

Product branding for effective delivery to low incomes consumers in Ghana



1. Pioneer partnership

In August 2016, the 2SCALE project officially sealed a partnership agreement to work with Yedent as the champion for the soybean PPP in Ghana. Yedent was at the time into production of cereal blend and supply of maize grit to Guinness Ghana Breweries Limited (GGBL). In terms of marketing, their major issue was increasing their portfolio in the consumer mass market for cereal blends. That agenda also brought with it a lot of hurdles to cross of which product branding, orientation and innovative presentation at the point of sale for low incomes became key priority.

Yedent had a good cereal blend product called *Maisoyforte*. Based on market scans conducted it became apparent the Maisoyforte brand name did not resonate well with consumers. The other issue was to create some brand associations to low income and we realised indigenous channel to market will create needed visibility amongst this consumer class. In furtherance, branding effort was aimed at differentiating the Maisoyforte as very nutritious, affordable and unique in taste. A number of activities were deployed in this direction to support the product brand building effort in terms of demystifying the brand name challenges and effective channel access to low-income consumers.



2. Replicable practice

There was something fundamental but missing in the brand name of Yedent product – Maisoyforte. According to market scan insight, consumers assumed the product was foreign and did not understand what basic product it is about. 2SCALE project advised Yedent management to attach a generic cereal blend name to the brand, which is known, resonate well and a household name to every Ghanaian. This simple step really worked and helped a lot of consumers to understand and decode the content of the package and what it stood for. The brand name became Maisoyforte TOMBROWN.

Same was captured and consistently used on all newly designed promotional materials, campaigns and jingles. Apart from the use of the trade to get the product on the market, 2SCALE wanted a very innovative way to create easy access to the very low-income consumers and build the Maisoyforte brand in their circles. This was an important step as part of building the product brand and creating strong visibility and consumption amongst the BoPs in Ghana.

“Koko” (Porridge) sellers are informal and indigenous micro-enterprises that sells porridge. The “koko” is a delicacy in Ghana and is patronised by all manner of consumer class. It is however patronised the most by low incomes because of its high affordability. They are found in almost every location, especially in the early hours of the morning. Through the 2SCALE project, Yedent forged a partnership with these “Koko” sellers as well as night tea sellers in order to bring Maisoyforte TOMBROWN to BoPs and also diversify the portfolio of the “koko” sellers. As part of the “koko”/Night sales distribution, all the sales points were also branded and Maisoyforte TOMBROWN Packages displaced.

It was successfully piloted for (2) years and is currently being replicated in the Faranaya partnership with B-Diet Limited.

To summarize, this practice is addressing constraints in terms of:

<p>Access to nutritious food</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability: The Maisoyforte TOMBROWN was sold in various pack sizes to ensure affordability by low incomes. The “koko” night tea distribution model also ensured that the product was sold in cooked form. The partnership ensured that Yedent was able to exploit the existing customer base of the “koko” sellers of which a predominant number are low incomes. Apart from the “koko” distribution model, the product was made available in local markets in Kumasi and Accra through distributors. • Affordability: Maisoyforte TOMBROWN came in various sizes to meet all manner of consumer pocket. Through the “koko” model, cooked form of the product was also sold in various package types and sizes including rubber, cup and bowl that ensured across board affordability. • Acceptability: The product’s taste was welcoming by consumers and was competitively priced compared to competing products. Again, the packaging was also appealing compared to that of competitors.
<p>Inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership: The ownership was quite a problem on one of the sales’ channel but largely insignificant. Yedent’s independent sales & marketing force (SMF) complained a lot about inadequate support to facilitate and motivate their sales effort. However, the “Koko” partners were deeply involved in every step in the planning and deployment of model. They were also supported with promotional materials to enhance their point of sales area. This created some amount of ownership. • Risks: The main risk found with “Koko”/night tea partnership sales model was potential brand reputation tarnish. Sometimes the “koko” sellers’ resort to alternative (adulterated) Tombrown when supply of Maisoyforte TOMBROWN slightly delays. That can result in consumer quality compromise issues which will be associated with the brand.

3. Preconditions for replication

Proper Selection and Engagement of "Koko"/Night Tea Sellers

The most important first step in the "koko"/Night tea partnership and product branding strategy for enhanced sales and access to BoP is proper selection. As part of the selection, we paid particular attention to serious "koko"/Night tea sellers in terms of their business mindedness, hygiene (personality & point of sale) and clientele base or average consumer traffic. The second factor is the proximity of the seller to Yedent retail or distributor points. That will ensure easy access to the product by sellers and also reduce distribution cost. As part of the engagement process, we had thorough discussion with sellers on the product preparation and costing. Partners will always want to know their margins (profit) and viability of such partnership in terms of contribution to profit.

Invest in Training of Partners

Its very important to impart some basic product knowledge to the partners ("koko"/Night tea sellers) as indirectly they are promoting your brand and needs some basic knowledge on product. It is also important to take them through the appropriate way of cooking the product (Maisoyforte TOMBROWN) as well as the profit margin estimations.

Provision of Point-of-Sale Promotional Materials

This indigenous partnership model involved critical aspects of point-of-sale branding for sellers. The "koko"/Night tea sellers do their business in an unbranded situation. In order to enhance attention of BoP consumers at point of sale to Maisoyforte TOMBROWN, we distributed a number branded Yedent items to them. Specific items distributed were branded point of sale stand, aprons, branded table mart, branded ice chest and flyers. In addition, we also displaced samples of the product on tables at point of sale.

4. Results Achieved

The model was piloted from 2016-2017 with an initial (5) “Koko”/Night tea sellers located in Sunyani and Kumasi. These numbers were gradually grown from (5) to almost (50) “Koko”/Night tea partners doing an average sale of (3) cartoons per seller. This translated to a sale of (150) cartoons of Maisoyforte TOMBROWN per month alone on this channel.

Initially, Yedent was only using (2) channels; trade (distributors) and independent sales (sales & marketing force). The 2SCALE project brought on board the “koko”/Night tea partnership channel which has become an established route-to-market channel.

Through this partnership, about (50) women micro-enterprises business portfolio was diversified and incomes increased through the sales of Maisoyforte TOMBROWN.

Want to know more?

In case of further information on this pilot, please contact Kwame Ntim Pipim (Senior BoP Marketing Specialist) on kpipim@2scale.org. You can also refer to the links below for more information on the Yedent BoP pilot.

- <http://www.yedentghana.com/the-emerging-koko-distribution-strategy-an-essential-partnership-with-informal-porridge-retailers-in-ghana/>
- <http://www.yedentghana.com/presentation-of-marketing-paraphernalia-to-our-distributors-sunyani-august-2018/>

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