



PACKAGED GOODS SILVER WINNER RITZ Crackers, Open for Fun

BUSINESS SITUATION AND CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

RITZ. A Fantastic Brand.

In 1934, the National Biscuit Company (now Nabisco, part of Kraft Foods) tried recipe after recipe before they created what they knew would be the finest, tastiest cracker on the market. It was popular everywhere—from the most modest home to the elegant Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.¹ For years, RITZ sat comfortably as a dominant force in the butter cracker segment, leading sales with over 37% household penetration, and defining innovation.²

RITZ. A Fantastic Brand with Two Problems.

1. Fancier Crackers. Since the early 2000's competitors have had their eye on the fast-growing cracker market. Townhouse and Club (Keebler's two leading butter cracker brands) were steadily gaining share. Consumers saw Keebler butter crackers as more sophisticated than Ritz.³ They were rectangular and oblong, perfect for company and fancy toppings like cheese and spreads.

2. A More Competitive World. In 2006 alone, 65 new cracker products were introduced to market.⁴ Against this backdrop, RITZ seemed less relevant. Consumers felt that it didn't fit into their current lifestyles. RITZ had been relegated to a dangerous position: the familiar cracker—for kids. In fact, a snack "for kids" was the attribute most associated with RITZ in qualitative, despite its having been marketed otherwise.⁵

The Marketing Challenge:

Over 40 million American households were eating RITZ without appreciating RITZ. This lack of a strong emotional connection left the brand vulnerable to competitive attacks. Our advertising was functional, focusing on usage occasions that no longer resonated with our core consumer (35-to-50-year-old moms). Our mission was simple: Each time somebody eats a RITZ, they should feel a little bit of RITZ-ness.

Our challenge was to reawaken the joy of RITZ.

Research and Communications Objectives:

- **Create an Emotional Connection.** Find out what people love about RITZ, what's true about the brand, its soul. Then tap into this essence to get consumers to notice and appreciate RITZ again.
- **Contemporize RITZ.** Let go of the past. Make a once fantastic brand relevant again.

Business Objectives:

- Reverse declining share.
- Grow revenue versus the previous year.

Budget:

- Approximately \$18MM

¹ Internet: Ezinearticles.com "Snack Facts: The Incredible History Behind Some of Your Favorite Foods." 2008

² ACNielsen Homescan Data, 2006

³ Energy Infuser Focus Groups and Ethnographies, 2006

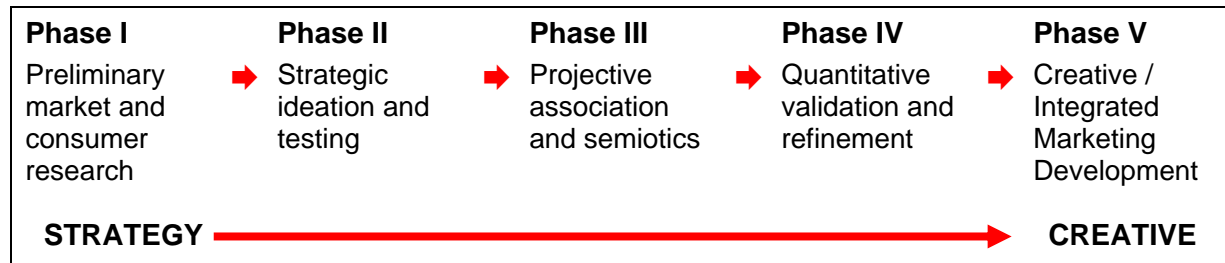
⁴ ACNielsen Scanner Data, 2006

⁵ Energy Infuser Focus Groups and Ethnographies, 2006

THE RESEARCH STORY:

Our research approach involved two defining characteristics:

1. Use of a diverse set of research methodologies to uncover deep emotional insights and associations.
2. Continuous use of research—from strategy development through integrated marketing planning and creative execution.



Phase 1: Preliminary Market and Consumer Research

Hendry market structure research revealed that cracker share was won and lost at the segment level.⁶ By early 2006, the butter crackers segment was growing, but RITZ was no longer leading segment growth. An ACNielsen Homescan study uncovered a group of strategically valuable consumers important to future RITZ growth: switchers.⁷ That is, people who increasingly switch brands within the butter cracker segment, sometimes buying RITZ but also purchasing competitive products.

We observed the behavior of switching quantitatively, but we needed to understand the motivations behind this behavior. So we conducted a deep dive into consumer insight among current loyal RITZ buyers, butter cracker switchers, and competitive brand lovers. It was important to know each consumer group in a personal way, to find out what was going on in their lives, their attitudes toward food and snacking, attitudes towards RITZ and other snack choices, usage patterns, and so forth. Working with Energy Infuser, focus groups and in-home ethnographies were conducted among the three consumer groups, in multiple markets.⁸

***Insight:** Loyal RITZ consumers see RITZ as the only brand to consider when thinking about a cracker. Switchers and non-buyers, on the other hand, are more adventure seeking; looking for new experiences, new friends, and trying new snacks. The team named this consumer Colleen (Come Over Let's Live & Enjoy the Everyday Now!). Colleen felt that RITZ hadn't kept current with her lifestyle—that it was too familiar and every-day.*

Phase II: Strategic Ideation and Testing

With an understanding of market dynamics, and a growth consumer identified, the team proceeded to develop strategic ideas for RITZ. An exhaustive list of positioning statements was generated based on consumer insight from Phase I of the research. Ideas like:

“RITZ. Says you're not stuck up.” • “RITZ. Perfect for you.” • “RITZ. Perfect for friends.”
“RITZ. Perfect for the whole family.” • “RITZ. Tasty, yummy, flaky.”
“RITZ. Perfect for every day.” • “RITZ. For life's special moments.”

However, when these ideas were exposed to consumers, they were all rejected.⁹ It became apparent that RITZ was bigger than any single person, attribute, or usage occasion. And it became even more apparent that we weren't making the progress that we had hoped.

⁶ Hendry Crackers Market Structure

⁷ ACNielsen Homescan Data 2006

⁸ Energy Infuser Focus Groups and Ethnographies 2006

⁹ Agency research, focus groups, 2007

Insight: While we were left without a definitive answer, knowing what not to do was an important first step. A more expansive positioning was needed.

Phase III: Projective Association & Semiotics

We quickly realized that we needed to go deeper. So we explored the subconscious and consulted semioticians. What we found, to our surprise, was fun.

Projective Association. This technique was used to discover underlying emotional associations.¹⁰ RITZ is so familiar that typical consumer discussion was clichéd. But when consumers were asked to draw themselves eating RITZ, a remarkable picture began to emerge. They drew all kinds of interesting things—like playing basketball, hanging out at a park, going to a baseball game, or simply sitting on the couch and watching TV. The pictures were bright and playful, depicting small moments of happiness. Through this exercise, we discovered that RITZ, more than anything else, is associated with special moments of fun.

Semiotics. Using a proprietary semiotics analysis tool, we deconstructed the signs and symbols of the RITZ brand. Uncovered was a similar set of codes to what consumers were telling us. The root of “RITZ-ness” is fun. Primary colors, round shapes, monosyllables. We own fun in the butter cracker category. We’re proudly un-fancy. RITZ has the right to have fun. Townhouse and Club could not say this.

Insight: The Joy of RITZ = fun. Beneath it all, fun is what RITZ is all about. Fun was the more expansive positioning we had been seeking allowing us to extend to many occasions and users, unlike competition.

Phase IV: Quantitative Validation & Refinement

We had the foundations of a new strategic platform but we were only half way there. If we were going to stake our claim on fun, we needed to know more about it.

Drivers of Choice and Equity Ownership: Quantitative attitude and usage research was conducted that included drivers of choice for butter crackers.¹¹ The study revealed that “fun to eat” was a powerful hidden motivator in the category. That is, an attribute that people don’t typically associate with crackers, but that is actually a strong driver of brand preference. Secondly, the study used correspondence mapping and brand equity mapping to reveal that RITZ is the butter cracker most closely linked to being “fun to eat.”

Quantitative Research: We needed to dimensionalize fun, so a 500-person survey was designed to explore the idea of fun in more detail.¹² Part of the survey asked consumers to rank a broad range of people, places, things and foods, on a fun-scale from 1 to 10. Highlights from the survey include:

- Fifty percent of consumers said RITZ is America’s “fun-nest” cracker (compare that to 14% for Goldfish, 7% for Townhouse, and 6% for Club).
- On the fun-scale, RITZ scored 7.8 out of 10, ahead of potato chips but just behind cookies.
- RITZ, unlike competitors, is consumed across a wide variety of fun occasions, from socializing with neighbors to watching TV and snacking after school.
- Fun is Important. Ninety five percent of respondents indicated that they were grossly dissatisfied with how much fun they were having in their daily lives. Sixty-four percent of those people said they want a “significant” amount of additional fun.

Insight: Quantitative research brought to life qualitative insight in more detail. While RITZ was associated with fun, this wasn’t being well communicated to today’s consumer.

¹⁰ Agency research, focus groups, 2007

¹¹ Knowledge Networks Attitudes and Usage Market Structure, 2007

¹² Agency quantitative survey, 2007

The Strategic Idea

Developing a connection with our growth consumer, based on fun, had the potential to address our challenges and objectives. It was emotional. It was different. It was true to the brand and bigger than the category. But if we learned anything from earlier research, it was that consumers responded negatively when we were prescriptive. We needed to stand for the “idea” of fun (in society and culture) and not get bogged down in the specifics. The strategic idea was summarized into a single statement:

RITZ. THE CHAMPION OF FUN.

An iconic proponent for fun, solely dedicated to making the world a “fun-ner” place in which to live.

Consumer Testing. Being that previous attempts at distilling a strategy for RITZ were unsuccessful, the team was eager to bring the new idea back to consumers. We conducted focus groups and exposed consumers to the new strategic idea. The response was overwhelmingly positive. We had an idea that consumers embraced with abandon.

CAMPAIGN DESCRIPTION:

Phase V: Creative and Integrated Marketing Development

We proceeded to brief our creative teams and integrated partners. However, instead of the typical one page brief, the strategic idea was brought to life with a 40-page multimedia presentation including consumer drawings, video-clips and facts and figures from the quantitative “fun” survey. We used research to get our creative teams excited—and it worked!

Semiotics (translated into) Iconography. The first thing we did was reinvent the RITZ brand from the ground up. The unique iconography of the brand discovered through semiotics was used to turn the RITZ cracker (round with ridges and seven holes) into a contemporary graphic icon. We also gave RITZ a new consumer facing tagline “Open for Fun.”

Fun Survey (translated into) the RITZ Fun-Analysis. The 500-person agency-led survey from Phase IV became the inspiration for the nationwide Yankelovich-commissioned “RITZ Fun-Analysis,” which asked Americans about all aspects of fun and life. The top feature: “What’s more fun? Republicans or Democrats?” was published in the *US News & World Report*. Digital and print creative executions tied thematically to the survey, asking consumers to weigh-in on the perplexing questions of what is more fun: Puppies or chocolate? Snakes or doctors?

The Integrated Campaign. In addition to the above described elements, the integrated “Open for Fun” campaign made strong use of the new RITZ iconography and brought the strategic idea through multiple media. Going live on ABC’s 2008 Rockin’ New Year’s Eve celebration, the campaign included:

- A total of nine TV spots were created. Three spots mixed live-action with animated iconography and six graphic animated spots showcased the new RITZ iconography and voice.
- RITZ used print to associate with pop culture—with placements in magazines such as *People* and *TV Guide*. The creative tied to content like the “TV, Movie, and Music” section of *People*, and the TV listings pages of *TV Guide*.
- Online featured simple games including RITZ Tic-Tac-Toe and others, all using the RITZ icon as the device for interaction.
- And to launch the campaign at retail, we integrated the iconography and tagline into the package graphics the back of the box. Every other box was then flipped around to create a dramatic billboard effect in-aisle. Fun was also injected in-store with (out-of-aisle) hopscotch-themed floor talkers.

RESULTS:

After more than five years of declining share and revenue, the reinvention of RITZ as THE CHAMPION OF FUN proved to have immediate and dramatic results.

Business Objectives:

Reverse Declining Share. RITZ experienced a sharp reversal in share decline, even during one of the most successful new product launches by Keebler in the history of the category. RITZ's share grew +1.0 points in January, +0.9 points in February and +0.9 points in March.¹³ As of August 31, 2008, cumulative share was up by total of +0.4 points complimented by equally strong consumption.¹⁴

Grow Revenue Versus Year-Ago. In the first quarter of 2008, revenue increased by 20%.¹⁵ From January to August of 2008, revenue grew by a total of +16% versus the previous year.¹⁵ Since the campaign launched, RITZ has experienced nine consecutive months of revenue growth.¹⁵

Communications Objectives:

Create an Emotional Connection.

- **Link Results.** With a predicted Awareness Index score over three times higher than average (13 vs. 4), the 30 second TV spot entitled "The Opener" tested in the top 3% of Kraft ads during the past five years. It was also the highest-testing RITZ ad of all time.¹⁶
- **Online.** People spent more that 400,000 hours playing RITZ games at average of 19 seconds per unit, compared to a consumer-packaged-goods average of 12.6 and over 2x the Kraft average.¹⁷

Contemporize RITZ.

- **Link Results.** The graphic animated 15 second spot entitled "Party" proved to be the most contemporizing of the work tested scoring a 27 for "contemporary" vs. 18 for "The Opener" and 7 for "Checkers."¹⁸
- **Part of Culture.** The RITZ "Fun-Analysis" helped establish RITZ as a current source on fun in America. The "Fun-Analysis" survey and related public relations outreach generated 372 print, broadcast and online placements for over 100 million total impressions.¹⁹
- **Breakthrough Design.** The new RITZ identity, specifically the iconography, was acknowledged by our peers:
 - One Show Silver Pencil for design
 - Shortlisted for design at Cannes
 - The Art Directors Club Annual Awards: Merit

¹³ ACNielsen Scanner Data 2008

¹⁴ ACNielsen Scanner Data 2008

¹⁵ Kraft Revenue Tracking

¹⁶ Milward Brown Link Test, 2008.

¹⁷ Digital media agency, interaction rate and average time per interaction tracking data.

¹⁸ Milward Brown Link Test, 2008.

¹⁹ PR agency, tracking data.