



## UNILEVER MARKETING SOCIETY AWARDS 2014 ENTRY

WORDS: 2,234

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WORDS: 297

#### **Smaller cans, big impact**

In 2013 Unilever set out to revolutionise the aerosol deodorant category as we know it. With 80% of consumers in the UK and Ireland preferring aerosol deodorants to roll on and stick formats, change was vital.

Unilever's mission is simple: to halve the greenhouse gas impact and waste associated with the disposal of its products by 2020 while significantly reducing consumers' environmental footprint through its ambitious Unilever Sustainable Living Plan.

The compressed aerosol can was born.

A result of 10 years research and innovation, the compressed technology marks the first packaging reduction initiative for the traditional aerosol in almost 50 years. It is also the first major move by any manufacturer to make the category more sustainable.

Using 50% less propellant gas than previous formats, 28% less aluminium packaging and with a 25% lower carbon footprint per can the NPD was rolled out simultaneously across Unilever's Sure Women, Dove and Vaseline brands.

Half the size of traditional aerosol deodorants but containing the same amount of product with the same RRP, the format's sustainability credentials promised to shake up the industry for the first time in almost half a century.

It did.

In just 12 months 12 million compressed cans have been sold and Unilever's year-end sales target was met three months early. The smaller cans mean more can be included per delivery, resulting in fewer lorry journeys.

As a result of the market-changing launch Unilever is compressing its entire female portfolio and conversion of men's deodorants is underway, meaning that in 2014 42% of Unilever's deodorant portfolio will be compressed.

Unilever predicts that if one million consumers switched to compressed deodorant cans it could save 720 tonnes of CO2 and enough aluminium to make 25,600 bikes every year

That's a lot of bikes.

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MAIN PAPER

WORDS: 1,932

### **'The most sustainable product innovation in the past year'**

The pioneering launch of Unilever's compressed range of women's deodorants in February 2013 heralded the first packaging reduction initiative for aerosol deodorants since they hit the shelves in the 1960s. It was also the first major move by any manufacturer to make the deodorant category more sustainable.

Half the size of previous cans, lasting just as long and priced the same, Unilever's Dove, Sure and Vaseline deodorants – which account for a quarter of the value of the UK retail deodorant market - shrunk from 150ml to 75ml, significantly reducing packaging, greenhouse gas emissions and waste.

The game-changing move means the company, which invested in a new production line to produce the format, is a step closer to achieving its Sustainable Living Plan ambition, a strategy to double the size of its business whilst reducing its environmental and increasing its positive social impact by 2020.

The ground-breaking NPD was rolled out as a cross-brand initiative – the first time Unilever introduced an innovation across three key brands at the same time. Supported by a £12.8 million marketing campaign including TV, print and in-store advertising, the activity combined mass awareness and education, helping to develop consumers' understanding of the new format.

**“The aerosol format makes up 80% of the total deodorant category and we are the biggest manufacturer in this market. It is therefore our responsibility to take action to improve the environmental impact of this hugely popular format. The compressed range will make a real difference, driving positive change for both the environment and the retail sector” – Jane Boret, deodorants marketing manager, Unilever UK**

### **Sustainable benefits to society and the environment**

Thanks to a re-engineered spray system and reduced height, weight and diameter each compressed can boasts:

- 50% less propellant gas than previous formats while still delivering the same level of deodorant active with each spray.
- 28% less aluminium packaging
- 25% lower carbon footprint because less propellant gas and aluminium is used in the production of compressed aerosols

By encouraging consumers to switch from dilute 150ml sprays to compressed 75ml cans Unilever has saved 339 tonnes of carbon in just 12 months since launch – this is equal to the average emissions of a car travelling 61 times around the earth.

Not only do the cans reduce Unilever's – and consumers' – carbon footprints, the use of less aluminium means Unilever avoids over extraction of the metal. Reducing waste across the value chain is extremely important and all of Unilever's factories in the UK are zero non-hazardous waste to landfill and 27% of Unilever's energy now comes from renewable sources.

**'These aerosols deliver both impressive packaging and transport savings' – Richard Swannell, director of design & waste prevention, WRAP**

The savings don't stop there. Less plastic in the cans means less waste to landfill and 53% more products on a pallet – now 856 boxes can fit into one pallet compared to the previous 560.

Put another way, taking up less space in transport means compressed cans are directly responsible for fewer lorries pumping their emissions into our atmosphere. The technology has also allowed Unilever to fill its trucks with cross-category products, meaning space saved by one product can be utilised by another.

In store, smaller cans take up less space on shelf, less storage space at the back of the shop and offer increased rate of sale as retailers can utilise 15% more space on shelf.

**'We never tell consumers what choices to make; we simply make it easier for them to make sustainable living achievable' – who is this quote from?**

The industry-wide benefits of compressed cans were clear: communicating – and educating – consumers about their advantages and changing shopper habits was another matter. As the largest step-change in the category for almost half a century, success relied heavily on ensuring retailers – and consumers – were fully educated to the benefits of the new format.

Only a maximum impact, clever stunt would do. Clarion Communications developed a trade press campaign reflecting Unilever's 100% commitment to the new format as part of the business' long term strategy to make sustainable living commonplace and generate excitement and buzz within the industry.

The Grocer magazine – the UK’s leading B2B publication for the retail trade - shrank from its usual A4 to an A5 ‘compressed’ format complete with special edition front cover to be distributed exclusively to 60,000 key decision makers on The Grocer’s subscription list.

The strapline ‘good things *do* come in small packages’ further drove home Unilever’s investment in sustainable innovation.

The activity demonstrated a natural synergy between both the publication and the new format, communicating an important message to the industry and prompting immediate responses from industry heavy-weights.

**“Love the ‘compressed’ edition – very cool” – Dalton Philips, chief executive, Morrisons**

**“Love the compressed version of The Grocer...fits your coat pockets and contains all its usual tasty goodness” – Sainsbury’s via Twitter**

The message hit home. The industry-first campaign delivered more than 120 separate pieces of media coverage and with the retail trade in no doubt about Unilever’s market leading NPD, it was time to educate the consumer.

The same tactic was applied to London’s free tabloid newspaper Metro, targeting 300,000 commuters with a mini edition with the ‘smaller size, same great content’ message. The canny venture was accompanied by a feature examining the rise of ‘green’ consumers and efforts by manufacturers to produce more environmentally friendly products and packaging.

**“This innovative, multi-platform campaign offers busy, on the move urbanites a number of exciting ways in which to engage with Unilever’s sustainability and eco-living messaging” – Matt Teeman, commercial director, Metro**

Of course simply conveying the eco credentials of packaging across three very different brands, at a time when consumer scepticism is commonplace, was not enough. Demonstrating what each distinct brand has to offer in compressed format was crucial, and brand specific campaigns vital.

With the category message that compressed cans are better for the environment clear, branded communications began.

With 17% improved dryness protection versus its 150ml equivalent Sure consumers were challenged to DoMore: both physically and environmentally.

A different tactic was required for Dove, whose heritage lies in beauty and care. Instead consumers were promised ‘our best care in a little can’ as well as a softer, drier and less cold product compared to other aerosols thanks to the use of less propellant gas.

**“Aisle theatre is crucial to helping shoppers make the switch and understand the benefits of the new compressed format. Unilever is working closely with retailers to ensure that**

**consumers truly appreciate the benefits of this new format and ultimately change their shopping behaviour” - Jane Boret, deodorants marketing manager, Unilever UK**

By compressing its deodorants Unilever is not only significantly reducing the environmental impact of its products, it is putting consumers first by offering them a far superior proposition.

The cans have been engineered not only to last as long as their larger counterparts, but to give consumers benefits over and above their conventional predecessors. There are no compromises to be made in terms of product quality or price premium, enabling the consumer to reduce their own environmental footprint with zero trade-off on performance or price.

By encouraging consumers to switch from dilute 150ml to compressed 75ml aerosols, Unilever is also motivating consumers to think more responsibly about their product choice and the impact they have on the environment.

Working alongside efficiency experts WRAP, the Aluminium Packaging Recycling Organisation (ALUPRO) and the British Aerosol Manufacturers' Association (BAMA), Unilever has also encouraged local authorities to accept consumers' empty aerosol cans in kerbside collections and recycling banks. As a result 86% of local authorities now collect aerosols for recycling – an increase from 63% meaning that nearly 6 million households are now able to recycle aerosols.

Unilever is actively encouraging consumers to recycle those cans with a raft of marketing campaigns, including a high-profile collaboration with Sainsbury's encouraging shoppers to recycle their bathroom packaging on the supermarket's iconic Bag for Life.

Support for the recycling of aerosols at the end of their life doesn't get more prominent than that.

### **'Embedding sustainability into our business is a top priority'**

The result of a decade of research and leading-edge innovation, Unilever's ground breaking compressed aerosol cans allow the company to make vital progress in achieving its ambitious Unilever Sustainable Living Plan.

The 10 year plan is aimed at doubling the size of the business while halving its impact on the environment and it has three main goals:

- to improve health and well-being of 1 billion people
- to reduce the environmental impact associated with the making and use of products
- to source 100% of all agricultural raw materials sustainably
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A key goal underpinning the strategy is making products more sustainable, including:

- halving the greenhouse gas impact of products across the lifecycle by 2020
- halving the waste associated with the disposal of products by 2020

If one million consumers switched to compressed deodorants and bought five cans a year each, Unilever could help the planet save@:

- 720 tonnes of CO2 per year – the equivalent amount of emissions from a car travelling 130 times round the earth or as is consumed by 32,700 trees, which would cover the area occupied by 23 football pitches
- Enough aluminium to make 25,600 bikes or 3 million coca-cola cans

### **The future – ‘sustainable growth is the only option’**

In just 12 months since launch Unilever has successfully persuaded those consumers to make the switch – tenfold. So far more than 12 million cans of compressed female deodorants have been sold across the Sure Women, Dove and Vaseline brands and Unilever’s conversion into compressed year-end target was met in September 2013.

Customer satisfaction research has shown that more than 70% of consumers prefer the look and feel of the new compressed cans, and Unilever’s largest ever R&R campaign gave the format a rating of 4.6 out of 5, with 94% of consumers giving the product at least 4 stars.

**“This new compressed deodorant is fantastic. It’s just the right size to fit into your handbag but with the same promise. There’s no compromise on the quality of the product – it keeps you dry, smelling nice and is better for the environment. It ticks all the boxes.” – Paula Webster, Sure Women consumer**

To date Unilever compressed deodorants have won a host of awards including:

- The Grocer Product of the Year 2013
- Best Packaging of the Year Award – Beauty Awards 2013
- Waitrose Treading Lightly Award
- Aerosol of the Year Award 2013 – British Aerosol Manufacturing Awards
- Special Innovation Award – Pure Beauty Awards 2013

In 2014 Unilever will compress its entire female portfolio by reducing its 250ml ranges to 125ml and continue to push the boundaries in the deodorant category by launching its innovative compressed cans across its entire male portfolio.

The sustainable format will be introduced simultaneously across Sure Men, Dove Men +Care, Lynx and Vaseline Men brands, backed by a £15 million marketing spend including TV advertising.

**“The compressed format taps into consumer demand for convenience and portability. The male compressed cans have been designed to appeal to men and although smaller in size, research has revealed men are receptive to the change, acknowledging this as a standard advance in technology. We believe the entire deodorant category could become compressed in the future” – Jane Boret, deodorants marketing manager, Unilever UK**

As a result Unilever’s compressed format will account for 42% of the company’s deodorant portfolio by the end of the year.

A positive change for the environment, a positive change for the industry and a more sustainable choice for the consumer.

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