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# CASE 7 NISHAN JAMS: MESSAGE STRATEGY AND EXECUTION

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## Objectives

The objectives of this case are:

- to understand the market for a given product, and
- select an appropriate message strategy

## Structure

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Bread Spread Market
- 7.3 Marketing Research
- 7.4 Copy Testing
- 7.6 Selection of Copy Testing
- 7.6 Discussion Questions

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## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

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In 1993 marketing executives at Green-Foods Ltd, were concerned about the performance of their "NISHAN" brand of jam. They were debating whether or not to adopt a new advertising approach as the central thrust of their strategy. The advertising campaign would involve an unusual and prospectively controversial direct comparison of the vitamin- nutritional value of "NISHAN" vis-a-vis the fresh natural fruits. The approach would be controversial in the sense that most Indians associated nourishment either to fresh fruits/vegetables or to medical preparations,

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## 7.2 BREAD SPREADS MARKET

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Green Foods Ltd was one of the six major processed food manufacturers marketing bread- spreads in India. In 1992-93, the bread spread sales at the retail level were about Rs. 300 crores and were growing at a rate of about 7% annually. There were items like table-butter, processed cheese, jams, marmalades and new products like cheese-spread and margarine were recent introductions. On a rough estimate there were about 60 brands! variations on the market.

NISHAN had been introduced to the market in 1970. By weight sold, its market share had fluctuated between 7-9% of the total bread-spreads market. During the 23 years, since its introduction, NISHAN's market share had not increased substantially. However, in light of the fact that the leading brands in the bread-spread market, with the exception of one table-butter manufacturer, held shares of only about 7-10%, Green Foods' executives were not dissatisfied with the brand's long term performance.

In 1990-92, NISHAN's marketing strategy was built upon its unique product characteristics. Only NISHAN provides the natural goodness of fruits since its jams are processed right in the fruit orchards.

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## 73 MARKETING RESEARCH

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During 1992-93, the Green Foods' executives were increasingly concerned by the accelerating erosion of NISHAN's market share. They sought to ascertain the cause of this decline and then to take whatever marketing action seemed most appropriate to arrest it.

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Upon gathering and analysing information from consumer panels, it was discovered that substantial proportions of NISHAN's volume losses represented shifts to more "exotic" tastes like "kala- khatta", "mango-orange", "3-in-ones", etc which were introduced as extensions to usual mix of pineapple, orange, mango and mixed fruit jams. The other category that appeared to be cutting into sales of NISHAN more than its competitors were the new- introductions like cheese-spread and margarine. A consumer image perception study showed that butter was the first choice as bread-spread and other things were treated as additional. 90% of the NISHAN users had this perception. These users believed that NISHAN jams sealed in the freshness of fruits but thought that all other jams were also similar.

The executives concluded that NISHAN was failing to communicate its vitamin nutrition value which was a definite product attribute.

Three marketing options were considered by the company executives as they assessed how best to improve NISHAN's sales performance. These included providing for larger marketing expenditure budgets, adjusting the brand's marketing mix, and developing a more compelling advertising approach. The third alternative appeared to offer the most efficient method of addressing the communications problem which the executives believed to be the root cause of NISHAN's deteriorating market position.

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## 7.4 COPY TESTING

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Focus group interviews were conducted with consumers to evaluate the relative effectiveness of seven alternative copy approaches making direct or implied comparisons between NISHAN and the other jams. These seven alternative approaches are presented in EXHIBIT 1. They are addressed to a variety of dimensions - nutrition, acceptability of taste, the avoidance of fuss created by children over eating fruits, and so on.

### **Exhibit - 1**

#### **Alternative Copy Propositions - 1993**

1. NISHAN is the only jam which has the vitamins and minerals so essential as a part of diet.
2. Unlike other brands, only NISHAN has the vitamins and minerals of the fresh fruits intact.
3. NISHAN jam spread over a toast is a good as a portion of fresh fruit eaten at breakfast.
4. Children may hate having fresh fruits at breakfast. Your anxiety about their not eating fruits can be relieved by serving them NISHAN.
5. Fruit picked up from the orchard is packed into a jam bottle without delay, keeping the nourishment intact.
6. NISHAN is more acceptable to children than any other rival brand.
7. No fuss on breakfast table when you serve NISHAN to your children.

The interview results indicated that a comparative listing of vitamin/mineral levels of NISHAN and fresh fruits created the greatest impact and the greatest positive attitude change in NISHAN's favour. The executives decided that the new copy strategy would continue to stress NISHAN's basic selling proposition (vitamin/mineral content). The copy strategy is summarised in EXHIBIT 2.



## **Exhibit - 2**

### **1993 Nishan Jam's Copy Strategy**

1. What is the unique product characteristic that justifies consumer interest? Only NISHAN provides the natural goodness of vitamin and minerals found in fresh fruits.
2. What is the image of the product to be conveyed over time? NISHAN image will be that of a definitive nourishing breakfast food product.
3. What is the objective of the copy?  
The goal of the advertising is to hammer in the fact that NISHAN is superior to all other jams in terms of its having succeeded in retaining the vitamin/mineral contents of fresh fruits. The copy will specifically aim at dispelling the misconception that all jams have same levels of freshness and/or nourishment.
4. How is the objective to be met?  
With advertising that continues to stress NISHAN's basic selling proposition (vitamin mineral/nourishment/freshness), as focal point, a direct comparison of the brand's vitamin/mineral content level with those of the leading brands and/or fresh fruits.

Next, NISHAN's advertising agency developed three different advertising executions of this copy' approach. These in turn were to be copy-tested to determine which seemed most effectively to fulfill the strategic objective set for the brand. Description of each of these three executions appears as EXHIBIT 3.

## **Exhibit - 3**

### **Summary of Three Alternative Copy Executions Conversation**

Setting is the processed foods section of a large retail store. A mother picking up a bottle of a leading brand of jams, begins a dialogue with an off camera announcer. After she indicates her belief that all jams have natural fruits and freshness, the announcer asks her to look more closely at the label on the bottle. He then hands her a bottle of NISHAN jam and shows her the label where the vitamin and mineral contents are listed. He then says, "All Jam are made from fruits but only NISHAN preserves the natural vitamins and minerals in its jams."

#### **Dining Table**

Setting is a large dinning table with breakfast laid out. Mother is serving while the husband with very young boy and girl have sat down for breakfast. The mother serves a fruit which the children refuse to take. She says "Alright, I will give you only what you want." She puts the fruit on top of a toast and children watch. The fruit dissolves in a thin layer of jam. The children lap up the toast in delight. A proud mother speaks, "I served them fresh fruit but my children thought it was just the jam."

#### **Laboratory**

A large chemical/analytical laboratory in the background with a doctor in his overalls is on the desk. He speaks, "I recommend fresh fruit at breakfast because they provide essential vitamins and minerals to keep you going for the day." In the meanwhile, he puts a fruit in masticator, converts it to a paste, puts the paste in an auto-analyser and the computer screen read the vitamin and mineral contents.

The doctor speaks again, "Mothers come to me asking for some prescriptions for their children who would not eat fruits at the breakfast." He scoops a spoonful of jam from NISHAN bottle and puts it in the auto analyser. The computer screen lights up showing vitamin and mineral contents.



These executions were prepared in the form of rough production advertisements costing about Rs. 60000, to develop and test, rather than in the form of finished commercials which would have cost about 20 times this amount. Each execution was tested separately among 200-300 users and/or its primary competitors. Reaction to current NISHAN and competitive ads. provided the base points for indices of brand disposition and preference. A summary of the test-results appears in EXHIBIT 4.

<b>Exhibit - 4</b>			
<b>Copy Test Results</b>			
Copy Executions	Indices* of performance Vs. existing copy		
	Female	Male	Combined
Conversations	55	215	105
Dining Table	65	345	150
Laboratory	225	135	170
*The index score in each cell should be evaluated against a base score of 100 representing the reaction to existing NISHAN copy.			

## 7.5 SELECTION OF COPY STRATEGY

One of the copy executions, the "LABORATORY" advertisement incorporated a very direct and dramatic comparison between NISHAN and the fresh fruit on vitamin/mineral content. This execution scored highest in the copy test, with particularly strong results among women. Some marketing executives responsible for NISHAN thought that the test results indicated that this execution- preferably refined to appeal more strongly to men-should constitute the core of the new NISHAN advertising campaign.

The executives were aware, however, that such direct comparison may still not go well with the audience who considered packaged foods more as items of convenience rather than health.

There was yet another apprehension about this approach in the minds of some executive. They thought that testimony from a technician/doctor may work well for hygiene products but if it works the same, way for jams, the audience might associate NISHAN with nutritional food supplements, health-tonics or even medical preparations. While this could lead to a distinct positioning of the product, the position might lead to a reduction in volume sales. Could such a situation result in NISHAN becoming a "PRESCRIBED BRAND" rather than a "PREFERRED BRAND"?

These problems caused a number of other executives to wonder whether the risks involved in selecting the "LABORATORY" execution were worth it. This latter group of executives considered the "DINING TABLE" execution in particular to have demonstrated sufficient appeal to be an acceptable alternative.

## 7.6 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Review the overall marketing situation for jams and bread spreads market as of 1993. What has prompted Green Foods Limited to take action on NISHAN. Is this action justified, premature or delayed? Discuss.
2. Appraise the chosen message strategy versus other alternatives listed in EXHIBIT -1 of the case.
3. Which of the three alternative executions would you choose to run? Why?
4. If you were the Brand Manager for the leading competing brand to NISHAN, how would you respond to the proposed advertising-of NISHAN?