

PERFUME BRIEF ... AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR PERFUME MARKETING

By

Bhuvana Nageshwaran

Ultra International Limited, New Delhi

Gone are the days when the product manufacturers picked up the telephone to his two or three favourite perfume suppliers to say that he needed a new perfume for the shampoo range.

Today, the objective of the international perfume supplier's fragrance development programme is to develop the best solutions for its clients, not just to present a bunch of submissions from which the least inappropriate can be selected.

This means creating the best solution for the product, the brand, the target customer and the market, at the time of product launch, which may be up to a year after perfume submissions are made. The fragrance house must understand how to create and submit a winning fragrance and also the intimate role of fragrance in communicating the enjoyment of the product, the functional and emotional benefits of the product, and the product's brand equity. This requires a deep understanding of the interactions between fragrance and all other product perceptions.

For the fragrance development process to work successfully, the best possible communication pathways must be established.

The Marketing company and fragrance supplier should ensure to list all necessary information before developing a fragrance.

Product Description

- Brand Name, Product Claims, Claim Support from Fragrance,
- Market Position i.e. Geographical Coverage, Brand Share Data.
- Brand i.e. Brand Equity, Brand History, Functional (Tangible Benefits),
- Marketing Strategy and Advertising Copy, Visuals, Media Clips etc.
- Consumer Profile i.e. Age & Gender, Demographic Profile, Psycho Graphic.
- Profile, Behaviour, Product Usage & Attitudes.

As much information as possible should be included on all factors relating to the product category i.e market shares, market trends and hypotheses to explain the market situation, together with a summary of the brand characteristics (brand equity) of the product briefed, including its product characteristics and its functional and emotional benefits.

What Brand claims are being made and which of these can be cued by the fragrance?

The target market must be defined in terms of geographic and consumer profiles, including, if available, data on consumer attitudes and behavior.

The marketing strategy for the product launch or re-launch is important information for the perfumer, especially if supported by advertising copy, visuals and media clips.

Perfume Description

- Product Performance Objectives
 - Functional (Tangible) Benefits
 - Emotional (Intangible) Benefits & Signal Attributes
- Perfume Performance objectives
 - Claim Support
 - Natural Ingredients
 - Performance Benchmarks
 - Perfume Strength; Immediate Impact and after time
 - Key Points of Perfume Perception during Product Use
 - Substantivity Profile (Lasting Characteristics)
 - Minimum Action Standards

Although fragrance profiles are sometimes used to help define the area of perfume required, this is not yet within the competence of most perfume briefs, other than “matching” briefs.

Even guidelines such as “fresh”, “Clean” or “lightly perfumed” may not hold the same meaning for the perfumer, marketer and consumer.

The careful use of visual imagery, concept boards and mood boards, illustrating the brand positioning, claim and benefits, is a powerful means of bridging the communication gap

between the brand manager, the advertising creative, the designer, the perfumer and the consumer.

Consumer Test Protocols

- Target
- Screening Process (Internal Hurdles)
- Final Test Protocols

The Consumer test methods and criteria to be used for perfume evaluation, screening and final selection need to be well understood by the perfume creators:

- In-house or external testing?
- Target Consumers? Which Countries?
- Benchmarks?
- Positive & Negative Controls?
- Action Standards?
- Final Test Design: Monadic, sequential, paired, round robin, or other design?
- Central Location sniff test or home placement?
- Test Samples: Small samples or full-sized packs? Branded, identified or blind?

The definition of Action Standards is particularly important: how will the company select a winning fragrance against the benchmarks?

- By achieving parity with, or significant improvement at the 95% level of the statistical confidence over, the benchmark product in certain defined key attributes?
- What if the Action Standards are only partially achieved?
- What is the minimum acceptable result for decision-making?

Safety and Regulatory requirements

- Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)
- Certification i.e. IFRA, SYNTHETIC MUSKS (NITRO MUSKS, POLYCYCLIC MUSKS)

- National Regulations
- Regional Regulation i.e. EU Directives (Cosmetic Directive, Dangerous Preparation Directive), other Regional Regulations (USA, Australia...)
- Global conformity

All responsible perfume manufacturers only supply perfumes that conform to the current IFRA standards. Client companies require that the perfume submissions conform to additional defined criteria, depending on National or Regional Regulations, European Directives, Company Policy, in-house research data, or pressure from non-governmental organizations, consumer groups or the media.

Technical Requirements

- Product Formulation
- Prototype or final formulation?
- Availability of product base (How much? When?)
- Packaging specifications
- Availability of packaging components
- Method of fragrance incorporation
- Stability test protocols
- Action Standards
- Critical stability issues

Perfume quality is strongly affected by the nature of the product base formula. Water, fat content, enzymes, pH, oxidizing or reducing agents, preservatives and colourants can all affect perfume stability.

As much details as possible should be given on the nature and ingredients of the base. Sufficient samples of the base should be made available for adequate perfume testing as soon as possible in the development process. Any special usage conditions need to be defined especially in the case of a new product concept.

Interactions of perfume with the product packaging should be considered, especially interaction with plastic packs or aerosol components, coloration and light-activated discoloration and loss of perfume by permeation through the pack.

Stability criteria and test protocols, including pack compatibility, must be defined clearly. Again, Action Standards and the minimum criteria for acceptability are important.

Timing

- Project timetable
- Deadlines
- Interim Submissions
- Final Submissions
- Test Results

Price Structure

- ***Perfume Cost Target***
 - Per tonne of Finished Product
 - Fragrance Dosage Limits
 - Pro Rata Limits
 - Submission Cost Information to Whom?

Submissions

- Perfume oils (How many? How much? To whom?)
- Illustrations in finished product
 - How many? To Whom?
 - Labeling requirements
- Accompanying data
 - Fragrance Description
 - Cost & Dosage Information
 - MSDS
 - IFRA Certificates
 - Other Certificates of Conformity
 - Perfume Performance Data

- Technical Performance / Stability Data
- Consumer Panel Test Data
- Provisional Analytical Specifications
- Presentation Document

Post Submission Requirements

➤ *Test Samples*

- Production samples of short-listed fragrances for final consumer test (Provided by the Fragrance Supplier)
- Factory-production samples for approval by fragrance house for final consumer test (Provided by the Client)
- Factory-production samples for testing in parallel by fragrance supplier and client (Provided by Client)

We must be also be aware, getting all these information from all our customers may not be possible, but one must ensure to get maximum information, so that we have a winning fragrance.

Ms. Bhuvana Nageshwaran has more than 17 years of experience in the aroma chemical, essential oils, flavour and fragrance industry. Currently, she is the Director – Creations of **Ultra International Limited**, one of the major Manufacturers of Fragrance & Flavour. She has a Diploma in Perfumery from Perfumery Education Center, London. She is member of **GDP – Deutsche Gesellschaft Der Parfumeure in der SEPAWA**, Germany, **WFFC - Women in Flavor and Fragrance Commerce, Inc.**, **ASTM - American Society for Testing and Materials**, **Fragrance Foundation**, **American Alliance of Aromatherapy, U.S.A.** Ms. Bhuvana Nageshwaran can be contacted at ultraintl@airtelbroadband.in