

CASE STUDY: KOTEX

Industry: Consumer

Breaking the mould

In 2010 Kimberly Clark's Kotex brand was facing an extremely tough trading environment in Singapore, with the feminine care category dominated by three leading competitor brands and a handful of powerful retailers. This was particularly true of the ultrathin segment, in which Kotex stood a distant fourth, behind three established market leaders that between them held over 90% of market share. The growing ultrathin market is of particular strategic and commercial importance as it is expected to account for one in two purchases within the category in 2011. Given its comparatively weak market and retail position, and significant outspend by its competitors on above-the-line media, Kotex needed to find a way of cutting through the retail clutter and reconnecting with the 15-24 year-old female consumer. Which is where we came in.



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Paint it black

The decision was made to launch a new ultrathin line under the Kotex Luxe name. Inspired by the insight that women are influenced by design and aesthetics as well as function, the new range would be the first to feature patterns on the pads themselves. In the absence of significant media support it was decided that packaging would be the primary channel for driving product awareness and purchase.

Given Kotex's limited retail presence and the prevailing conventions of using pastel shades and functional information on pack, we decided to take a bold and disruptive approach to the pack design. We undertook research of female consumers and the personal items in their handbags, and based on this we were able to take a radical step in our concept development – in a market and region that had studiously avoided it, we decided to embrace black as the colour of Kotex Luxe.



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Breaking records

Research showed that despite preconceptions, the black design positively conveyed a sense of premium style and luxury. This was enhanced by the use of elegant typography, a detailed background patterning, pink accent colours and an innovative use of matte and spot varnish. Onto the luxurious black background we incorporated the coloured pad designs both as a delicate pattern emerging from the product information bar, and as separate illustrations on front of pack. The launch was also supported by point of sale, which continued the design style from the packaging.

Within six months of the launch of the new Kotex Luxe range, Kotex's ultrathin pad market share and value sales grew from by more than four times. In just four months Kotex Luxe had transformed its position within the segment and the face of femcare in Singapore.

