



**FOR PUBLICATION**

**MILLER LITE – HOW BRAND RE-BIRTH  
CREATED BRAND GROWTH**

**INDUSTRY SECTOR**

Beverages – Brewers – USA Light Beers

**CLIENT**

The Miller Brewing Company  
*Milwaukee, USA*

**DESIGN CONSULTANCY**

Turner Duckworth  
*London and San Francisco*

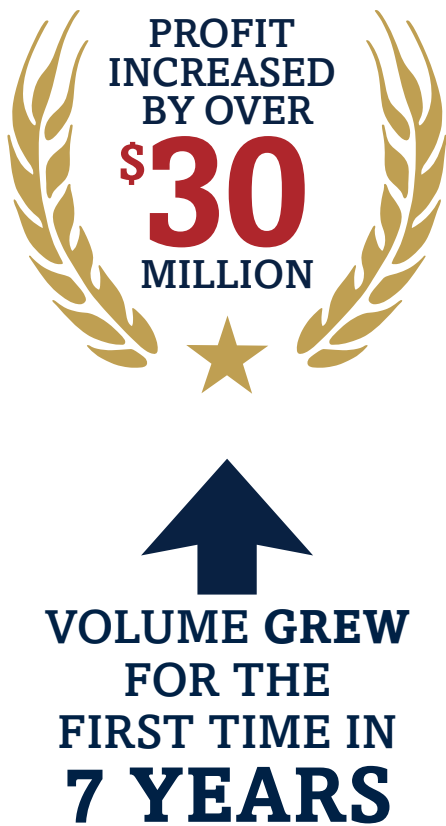
**DATE**

26 June 2015



**Turner Duckworth**  
DESIGN: LONDON & SAN FRANCISCO

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Miller Lite in the USA is the original light beer, the brand that created the light beer segment that now makes up half of US beer. Fierce competition over the last two decades turned Miller Lite into an imitator, losing relevance, differentiation, and 30% of sales. Gannon Jones, Head of Miller Lite Brand Marketing, observed: "We had lost our way and had started to follow our competitors instead of being true to who we are."

In 2014, Turner Duckworth set about the task of reinvigorating this US icon with an authentic brand identity designed for relevance today. The successful design idea was based around going back to the roots of the brand and the 1970's Miller Lite packaging. This approach interpreted the core of the original Miller Lite can design in a modern way, introducing new elements that would build a brand for the 21st century across all media.

The brand identity redesign was a challenging process: "It wasn't just about taking those assets from the 1970's and cutting and pasting them for the 21st century – each and every one was carefully re-crafted, while still retaining the core of those elements" commented Gannon Jones. The redesign was able to scrape away the glossy marketing gimmicks that had obscured this timeless brand icon.

Results achieved for the brand exceeded expectations – volume grew for the first time in seven years, brand perceptions improved, Miller Lite took share from Bud Light, and profit increased by over \$30 million...all with marketing investment 7% lower compared to 2013.

*(253 words)*

# PROJECT OVERVIEW



Miller Lite is the USA's **4th** largest beer brand selling over **13 million** barrels a year.



The brand was the world's **first** light beer, inventing the light beer category in 1975.

## THE BRIEF

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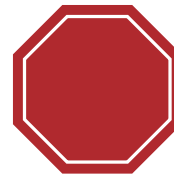
However, from a combination of increased competition from other major brands who had also introduced light beers (e.g. Budweiser), locally-produced craft beers and a decline in the beer category as a whole, in 2013, Miller Lite in the USA was in a serious 5% YOY sales decline.

MillerCoors briefed Turner Duckworth to radically redesign the brand in order to help reverse this challenging situation.

## BUSINESS OBJECTIVES



**Improve**  
brand perceptions



**Halt**  
sales decline



**Increase**  
consumer penetration



**Increase**  
profitability

## DESIGN OBJECTIVES

Differentiate the brand from other copy-cat light beers.

Cover every aspect of brand identity: all pack formats and all 360° media opportunities.

# PROJECT OVERVIEW CONTINUED

## OVERVIEW OF MARKET



### BUSINESS CHALLENGE

In 2013, Miller Lite sales were plummeting in the USA and the brand was seen as inauthentic: undifferentiated, unbelievable, and uninteresting. Miller Lite sold 21.5 million hectolitres in 2005 and declined to 15.2 million in 2013. Sales had declined every quarter for seven years.

### UNDIFFERENTIATED

Miller Lite was an undifferentiated fourth place brand in a declining segment. When Bud Light and Miller Lite both moved to blue packaging 14 years ago, Miller Lite started to look like an imitator. Few consumers could identify anything memorable about the Miller Lite brand iconography, remembering only that it was “blue, just like Bud Light”.



*Not Turner Duckworth Design*

### UNBELIEVABLE

Although it is the original light beer, it was perceived as an over-marketed imitator. Inconsistency was a key driver. In 23 years, Miller Lite had over 20 advertising campaigns and changed its packaging look every two years, becoming silver in 1998 and blue in 2001. Packaging innovations every two years like the vortex bottle, the taste protector crown, and the punch top can had drinkers saying that Miller Lite was “gimmicky” and “trying too hard”.

### UNINTERESTING

Light beer, especially Miller Lite, was not perceived as quality beer. Miller Lite was perceived as a cheap packaged good, like a snack cake – a processed product that is a copy of something else, has a sub-standard taste, is probably bad for you, has an uninteresting history, and no local relevance to the community.

### LAUNCH DATE

August 2014

*(394 words)*



## OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION



*Original 1975 Design*  
*Not Turner Duckworth Design*



*2013 Design*  
*Not Turner Duckworth Design*



*Turner Duckworth Redesign*

We looked to the history of the brand to inspire our solution. The existing packaging didn't relate to the original promise of 'great tasting beer with half the calories.' Our core idea was to remind consumers that Miller Lite was the original light pilsner, an iconic American product with strong brewing credentials and an innovator in the beer market.

We sought to reconnect with the brand's authenticity, redesigning the original 1970's Miller Lite packaging in a modern way – introducing new elements that would allow us to build a brand for the 21st century in all media.

Our design solution was built on the premise that design is key to making brands feel bigger – iconic brands have a confidence in their use of iconography. The Miller Lite brand identity redesign ensured that packaging iconography could be stretched into striking new uses while still unmistakably coming from Miller Lite.

## OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION CONTINUED

The identity embraces redesigned Germanic typography and beer crest that elevates originality and the high quality ingredients, whilst also building a new set of equities including iconic wallpaper, typography and monogram to add depth.

The redesigned original heritage can formed the basis of a rich and layered visual identity system that spans packaging, tap handles, glassware, special editions, promotional packaging, digital and more.





## OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION CONTINUED

Key equities have been modified to create packaging for existing and potential sponsorships, keeping them looking cohesive with the identity but different enough to gain interest and impact.

(238 words)





# SUMMARY OF RESULTS

## BRAND PERCEPTIONS HAVE IMPROVED

Consumer perceptions of the brand have improved significantly since the launch of the new visual identity. On key measures tied closely to sales impact like “for someone like me” and a “great tasting light beer”, the brand has significantly improved perception by 7pts.

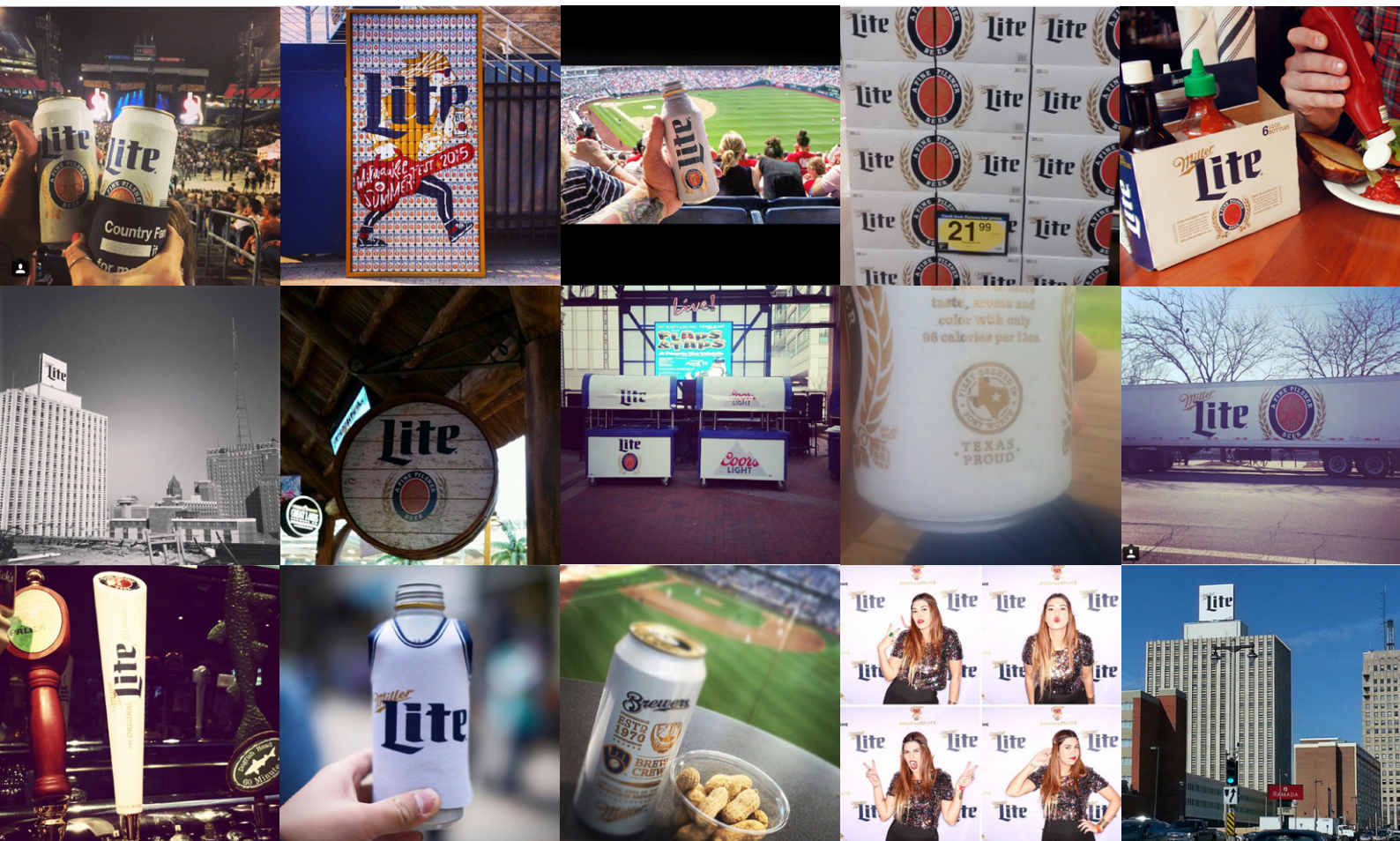
## MILLER LITE RELEVANCE HAS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY VS. EARLY 2014

	Jan/Feb/March '14	Jan/Feb/March '15	
Great tasting light beer	23	30	★
Have hanging with guys	24	33	★
For someone like you	20	27	★

National, 21-60 M/F 1+

★ = Statistically significant vs. YAG at the 90% confidence level Q10

 MillwardBrown



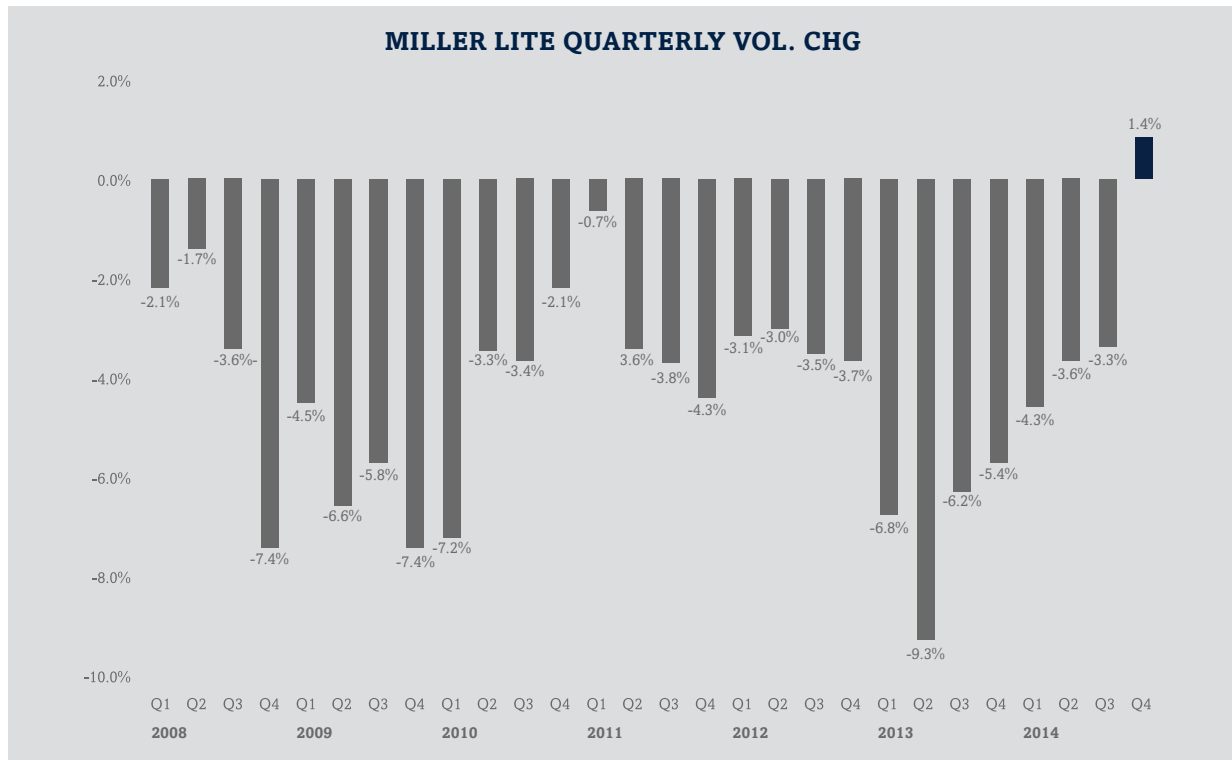
Instagram posts of the Miller Lite brand



# SUMMARY OF RESULTS CONTINUED

## SALES DECLINE HALTED

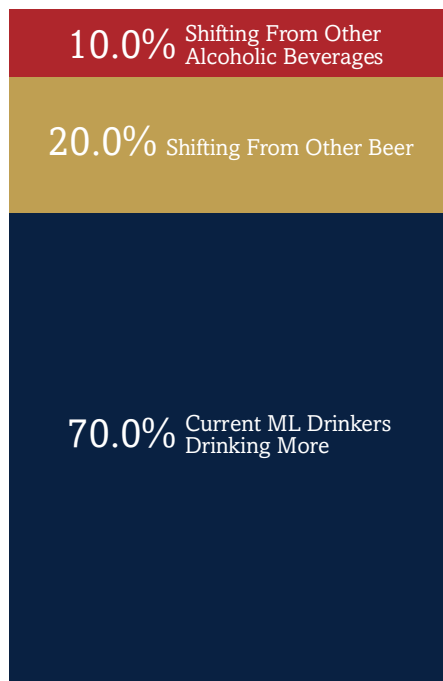
Sales decline has ceased – 2014 Q4 being the first quarter of growth (+1.4%) in seven years. The level of the turnaround exceeded brand expectations.



Brand Wealth: In Q4 '14, ML grew shipments (versus same quarter in last year) for the first time in 7+ years.

## SOURCE OF MILLER LITE VOLUME GROWTH

OFF-PREMISE – 6 MONTH ENDING 11/14



Source of Volume

## INCREASED CONSUMER PENETRATION

30% of the Miller Lite growth came from drinkers of other beers or other alcoholic beverages, showing an increase in overall brand penetration.

## INCREASED PROFITABILITY

The sales growth was accompanied by a reduction of 7% in marketing spend versus 2013, equating to a \$30m increase in brand profitability in 2014.



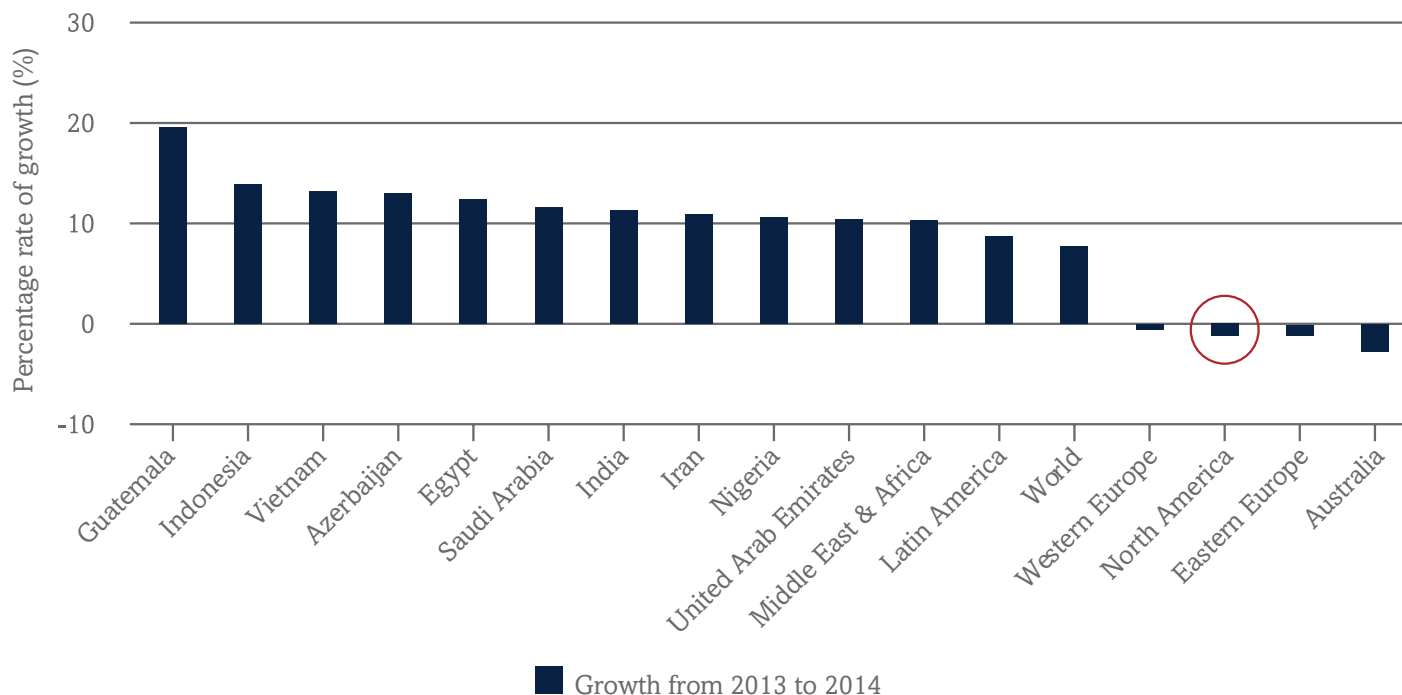
## OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

### USA BEER MARKET IN DECLINE

The sales increase for Miller Lite is not influenced by any general market growth – the USA beer market is in long-term decline, as evidenced by the Euromonitor information for 2014 vs 2013.

#### BEER SALES BY MARKET

Source: Euromonitor



### MILLER LITE MARKETING SUPPORT AND ADVERTISING LEVELS WERE LOWER

Miller Lite marketing support (covering all advertising and promotional support) was 7% lower in 2014 versus 2013; Miller Lite media spend (TV, digital, OOH) decreased by -19% in 2014 versus the previous year.

## RESEARCH RESOURCES

Millward Brown USA

Nielsen USA

Miller Lite sales / profitability / spend data

Euromonitor

