



# Fragrancing Products at Johnson Wax

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As a major privately-held multi-national marketer of consumer and institutional products, S. C. Johnson is probably known better as simply "Johnson Wax." I am personally involved in all aspects of Air Care product development. To us that means our "Glade" line of products.

Dr. Hiller concentrated his discussion on policies. I will take the other tack and emphasize the procedural aspects of new product development as it relates to fragrance. I hope to accomplish this by answering a few key questions. Though slanted toward S. C. Johnson, I think you will find similarities in other companies in the industry.

Question number one, where do our product ideas come from? Second, what is S. C. Johnson's new product philosophy, particularly with regard to fragrance? What are the logistics? Procedurally, how do we go about fragrancing products? What happens to perfume submissions after they arrive in-house? I would like to provide you with the answers to these questions. I will not, however, spend much time on specific product evaluation techniques.

Where do our product ideas come from? I am

sure many of you in the fragrance industry have asked that after receiving briefs. Who dreams up these mysterious ideas that you have been asked to work on?

Product ideas are born of many sources. In practice they usually originate from one of two areas. One source is a technical innovation or breakthrough. A researcher in the laboratory discovers a new process, formulation or material and brings a product prototype forward. These ideas may be particularly lucrative if a proprietary position can be gained. An excellent example of this within S. C. Johnson is Edge Shaving Gel.

Alternatively, the idea may come from our partners in marketing, often as a new concept or positioning, and I include here market research. Qualitative research with focus groups or concept testing uncovers a consumer need, a niche that can be filled. This research can be productive since relatively low levels of resource expenditure can focus future work. An example of this may be an extension such as Skin Conditioning Edge.

Another source of ideas, of course, is the classic "President's Wife" project. I think we have all been exposed to examples of ideas from upper

management. They seem to generate priority with very little effort. Sometimes these ideas are good.

Increasingly, ideas are being solicited from other "non-conventional" areas of the corporation. At S. C. Johnson we have initiated an active drive for entrepreneurship (or interpreneurship if you subscribe to Gifford Pinchot's vernacular). Personnel at all levels and in all functional areas such as production, finance or sales are encouraged to present ideas and follow through on them. This may prove to be another fertile source of ideas.

So, we now have an idea. If it is promising, and there is support behind it, it is advanced to a project stage. More formal concepts can be written and quantitatively tested, and/or laboratory prototypes developed and evaluated. It is at this still early stage that fragrance becomes, and should become, a concern—even earlier if fragrance direction is the actual idea.

A new product proposal is drafted to formalize the objectives of the project. Incorporated into those objectives is a statement of the product's "plus." At S. C. Johnson we have an important corporate philosophy that requires all our products to have a *consumer-identifiable plus* before we market them. Fragrance can be an important part of this "product plus." It gives an added-value to the consumer. It helps tie the concept and product together into a package that meets consumer expectations. Fragrance is particularly important in competitive categories where the technological differences between products may be small. Fragrance objectives become a part of the new products program very early in the process.

Let's turn to the logistics of the process we use to actually fragrance our products. The process I describe is idealistic, and I do not claim that it is used, or should be used, all the time every time. Particular projects, timetables or even categories may dictate alterations.

The process is initiated with a brief. We have tested our revised brief format in Air Care and expect to use it more in all of our consumer products area.

The written brief is created with input from product research, marketing, market research, and product evaluation. At S. C. Johnson the product research chemist is responsible for the brief and is the single focal point for the process. We do not use a central fragrance coordinator, though I know several other companies do. Time and effort at the onset of the process is invariably well spent. Too often cursory attention is paid to brief preparation. This leads to inefficiency and

loss of time down the road.

The key points involved in the brief include a product description, marketing position, fragrance requirements, product/package details and evaluation techniques.

### Product Description

The product description should give the fragrance company a good picture of the product and its intended use pattern.

The product description includes three main points: a base or code number for reference, the product type (for example, "a decorator continuous-action air freshener formed from a clear, polymer matrix), and its usage, including location, frequency, technique.

### Fragrance Requirements

The fragrance objectives include two important criteria.

- Profile (for example, "noticeable lemon character as perceived by consumers, connote fresh and clean, appropriate for all household locations")
- Performance criteria (for example, "the product must have superior fragrance strength and hedonics over four weeks versus a control")

The examples noted pertain to an air freshener; however, the same kind of descriptions can be used with any product.

### Marketing Position

The third important descriptive piece of the puzzle is the marketing information which delineates the brand image ("unique, high quality, effective air freshener with a superior visual appeal") as well as the target group ("homemakers 18 and over"). This information also describes the advertising platform ("first high performance air freshener that you can leave out all over your home") and the competitive brands. The sum of all the information should give the perfumer a solid picture of the product concept to fragrance.

### Packaging the Product

Specific product and package details are then included in the brief. Cost requirements are usually given on a \$-% basis. In other words, the key concern is the cost to fragrance 100 pounds of finished product, the exact perfume cost and the percentage it can vary but not exceed a certain level. This gives the perfumer more latitude.

The expected annual volume is, of course, important for the pricing structure, as are the sample size needed and number of submissions.

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Formula details include base number, description, base odor, color, pH, and unusual ingredients. Package details are determined by the type of materials, special components, unusual storage conditions or stability requirements.

Finally we must consider the laboratory process and how can the future production process and conditions can be mimicked at the perfume house.

The perfumer knows in detail what kind of base must be fragranced, what process conditions the perfume will face, and with what kind of packaging it must be compatible.

### **Evaluation Techniques**

A detailed account of the evaluation techniques that will be employed once the perfumes are submitted is also included in the format of a brief. The evaluation list is as follows:

- Performance testing—in-house procedures, standards, consumer testing program, psychophysical techniques
- Toxicology requirements
- Stability requirements and test procedures
- Other product-specific testing

It is particularly important that the perfumers be made aware of these evaluation techniques. In theory and, I believe, in practice, the quality of submissions will be higher if the houses seriously consider and apply those techniques.

Briefs are then presented to the fragrance houses, depending upon the project, via several avenues. Often, they are given to the sales representatives. If the product is unusual, or a particularly key program, we invite the perfumer and evaluator to discuss the brief in detail. Communication is the key to being successful and obtaining a good fragrance in one iteration. It is much more efficient to put in the front-end effort than to do a less thorough job and repeat the procedure.

What happens to submissions? The individual product research chemist receives the perfumes and makes an initial laboratory evaluation. Is the perfume compatible with the formula? Is the color acceptable? Does the perfume match the fragrance type requested? Did someone submit a powder on a lemon brief? Basic questions are answered and information gathered. Few perfumes should be eliminated at this point if the fragrance houses have properly done their homework and if we, as marketers, have communicated properly.

Once perfumes pass the initial screen, objective performance testing is initiated in the prod-

uct evaluation department. Submissions are screened against the criteria and standards outlined in the brief using the proposed methodology. Internal experts and panels are used first. The fragrances may be subjected to descriptive analysis. The next stage is often with small scale consumer placements, then on to large scale multi-city field test placements.

**Drs. Pader, Konicek and Hiller fielded questions following their presentations on Fragrance Selection. The lively discussion lasted for almost an hour.**

Throughout this sequence, the purpose of product evaluation is to supply direction to product research. Do we have a good product? Are we meeting performance requirements? Can we improve the product? Can advertising claims be substantiated? These questions relate to *all* aspects of the product; fragrance is but one part. I will emphasize here the importance of evaluating the product as a whole in a *real-use* situation with *real-live* consumers. It is they who will ultimately judge and determine if the product will be successful. They will, of course, make that judgment based on the whole package.

Concurrently, market research may test the product. Market research is separate entity at S.C. Johnson that reports through marketing. While product evaluation usually blind tests product directly against standards, market research generally tests with a concept in a monadic fashion. Additionally, market research tests concepts alone, does research into consumer attitudes and usage, and coordinates test markets.

Data can differ between product evaluation and market research. However, both provide information that is extremely useful in new product development. Market research testing usually follows at least some screening by product evaluation.

As is apparent, there is actually a continuous

feedback loop in the process where product evaluation and market research results are funneled back to product research and marketing. Modifications are made as needed to ultimately optimize the product. Some steps may be repeated several times. We may go back to the fragrance houses and ask for perfume modifications which are sometimes unavoidable because we constantly learn about the product as we carry out our evaluations. Product development is necessarily a dynamic process. I'm sure the fragrance houses turn existentialistic by this time and feel that they are somehow doomed to a task of Sisyphus. I ask that you bear with us.

Both of us will benefit only if the product is successful with the consumer.

We have recently initiated a program to periodically evaluate the performance of the fragrance houses we work with. The performance of each house is measured as a function of success against our briefs and, subsequently reported to it. We feel that this type of feedback will be beneficial to both of us.

Once the fragrance has been chosen and passed all the performance screening, the commercialization phase begins. Full scale stability testing is initiated. These are often year-long test packs although they can be read earlier with more risk. Larger scale consumer placements may be done for claims support. The advertising is refined. Toxicology studies are initiated if they have not been done at an earlier stage. The timing on toxicology testing depends greatly on the particular program. Working with a known formulation in a known application, we recognize the risks are lower and tox testing may be postponed until late in the program. For a completely new formulation or application, tox testing may be needed prior to any consumer placements.

If all goes well, the product is introduced into the marketplace. If we've done our homework properly it will be a success.

In summary, I have tried to provide an answer to the question of how we fragrance products at S. C. Johnson. I have discussed where ideas originate, how they are expanded into product proposals, logistically how we brief perfume houses, and what happens to perfumes once we get them. The process is necessarily very flexible and depends on each particular new product program.

I would like to re-emphasize that we take fragrance seriously at S. C. Johnson. We feel it is an important part of most of our products.

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