



Flame On - Reckitt Benckiser Gets Emotional



Reckitt Benckiser is changing its approach to promoting Airwick. The company is investing £4m on a strategy that connects with the emotional aspect of its fragrances, rather than the more technical aspects such as formulations and devices.

Emotion sells. Airwick sales grow by more than 35% value in the Christmas season, due to that emotional connection with seasonal fragrance.

This shift away from gadgetry and towards emotional state is in our view the right move. But how well is RB making the shift? To get a sense we compared RB to one of its competitors with that most emotional of products - the candle.

We collected raw data by visiting websites, consumer forums, blogs, etc. We compiled a modest data set of unstructured text, and analysed it to extract underlying meaning from the written text. The analysis is concentrated on four aspects of emotion that uncover a person's attitudes and beliefs that determine his or her decision making.

These are : -

- What "mental gear" are the consumers in when thinking about candles?
- What character archetypes are operating among the candle aficionados?
- What are the unspoken messages (as evidenced through metaphor)?
- What emotional states do the consumers display?

We found an interesting mis-match between the emotions expressed by consumers were demonstrating and the emotions that Airwick was evoking. Even more interestingly we found a much better match between the consumer and the premium priced Yankee candle, an Airwick competitor.

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To illustrate, we'll look at two of the four aspects here - emotional states and archetypes.



Emotional States When Thinking About Candles

We analysed the text from a number of candle enthusiast blogs. The mismatch between Airwick communications and the bloggers is starkly illustrated in figures 1 and 2 below. The bloggers clearly associate candles with Love.

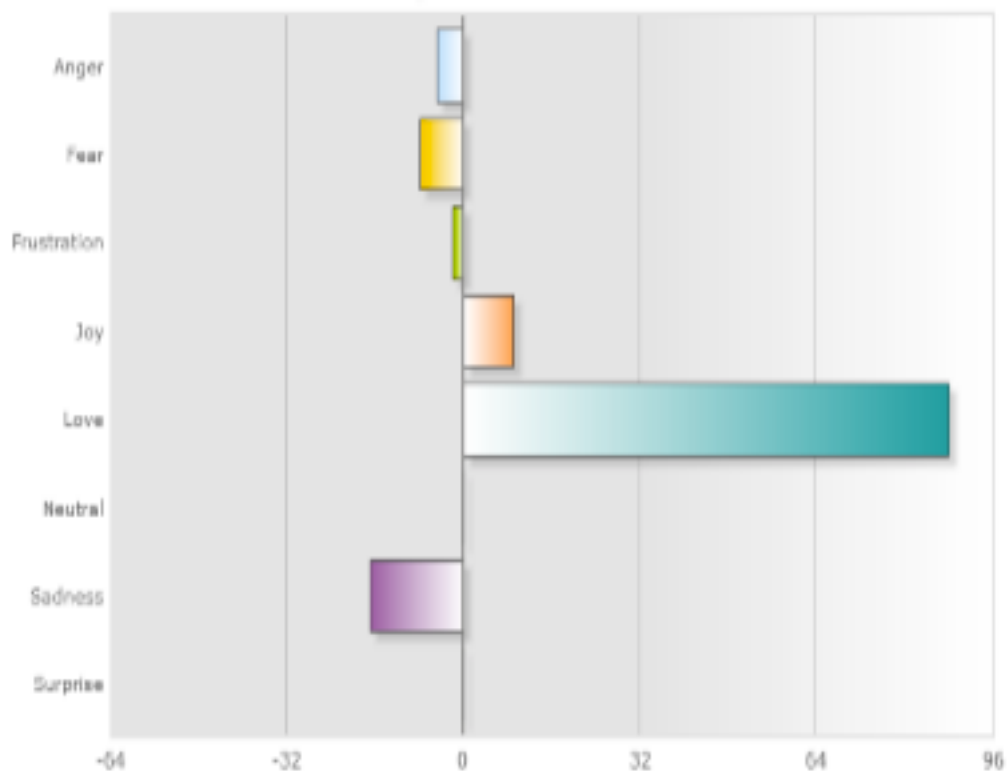


Figure 1. Emotional states expressed by Candle Bloggers

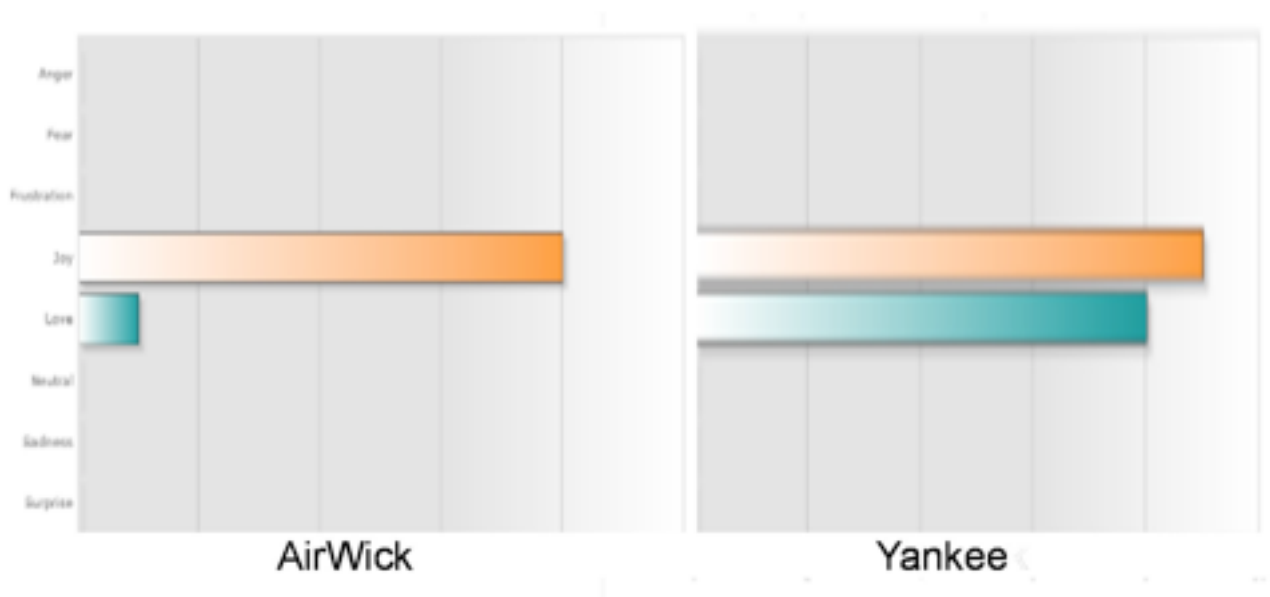


Figure 2. Emotional States expressed in Airwick and Yankee literature.

We can see that Airwick completely misses the mark. The Airwick messaging is all about Joy (90%), with very little mention of Love (10%), - exactly opposite to the consumer discourse. Yankee do a much better job of connecting to Love.

This simple analysis should immediately suggest many ways in which Airwick could modify its message - (advertising campaigns, imagery, music, copy, offers, fragrances) - to be more aligned to Love.

Archetypes

Archetypes embody many unspoken and complex values. Organisations can communicate their values and brand essence through Archetypes.

Our Archetype work draws on the work of Allan Hunter who found that the same six archetypes appeared ubiquitously throughout 3000 years of western literature: -

The Innocent (Faith, trust, optimism)

The Orphan (loneliness, alienation)

The Pilgrim (seeking, freedom-loving)

The Warrior-Lover (commitment to another)

The Monarch (power, leadership, responsibility)

The Magician (healing, imagining, creating)

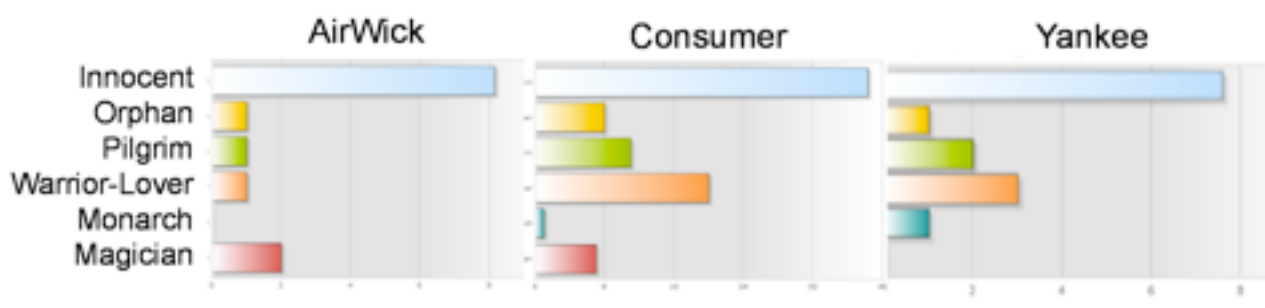


Most people have several archetypes within them and different archetypes will dominate in different settings and at different stages of their lives. We looked to see what Archetypes dominated in consumers while thinking about candles.

Then we examined how well Yankee and Airwick were resonating with these Archetypes in their communications.

As we can see the consumer community displayed a mixture of five of the six Archetypes, dominated by The Innocent, but with a significant proportion of Warrior-Lover and Pilgrim.

Both Airwick and Yankee play very well to the Innocent (with messages of home, security, warmth), but overall Yankee matches the consumer profile much better than Airwick. Only Yankee taps in to the Warrior-Lover aspect of the candle (passionate, intimate, romantic).



Yankee candles command twice the price of Airwick.

We think, in this analysis, we may have identified part of the reason why - consumers believe Yankee candles meet their needs (love, passion, intimacy, romance), much better than Airwick.

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Our analysis is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive. It is intended to spark innovative thought. We believe that in highlighting these emotional drivers we can provide powerful triggers for new ideas that will help to build on RB's strategy to focus on the emotional response to fragrance.

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Systematic Innovation Ltd. is a boutique Innovation Consultancy specialising in solving difficult problems, and finding disruptive opportunities.

Part of our innovation work involves analysing qualitative unstructured information to uncover the real consumer drivers that influence decision making and behaviour.

If you would like to discuss how our tools and techniques can support your organisation please email enquiries@systematic-innovation.co.uk.

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