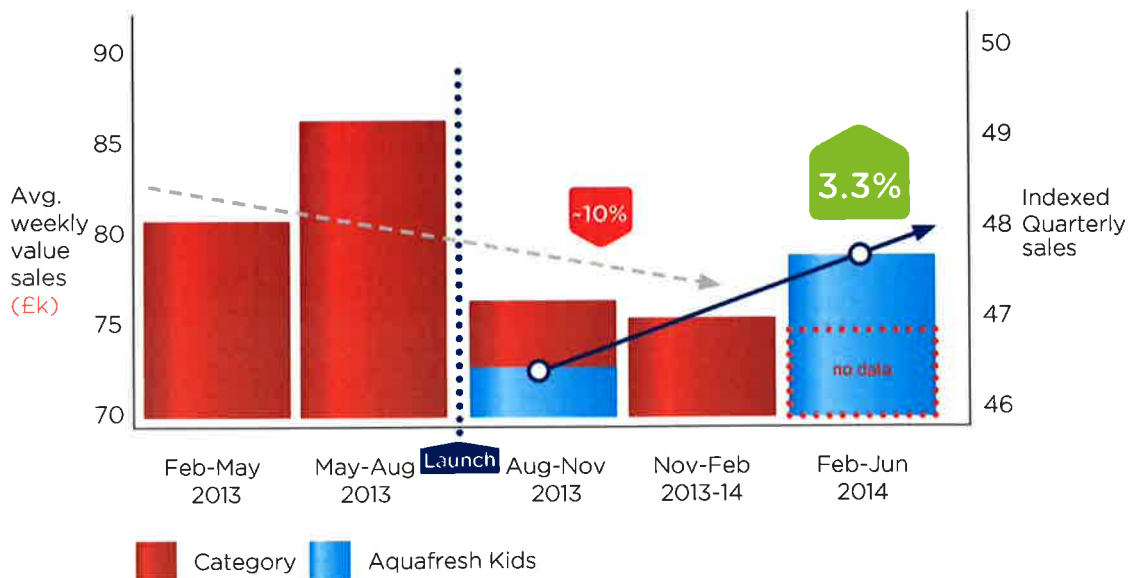


Following the successful launch of the brushes in Q213, the teether launched in Q3 to outstrip forecast sales. Overall the oral development teether market shrunk 11.5%, comparing the 12 weeks following launch with the equivalent period the previous year. In spite of this inclement environment, the Aquafresh teether launched and grew beyond predictions, steadily growing share at ~3% since launch in Oct 2013.

The effect of the teether has been both to recruit parents to the brand early, and spread the reach of brand distribution beyond the oral care aisle. Perhaps most notably, Aquafresh's entry and growth within the teether market has been achieved without the usual brand support, being merchandised alongside and forced to compete with established infant care brands such as Tommee Tippee, Nuk and Vulli's Sophie (the Giraffe).

131 words.

Oral Development Teether Sales, by period 2013-14



Sources: Nielsen Scantrak sales data

Whole submission: 1642 words