

Marriage of a Fragrance

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The planning and development of any new fragrance is a very long, difficult and arduous process. It requires that three basic elements, the idea itself, the fragrance and the package be melded into perfect harmony with each other. If you do that, it's called happiness, and if you don't, it's called failure.

Most work on a fragrance starts with the concept or positioning. That drives the process and, thus, much of the time is spent searching for what we call that big idea. A lot of testing, exploring, money, time, and effort goes into that process. For once you find the idea, it is the guidepost, the driving force, that helps you get to the fragrance and the package. Unfortunately, that idea is often elusive and many times after months and months of work, you come up empty which means you start all over again.

If you do come up with the right idea, then you've got to find the fragrance that matches that idea and that's a second hurdle that sometimes becomes difficult. I will describe an idea that was great, and a fragrance that didn't marry well to that idea. The result of this mismatch is at best a short term success and at worst a total failure.

So, matching that fragrance becomes a second key hurdle.

The third part of the equation for success is the package. The package clearly must match the idea and fragrance. If they all come together and marry well the result is success.

A classic success in the sense that the idea is big and the package/fragrance/concept marry together in perfect harmony is the perfect marriage between the Aviance Night Musk positioning and fragrance/packaging. It is unique because it was born by taking existing elements. Because we used existing elements, we cut off that huge time-consuming development step of ideation and began right at the heart of the matter.

Let me take you through this process because it's rather interesting. You have to understand there were really two separate elements totally independent of one another that were brought together.

First, there was Aviance itself. The Aviance fragrance was launched in the fall of 1976. It was one of several brands that was launched that year, including Jontue from Revlon and Stephen B from Max Factor. Of these three major mass mar-

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ket launches in 1976, Aviance was the big success. It was introduced in the fall and there was virtually 100% sell-out by Christmas. I have never seen such an instantaneous success since, with the possible exception of the latest Vanderbilt launch.

The success of Aviance was based upon what I suggest was a piece of copy that revolutionized the industry. With such an impact, this piece of advertising literally took the industry by storm. In one three week period after it started, the shelves were empty. It was a complete and total sell-out. We couldn't supply the fragrance fast enough, and, believe me, we thought we were prepared to do so. It played on what has come to be known as the sexual revolution. It had a message for the housewife that was particularly relevant at that time and place:

"I've been sweet
and I've been good,
I've had a whole full day
of motherhood,
but I'm gonna have an Aviance night.

Prince Matchabelli brings you Aviance, a radiant perfume that lasts through the night and what a way to start it.

We're gonna have an Aviance night!"

I'm sure many of you remember that commercial. It has become a classic. It has been copied many times since then. It won the Advertising of the Year award. Unfortunately, despite this fantastic piece of copy and this great idea, the fragrance never really grew in sales after a great introduction. We spent a lot of money on advertising but what we found out after doing some homework was that the *fragrance did not match the concept*. It was in the Rive Gauche family fragrance which just didn't have the sensuality, the sexuality that women expected when they picked it up and it also didn't have the broad appeal we were looking for in the mass market.

So, despite this fantastic concept and exciting piece of advertising, we had a fragrance that, over the years, slowly lost sales vitality. By 1979, we had given up that we would grow the brand and virtually cut all advertising. However, we still

marketed the brand at a very low volume level, relative to the other brands in the division.

The interesting thing was that we continued to see high awareness of the Aviance name every time we did an awareness check (polling the consumers once or twice a year to find out what was their top of mind fragrance brand name awareness). The awareness levels of Aviance were equal to, or slightly less than, brands such as Chantilly, Emeraude and our own Cachet. Amazing when you consider that two of these brands have been around for twenty-five years, and the other one for fifteen years. It made you wonder. The idea was so big it just wouldn't die, despite the fact we weren't advertising. This finding was really Step I in the development of Aviance Night Musk.

Step II occurred independent of Step I. Some of you may remember that back in the early 1960s, the musk fad began. It began in the local drug stores with the little vials of natural musk oil, and it grew. It quietly grew. Jovan picked up on it; we, at Prince Matchabelli, looked at it and decided against marketing a musk because we thought that it was a fad. The basis for selling musk was based on sexual attraction, and it was strictly, we thought, a singular note fragrance that would disappear slowly. But, despite everything, it grew and grew and grew, until 1980 when we estimated that the market was about \$100 million, with Jovan and Coty owning the biggest share.

All the musks, from the original to Jovan to Coty were positioned very sensually as sexual attractants. That was the basis for sale. This is Part II of this equation.

To the credit of our fragrance group in Greenwich, they analyzed the marketplace to find out what was going on and found out that the musk market was not only 100 million dollars but, based on information they could glean, was growing. Furthermore, there was nobody really spending any money on marketing musk. Thus, the opportunity seemed right for a musk fragrance, and the Aviance positioning seemed perfect for the concept. Aviance awareness had been maintained all this time despite no advertising. It had a sexual, sensual connotation consistent with musk fragrance. It was like the Reese's Peanut Butter Cups ad—the accidental marriage of

CORRECTION: Cinnamo Nitrile was incorrectly listed as Cinnamon Nitrile in the Nickstadt-Moeller advertisement in April/May 1984 Perfumer & Flavorist, p. 54.

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peanut butter and chocolate. Well, analyzing the market these two elements seemed to fit together perfectly. A perfect marriage. The Aviance name and sexual image; the musk fragrance image clearly sexual attractant-type positioning. The conclusion they came to was simply that an Aviance musk fragrance could be successful. And, it could probably be launched at a very modest advertising level, since the awareness of Aviance was so high. So Mike Horowitz, our Vice-President of Marketing and Fragrance, came to me two years ago in April, shortly after I was made President of the Division, and said they had this big idea. I agreed and we went forward.

Aviance Night Musk

We decided to get into the marketplace as quickly as possible. The first step was to develop the advertising. We gave the assignment to the William Esty Company and told them to "work off" the Aviance Night commercial and develop a musk commercial which played on the same sexuality, sensuality.

We decided to call the fragrance Aviance Night Musk to get the rub-off of Aviance Night recall.

Esty developed the commercial which is now called "Put It On."

Put it on, Aviance Night Musk.
Put it on, Aviance Night Musk.
Introducing Aviance Night Musk,
put it on
and have an Aviance night.

We had what we thought was a winner. (There is no man in the commercial, which is an interesting nuance that most people don't realize. It's strictly the viewer's imagination that carries the imagery.) We tested the commercial and, as we suspected, it was a "home run."

As I said earlier, once you have that idea, you can quickly move in other areas. We picked up the existing packaging. We took the existing carton and just redesigned it slightly to give it a richer, deeper terra cotta color. We then went to our fragrance suppliers and said we needed a musk fragrance that could beat Jovan Musk hands down. Very quickly and very efficiently, one of our suppliers, Firmenich, came to our fragrance group with a fragrance we believed was right. We selected it for the launch and went full steam ahead. Thus, in a period of five months from initial presentation of the idea, we were in the marketplace in two cities, Kansas City and Dallas. We had just one goal in mind—to find out how big this business could be as we were already planning a Spring launch in 1983. Well, we were a hit in Kansas City and Dallas. Before the advertising could begin, we were sold out. This created such excitement that we quickly moved to our national launch in March 1983 and the rest is history. We launched with just two SKUs (two stock-keeping units), a small and large spray. From March to December 1983, we did a little over \$25 million at retail with just those two SKUs. In the first quarter of 1984, we launched two other products to go with our sprays, an oil and a powder, and the vitality of these new products has been excellent.

Aviance Night Musk truly was the perfect marriage between concept and fragrance. What makes it more interesting for us is that it really was the marriage of two existing ideas waiting to be put together. We got it together and into the marketplace in record time with a major success. I wish they could all be that simple. I wish they could all be that successful but this one has been truly a rewarding experience for all of us.

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