

BONDUELLE BIENVENUE

The All-Vegetable Showcase Store: A new outlet for the vegetable consumer

Awarded 2014 Best Case in Marketing by AFM-CCMP

Summary of the case study

Bonduelle, a French company specialised in the industrial processing of vegetables and the world leader in the ready-to-eat vegetable market, is currently testing a new concept – Bonduelle Bienvenue – The all-vegetable showcase store, a store 100% dedicated to processed vegetables – near its headquarters in Villeneuve d’Ascq in the North of France. Bonduelle’s aim is to design a complete brand experience and enable direct contact with the consumer by developing 3 different universes: a bargain zone (clearance products and discounted items); a product zone, dedicated to all the products (French or foreign products) sold by the group; an Information Zone, which has a pedagogical aim.

In 2013, after two years of existence and initial promising results, Pierre Masse (Project Director at Bonduelle) and Sandrine Debreyne (Bonduelle Bienvenue Store Manager) intend to give a new momentum to this hybrid concept and involve their new marketing intern in the strategy they need to employ to ensure that their objective has the maximum meaning and content possible. Their goal is to focus on the production of experiences in order to strengthen the relationship with the brand.

Pedagogical intention

This case study can be mainly used in a class dealing with point of sale marketing or experiential marketing. It can also be used in a distribution strategy class.

Point of Sale Marketing – Experiential Marketing

Today, the consumer with their hedonistic behaviour is looking for a fun consumption experience with a strong emotional impact (emotions represents 60% of the purchase decision). The client now consumes the place before consuming the product. Therefore, by offering an experience, a brand can differentiate itself (attain a competitive advantage) and gain proximity with its clients.

The Bonduelle Bienvenue case study enables the instructor to illustrate the essential questions companies ask themselves when they wish to use an experiential approach to consumption. With its new concept of Bonduelle Bienvenue, Bonduelle is asking itself: How can they develop a strong consumer or store experience? What will be the added value of such an experiential approach? Does a food brand have sufficient strengths compared with a travel or entertainment brand, to engage in the creation of memorable experiences for the consumer? What is the added value of such an approach for the brand? The professor/instructor can ask students to reflect on the benefits and challenges/risks

associated with this type of approach.

Distribution Strategy

This case study shows how a company, in this case the giant vegetable company in the North of France, who has less and less shelf space in supermarkets, takes action and opens a new concept outlet of 100m² near its headquarters. By adopting the opposite to an « everything under one roof » strategy, the Bonduelle Bienvenue dares hyper-specialisation by opening the all-vegetable showcase store and thereby takes a new route. However, moving from an industry to a trade focus, from manufacturer to distributor is less obvious than it seems: this is a profession that cannot just be improvised but must be learnt. Craft manufacturers and distributor traders are indeed fundamentally different and have distinct logics even if the two approaches may seem complementary.

This strategy "When manufacturers become distributors" has existed for a long time now, especially in the textile industry: Gap, Etam, Cacharel, New Man, Lacoste, Adidas, Nike, etc. have all moved from manufacturing to distributing, more or less completely. Today more and more food brands are taking the plunge: Nescafé, Fleury Michon, Lustucru, Danone or even Heineken and have done this with varying success.

Therefore, this case study can be useful in illustrating and discussing the advantages and risks of a vertical integration strategy of a distributor by a producer as well as a multi-channel strategy.

Summary of the article on the use of case studies in marketing education

What seems most important to us is primarily the dynamics with which the teacher shares his/her knowledge. Our key objective when writing case studies to teach marketing is to (re) activate the pleasure and motivation in young learners. The case method raises unique issues that are going to lead to decisions and concrete actions. Students can even be placed from the start in a co-creative process that will multiply their potential for creativity and innovation.

Among the many problems faced by Bonduelle, we selected the one which seemed most appropriate to interest students at Bachelor level, but also the one enabling further reflection with Master level students. The creative concept recently launched by the company caught our attention because it represents an interesting response to recent changes in the consumer society and strategic issues for producers in the distribution of their offer in this new environment.

The use of case studies enables not only to train students, but also to develop partnerships with various businesses that can benefit students and business schools.