

**adam&eveDDB°**

**Marketing Society Awards 2015  
Consumer Insight**

**Helping Britain say it all**

The story of how Colman's redefined its role in modern British culture, and secured its presence in Britain's future, through a crucial combination of meaningful cultural and consumer insights



**Meals that  
say it all**



## Introduction

### In the quest for the unknown, it pays to keep looking.

Colman's has been a strong British jewel for 200 years. In 2013 however, its leadership position was under threat. Penetration in core product areas (*especially Dry Core Casserole sauces*) had been in long-term decline, with consumers leaving the category or trading down.<sup>1</sup> Instead of dwelling on our past, we seized our 200-year anniversary as a chance to secure our leading place in Britain's future.

We set out to find, and found, our Holy Grail: a genuinely unique, powerful, valuable and ownable consumer insight. It took a bespoke insight methodology, and an open mind, but with every step in the process and every consumer truth we uncovered, we felt we were getting closer to the golden insight that would unlock our brand's relevance in modern Britain.

We discovered that Colman's, as an icon for British comfort food, has a uniquely valuable role to play in helping Brits express their emotions through the comfort food they cook. Behaviour that already existed, in the most reserved nation of Western Europe, but that no brand was currently owning.

The insight became the heart of our new brand platform: 'Colman's helps Brits say it the British way'. And it was the starting point for our brand re-launch campaign around the idea of 'Meals that say it all'.



<sup>1</sup> - Source: Coleman's, 2013  
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## Context

### A British jewel facing irrelevance

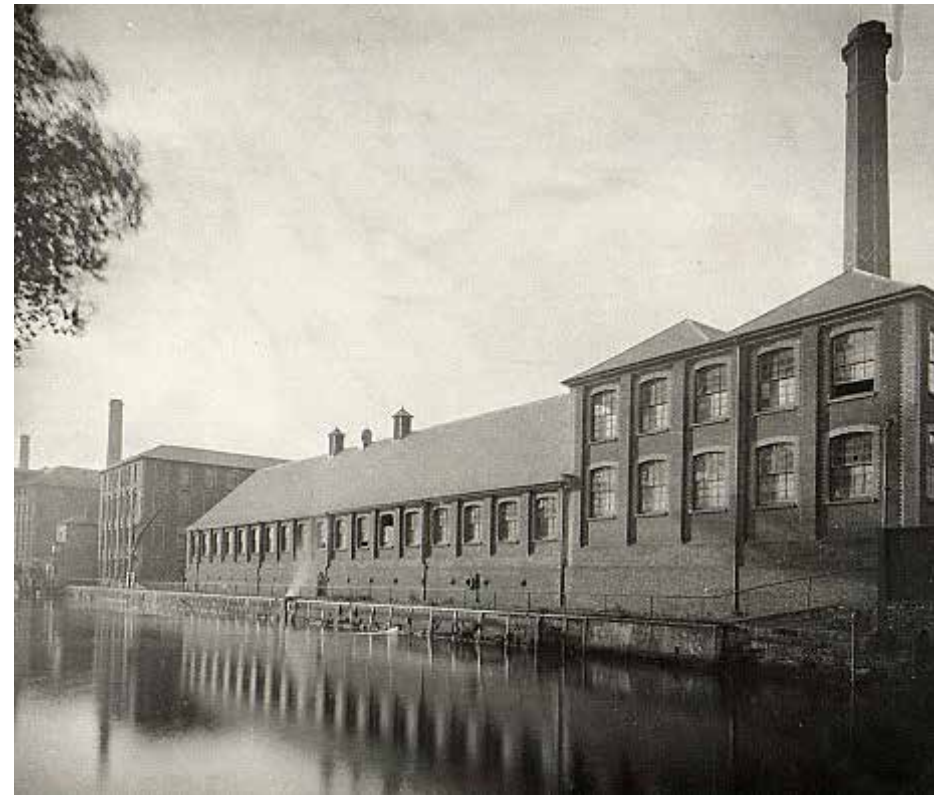
Colman's is a traditional British brand dating back to 1814 when Jeremiah Colman decided to first spice up his food with homemade mustard. Soon, Jeremiah started producing his mustard on a bigger scale, and Colman's became one of the most important employers in Norwich.<sup>2</sup>

Colman's was born out of mustard, and mustard has always been its claim to fame. Over the years however, the product range has expanded, and Colman's now sells various condiments and dry sauces, meal makers and pour over sauces. We define our category as the category of food enhancers.

Everything looked good for the market leader in food enhancers, until its fortunes changed when the category went in decline at the end of the previous decade.

In the aftermath of Britain's double-dip recession, British consumers realized that they would have to reduce the cost of everyday life if they wished to maintain some basic luxuries. Consumers started scrutinizing the value of everyday luxury goods like food enhancers.<sup>3</sup> Consumers were trading-down, or leaving the category all together, eroding Colman's penetration.<sup>4</sup>

At stake for Colman's were not only its immediate sales, but also its future as a leading British brand. We knew we needed a strong insight that would re-define the valuable role we could play in the life of modern-day Brits. An insight that tied together our heritage in mustard, and ambitions for new parts of the range.



The original Colman's factory in Norwich

<sup>2</sup> - [Norfolkmag.co.uk](http://Norfolkmag.co.uk), 2014

<sup>3</sup> - The Institute for Fiscal Studies, November 2013

<sup>4</sup> - Colman's, 2013

## **Objectives**

**Become the preferred choice for a larger number of Brits**

### **COMMERCIAL**

*Reclaim market share through penetration*

If we were to secure our future, we had to start by growing our user base.

### **ATTITUDINAL**

*Drive relevance*

In order to get a bigger number of people to pay more for Colman's, we had to drive relevance.

## Approach

### An insight journey to redefine our role in British culture, across our range

In order to be relevant for a greater number of Brits, we had to prove that it's worth paying more for Colman's. We had to find a valuable, powerful and ownable insight. A rarity in a world where it is felt every insight has been had, and owned, by other brands.

Importantly, we had to do so by bringing together a broad range of very different products. While we had equity in the very traditional mustard category, that equity was not relevant for the modern range-expansions in dry pack sauces and condiments.<sup>5</sup>

We created a research methodology that would gradually uncover consumer truths while refining our brand proposition.

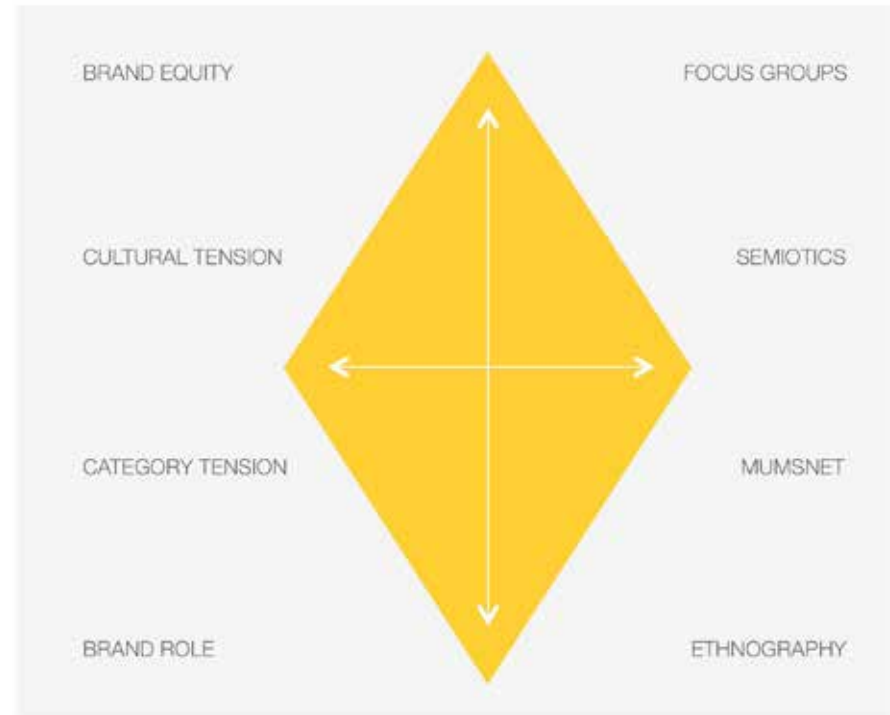
We developed a four-step insight journey:

step 1: brand context – what differentiating equity is left in the brand?

step 2: cultural context – what role does the category play in culture?

step 3: category tension – what are consumers struggling with?

step 4: brand role – how is the brand addressing this tension?



The insight framework

<sup>5</sup> - Colman's brand tracking, 2013  
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## What differentiating equity was left in the brand?

### Brand research - focus groups

As a first step, we wanted to understand what equity we had left in our brand. We ran focus groups to interrogate the relevance of Colman's, and its competitors.

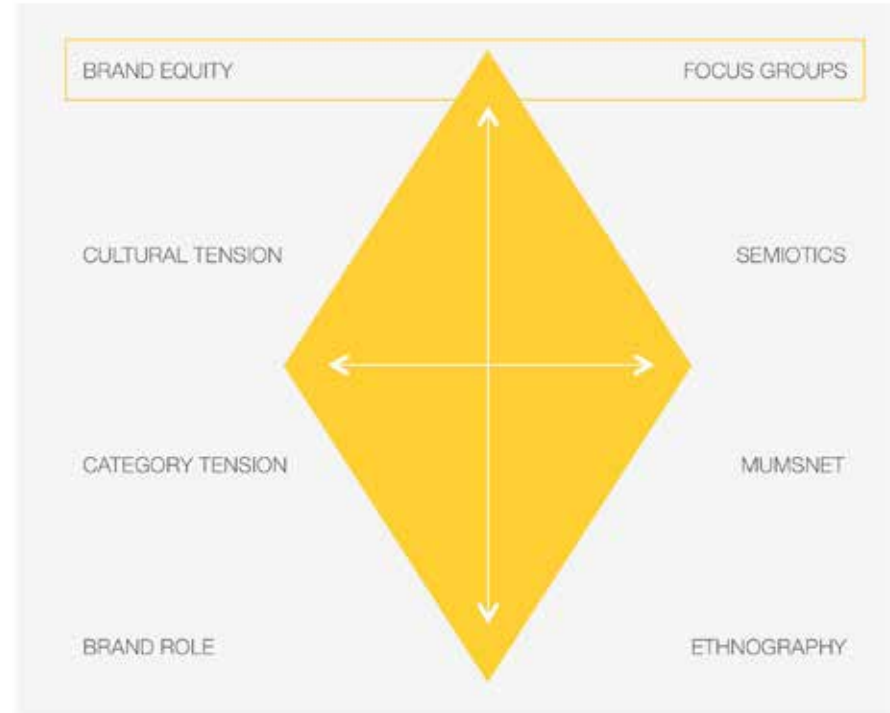
While there was very little active love for the brand, there was one thing that came through clearly in all the groups: there was residual love for the brand in its genuine British heritage. Importantly, this was something that none of our competitors had.<sup>6</sup>

When probing the equity we had in British heritage however, it became clear that the equity was actually not in the fact that we were old, but in the fact that we were British. Our products were specifically associated with the most British type of meals; comfort food. The kind of food you eat when you need edible support. The kind of food that needs rich gravy, or a dollop of mustard.<sup>7</sup>

We were on to something; to find a truly ownable insight, we had to embrace the icon of British comfort food we had become.

### **INSIGHT 1**

*Colman's is an icon of genuine British comfort food*



Step 1 in the insight journey – establishing the brand equity

<sup>6</sup> - Agency focus groups, 2013

<sup>7</sup> - Agency focus groups, 2013  
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## What role did the category play in culture?

### Semiotics - Kate Fox

If we were to embrace the icon of British comfort food we were we had to understand the role of comfort food in modern British culture. We teamed up with ethnographer and semiotician Kate Fox to chart the British identity, and the British relationship with comfort food.

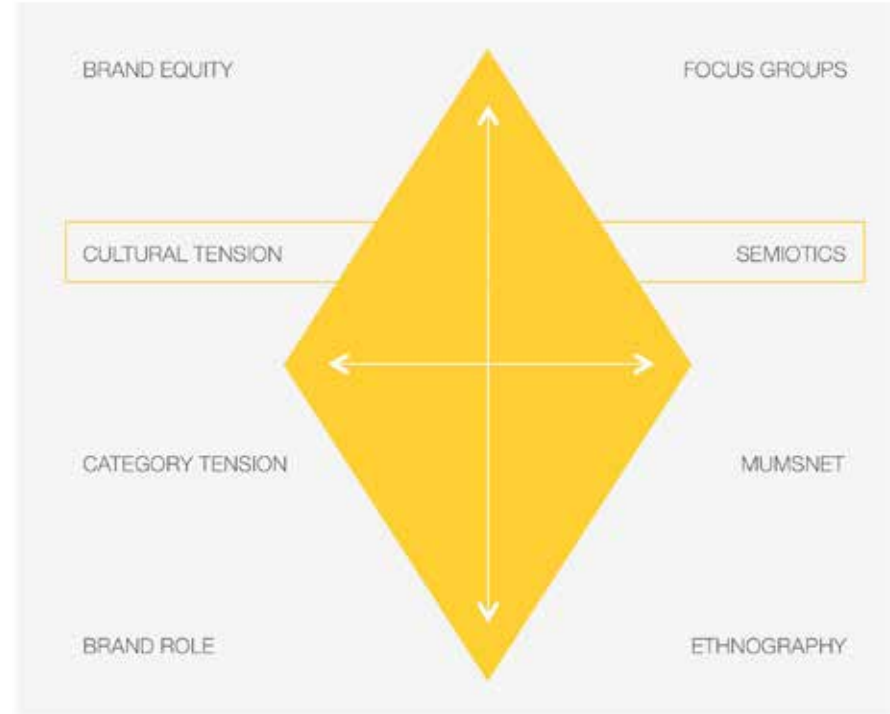
What we found was that there's a reason why Brits find comfort food is so... comforting. And it's not a physiological reason. For Brits, comfort food has always fulfilled a more important role than pure nourishment. It has always been a tool for the typically reserved Brits to express their emotions to one-another.<sup>8</sup>

We are a reserved bunch, troubled to communicate emotional nuance. Hence, we have resorted to the comforting nature of food, and the act of providing that comfort by cooking it, to help us express our emotions. The simple act of cooking a comforting meal says more than we could express in words.<sup>9</sup>

And while we feel like today's society has given us more means to express ourselves, we realized that it has actually gotten a lot harder. Our reality is more complex and our lives more disperse, making it even harder to express our increasingly complicated emotions to each other. More than ever, we rely on comfort food to say it all.<sup>10</sup>

### INSIGHT 2

*Comfort food is an essential tool for modern Brits to express their emotions*



Step 2 in the insight journey – finding the cultural tension



Kate Fox on camera about British comfort food - Kate Fox's book 'Watching The English'

<sup>8</sup> - Kate Fox semiotic analysis, 2013

<sup>9</sup> - Kate Fox semiotic analysis, 2013

<sup>10</sup> - Kate Fox semiotic analysis, 2013

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## What were consumers struggling with?

### Category tension research - Mumsnet Insight survey

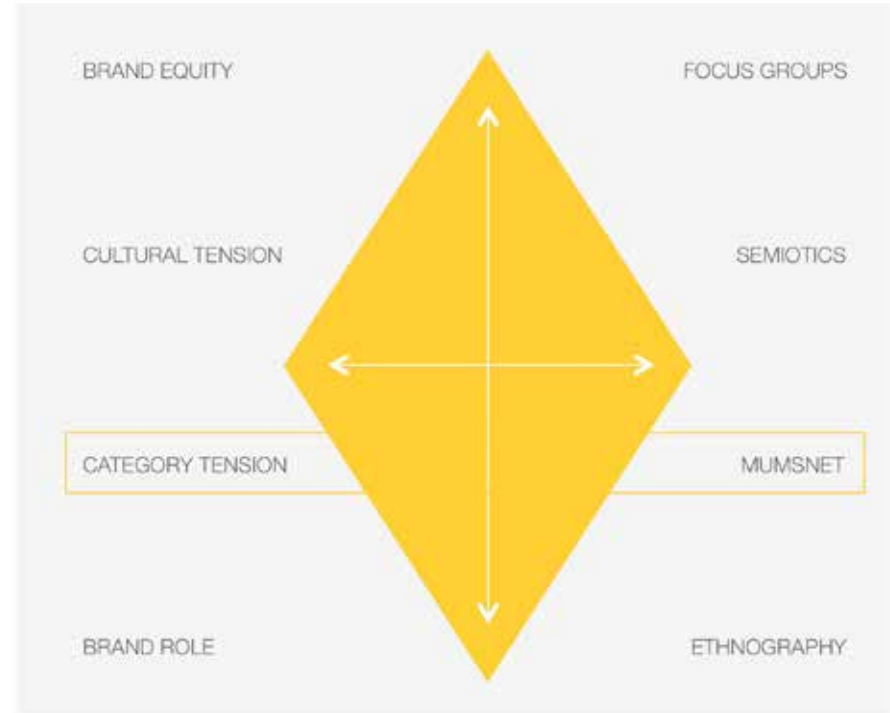
We partnered with Mumsnet Insight, which had already published the Family Meals Survey in 2013, to expand on that survey and explore which tensions modern British families were struggling with around mealtime. Having understood the critical role comfort food plays in modern Britain, we wanted to understand how we could help consumers get more out of the comfort food they cook.

The survey highlighted a surprising fact: While British parents feel under-skilled and time-poor when preparing proper British meals, they also feel a strong sense of guilt when it comes to preparing that food in a more convenient way. They feel like they are cutting corners and failing as a parent.<sup>11</sup>

We realised that we had to flip the perception around convenience. It's about cutting corners, but a way to do more valuable things with the time you would otherwise spend cooking.

### **INSIGHT 3**

*Flip the perception around convenience from guilt-worthy, to smart parenting*



Step 3 in the insight journey – finding the category tension

<sup>11</sup> -Mumsnet Insight, 2013  
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## How was the brand addressing this tension?

### Ethnography - BAMB

The last step of our journey took us into ethnographic research. The objective was to help us understand how consumers were actually using our products. How are we helping Brits express their emotions better through the comfort food they cook?

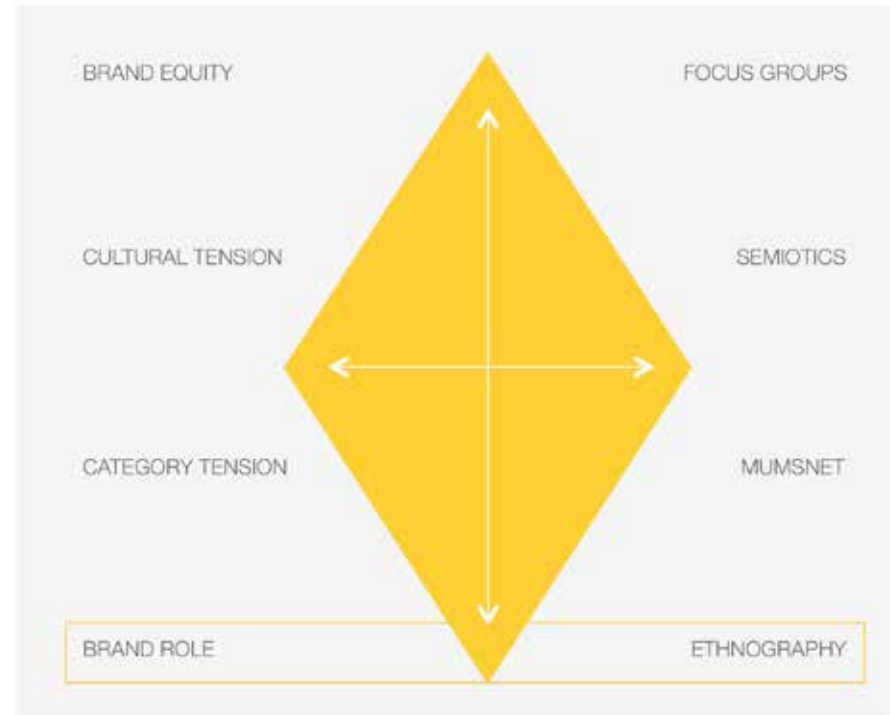
We decided to follow eight British families up-close and observe the meals they make and the time they share around the dinner table. What are their worries? What do they chat about? How do they use our products?

A major observation was that actually, Brits turn to food to say *it all, all the time*. Be it a big hairy issue that needs discussing, or an everyday 'thank you', Brits were letting their meals do the talking.<sup>12</sup> And the simplest way to make their meals speak, was by adding a little 'extra' to it through the sauces and condiments.<sup>13</sup> They wanted to make their meals great, and we made it easy for them to do so.

We defined our role in the British kitchen as such:

#### **INSIGHT 4**

*We make it easy to make British comfort food great*



Step 4 in the insight journey – defining the role for the brand



Impressions from the ethnographic research

<sup>12</sup> - BAMB ethnographic research, 2013

<sup>13</sup> - BAMB ethnographic research, 2013

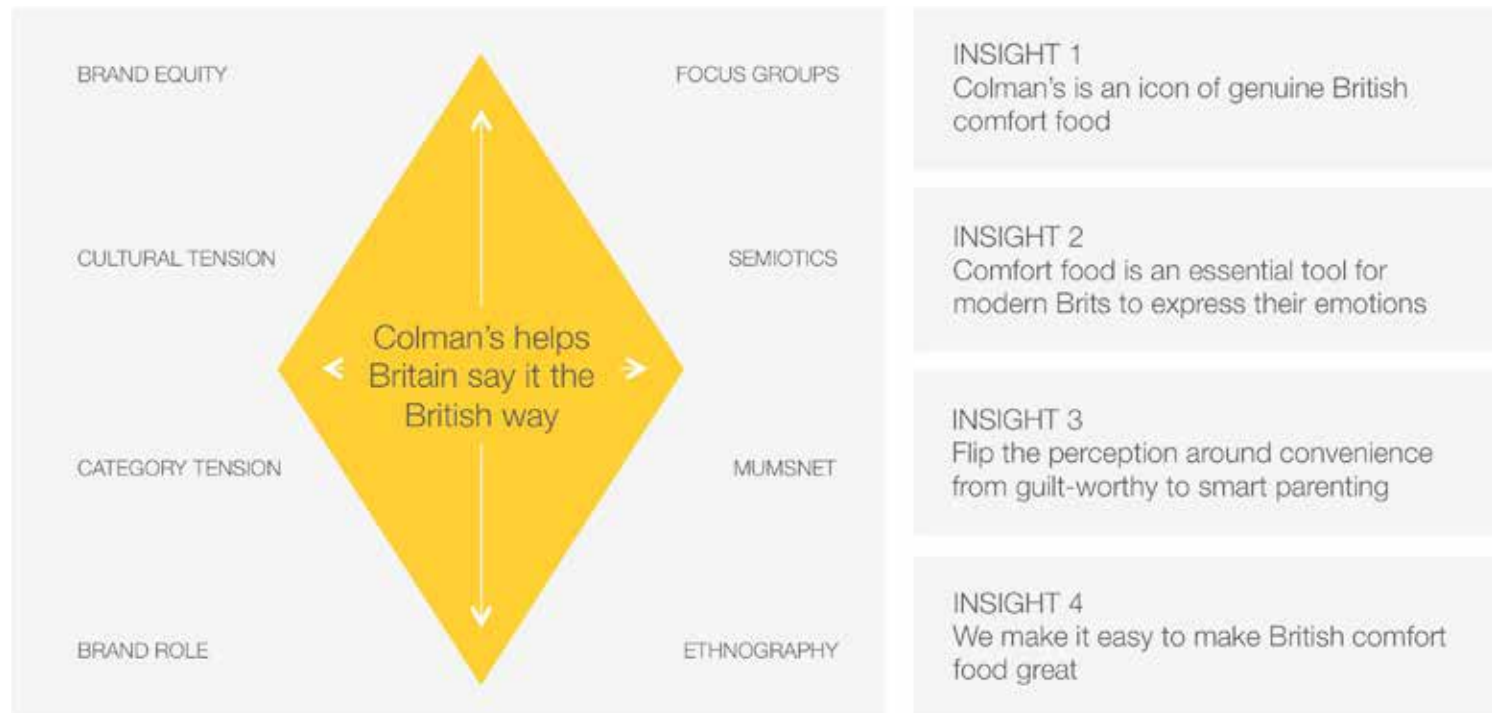
## The definition of the core brand idea

### A powerful consumer insight that only Colman's can own

We had learned a lot about the strengths and weaknesses of our brand, the role comfort food plays in British culture, and the tensions our products help resolve. It was clear what the relevant role was that Colman's could play in modern Britain, and we summarized it into one phrase that says it all:

*Colman's helps Britain say it, the British way*

It's a platform that re-formulates the valuable role Colman's can play as an icon of British comfort food and gives us access to the Millions of Brits that try to say it all, every single day.



Overview of insights at every stage of the insight journey, leading to our over-arching core brand idea

**Bringing the insight to life**  
**'Meals that say it all' launch campaign**

We seized our 200 year anniversary to start owning our newly defined role in modern British culture. We translated the brand positioning to a brand campaign idea that would enable us to tell the new Colman's story.

The 'Meals That Say It All' campaign was suitably different from what people had come to expect from Colman's. Our launch TVC let us bear witness to the story of a father trying to tell his daughter that he understands how she feels after just having broken up with her boyfriend. A complex emotion that in true British fashion could only be expressed by cooking a comforting Shepherd's Pie, with Colman's dry sauces.

We featured a non-typical family, in a non-typical home, having a non-typical meal, with non-typical Colman's products. No matter how non-typical it was however, it all felt 'right'. We were showing the role Colman's had naturally played in their lives, but had never explicitly claimed. We found an idea that is closely tied to what people know about the brand, but still fundamentally redefines our cultural relevance.

We didn't leave it at that, and continued our brand overhaul across all consumer touch points. The website was re-built from scratch, in-store communications started carrying the Meals That Say It All message, and importantly, we redesigned the most prominent of all touch points: our packaging. For the first time in the brand's history, all our products are telling one consistent brand story.



Stills from TV launch



Retail OOH



Website re-design



Package re-design

## The effect

### A warm embrace from modern Britain

#### We Cut Through The Clutter

Our Launch Tvc Achieved Above 90% Scores In Millwardbrown Preview Testing, For The Key Measures Of 'Enjoyment', 'Brand Appeal' And 'Persuasion'.<sup>14</sup> Reactions On Social Media Reflected This. <sup>15</sup>

#### We Became More Relevant

Attitudes Towards Colman's (Specifically Cooking And Pasta Sauces - The Subcategory *Which Dry Core Casseroles* Is Part Of) Changed Significantly On Both Key Metrics:

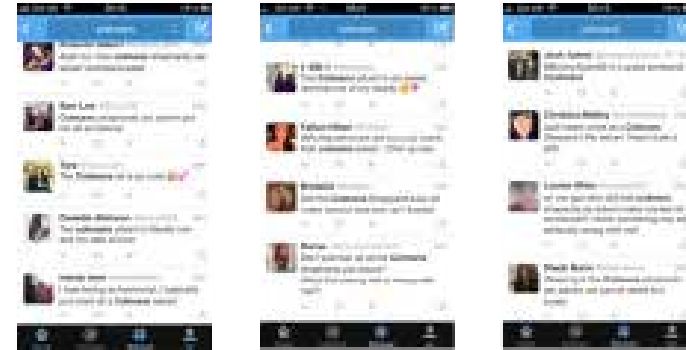
- We Grew 'Relevance' With 8% Points Pre- Versus Post Campaign.<sup>16</sup>
- We Grew Agreement To The Statement 'Colman's Help Create Great Tasting Meals' With 5% Points, Pre- Versus Post Campaign.<sup>17</sup>

#### We Grew Penetration In A Shrinking Market

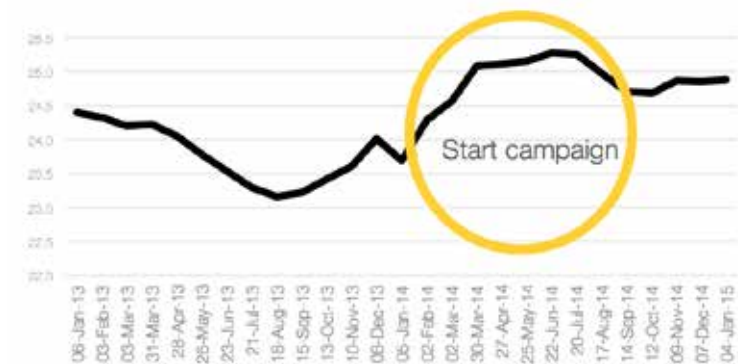
*Dry Core Casseroles Penetration* Grew +5.1% Yoy, As A Proven Effect Of Our Campaign.<sup>18</sup>

#### We Grew Value Market Share For Dry Pack Sauces

*Dry Core Casseroles Value Share* Grew With 2.2%Yoy<sup>19</sup>, Enabling Us To Reclaim The Number 1 Position For Dry Pack Sauces Value Share, Overtaking Our Main Competitor Schwartz.<sup>20</sup>



Twitter reactions to our launch TVC



Evolution of penetration for Colman's Dry Core Casseroles

<sup>8</sup> - MillwardBrown, 2014

<sup>9</sup> - Twitter, 2014

<sup>10</sup> - Colman's brand tracking, Oct '13 vs Oct '14

<sup>10</sup> - Nielsen Scantrack, 2014

## **The conclusion**

### **Securing Colman's role in Britains future**

In the face of irrelevance, we made a bold choice. We decided to use our 200th anniversary not to celebrate our past, but claim our place in Britain's future.

Through a process of brand, cultural and consumer research, we found our Holy Grail; a truly unique, powerful, ownable and valuable insight. We defined our role as helping Britain say it the British way. We make it easier for Brits to make British comfort food great, because we understand its crucial role to express our emotions. The expression of that idea across our communications touch points gave us the 'welcome back' we were hoping for. We captured the nation's attention, drove relevance, and crucially, drove penetration.

Word count: *1981 words*

## Helping Britain say it all

### Unlocking our relevance through an insight only we could own

#### Objective

Colman's has been a British jewel for 200 years. In 2013 however, its leadership position was under threat. Penetration in core product areas (especially *dry core casserole sauces*) had been in long-term decline, with consumers leaving the category or trading down. We had to regain relevance, to reclaim penetration.

#### Scale of the task

It wasn't going to be easy. In the aftermath of Britain's double-dip recession, British consumers realized that they would have to reduce the cost of everyday life. Consumers started scrutinizing the value of everyday luxury goods like food enhancers and were trading-down, or leaving the category all together, eroding Colman's penetration. At stake for Colman's were not only its immediate sales, but its future as a leading British brand.

We had to prove that it's worth paying more for Colman's. We had to find a valuable, powerful and ownable insight. Not an easy feat - we rarely get the chance to spend significant time exploring the unknown in order to find that one compelling truth that only we can leverage.

#### Key results

It took a bespoke insight methodology and an open mind, but we found the golden insight that would unlock our brand's relevance in modern Britain: We defined our role as helping Britain say it the British way.

We realized that Colman's unique relevance is to make it easier for Brits to make British comfort food great, because we understand its crucial role to express our emotions. The expression of that idea across our communications touch points gave us the 'welcome back' we were hoping for:

- We grew 'relevance' with 8% points post-campaign
- We grew *Dry Core Casseroles* penetration +5.1% YoY
- We grew *Dry Core Casseroles* Value Share with 2.2% YoY
- We reclaimed the number 1 position for Dry Pack Sauces

