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In 2007 he founded the MAYER DE GROOT Marketing-Research and Consult network. Before that he was 7 years COO at Konzept & Analyse, vice president at Carat media agency and at Target Group, after an international career at Mars (petfood) and a start at Scholz & Friends advertising agency. He is a frequent speaker at conferences and author of numerous articles. For more information and exiting case studies see www.mayerdegroot.com

International brand guidance research leads to success

Management Summary

International brand guidance analysis paved the way to increased market share and profitability throughout Europe with an optimized and concentrated ice cream range. A clear understanding of the needs and market structure as well as the brands status in each country and in total Europe proved to be very helpful. Advertising spendings per brand and country could be weighted according to growth potential (target group size). Local brands were maintained, where necessary and profitable. Competitor brand's weaknesses were identified and exploited. In addition so far unsatisfied market gaps and market niches were discovered and used to client's full advantage. Subsequently more brand guidance analysis surveys were carried out in other European countries as well as in Asia.

Brand guidance research analysis is an unique method which combines the advantages of image analysis, market status analysis and segmentation, concept test and classic market gap analysis. The results go beyond a mere status description because the analysis shows how the market position of a brand can be further optimized. Special analysis also ensures that the uniqueness of the brand, its main competitors and its volume source can be reliably rated. We know of no other method which provides such reliable forecasts of the optimization direction which appears most promising for the relaunch of an existing brand and what changes in the market are to be expected after the launch. The same is true for new brand launches. - **Four case studies indicate the opportunities.**









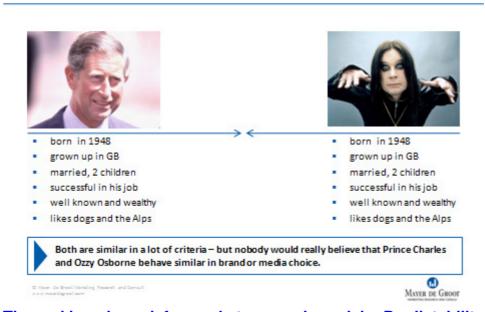
International brand guidance research leads to success

Effective research needs firm conceptual models of the mechanisms by which markets operate and evolve. This is equally true for both qualitative and quantitative analysis. It is important that the research results are actionable. However, above all it is essential that they should correspond to reality.

Market research history is littered with the corpses of once fashionable techniques which were based on unrealistic assumptions or models of market behaviour. This is namely true for the large majority of market segmentation and positioning models which were based e.g. on sociodemographics or psychological criteria only. Market segmentation surveys in the sixties and seventies of the last century have proven that usually no significant sociodemographic differences exist between users of competitive offers. (e.g. Sissors et al. 1996 p. 279; Jones 1986 p. 53)

"Marketing ... has pulled advertisers back buying 18 to 49 years old (or whatever). Everyone in the business knows it makes no sense. But we still do it." (White, Admap 2005). The "sociodemographic twins" Prince Charles and Ozzy Osborne demonstrate the low effectiveness of sociodemographic target group definitions.

Deficits of Segmentations based on Sociodemographics



The real bench mark for market research models: Predictability

People are, of course, different on nearly any questions we choose to ask and it is possible to cut up a specific market according to any demonstrable difference between consumers. However, we have to remind ourselves in market research and marketing that unless these differences manifest themselves in purchasing behaviour, the market segments have a questionable for marketing strategy.

Therefore in this article we will deliver the proof in one international example and four case studies that our approach lives up to its promise.

The marketing objective defines the information requirements

It is the objective of marketing to persuade the consumer to change his preference in favour of the own brand. However, the consumer will only switch his current main brand in favour of an alternative product, if he or she perceives the "new" product to be able to offer him or her substantially more benefits than his actual main brand. - Which informations are really necessary in marketing to succeed?

1. Needs structure

Consumers usually prefer available brands which correspond most closely with their individual ideals, demands and wishes of which they are most often not even consciously aware. This means that market research and marketing must understand the individual needs structure of the consumer in order to optimize your product's ability to meet better these consumer needs.

It is vital that you are able to answer the following questions:

- What benefits or performance expectations are relevant in your specific market?
- How many consumer groups with different or varying need structures do exist?
 (⇒ market segmentation)
- Which basic benefit expectations or needs must definitely be met for (nearly) all target groups?
 (⇒ basic category benefit)
- Which needs are (additional) benefits which can be translated into product concepts and implemented as brands?
- How important are emotional benefits in relation to product-specific benefits?

2. Brand status and product structures

In order to be better than other brands on the market it is necessary to gain a status description of the market. Market research and marketing must understand what the existing brand landscape looks like and which purchase relevant reasons determine the choice of your brand or its competitors.

The more you are in a position to explain the perceived exchangeability and preference relationship of brands in the relevant sets of different consumer groups, the more you can describe the total market and the market structure as well as the brand status. This is another important requirement to be met for marketing success.

- Which criteria do consumers use to structure this market? How do they perceive the market?
 (⇒ perceptual brand and market mapping, etc.)
- How do category users perceive existing brands? What emotional benefits, product performances and product features are associated with them (market structure)?
- How are the individual brands positioned? What makes them in the consumer perception unique (usp = unique selling proposition)? How well are specific benefits associated? How well are different market seaments attracted?
- Which cause-and-effect-chain determines the selection of individual main brands? Why are other brands also purchased (eg. in different occasions, situations)?

3. Ideal requirements

If all consumers had no additional wishes and desires, there would be no motivation for change. However, this is most often not the case. Therefore we measure also the needs, motives and desires of individual consumers in the sense of an ideal requirement profile. The ideal defines the marketing target, in which an existing offer should be optimized. - Brand loyalty and reach increases when the difference between consumer (ideal) wishes and your brand's performance is perceptibly reduced.

- How well are the consumers' ideal product wishes met by the existing range of brands or offers?
- What are the perceived product performance and / or benefit deficits of individual brands?
- Are the deficits primarily caused by the perceived product performance? Or are they mainly influenced by emotional benefits or the personality image of a typical user created of that brand?
- How many consumers do exist who perceive similar deficits? Is this target group big enough for economical success? What possibilities exist to satisfy these needs with a repositioning of your brand or a new brand?

4. Brand positioning

Brand positioning belong to the most important and difficult decisions in marketing. Positioning often implies a segmentation commitment – unless you can dominate the core category benefit - an overt decision to ignore large parts of the market and concentrate only on certain segments, namely those interested in the benefits and associations selected for the brand. Such an approach requires commitment and discipline, because it is not easy to turn your back on potential buyers. Yet the effect of generating a distinct, meaningful position is to focus on the target segments and not be constrained by the reaction of other segments.

Our research approach provides significant help to take the right positioning decision by grouping consumers together who have similar needs structure and relevant gaps (in the sense of perceived deficits to their ideal requirements). The results are different consumer target groups with alternative need structures and requirement profiles. These specific need structure and requirement profiles simply show the reason for buying. This reason for buying forms the brand concept which is encapsulated in the (new or relaunch) brand positioning.

Information requirements for repositioning decisions

Before you consider to reposition your brand you should be able to answer the following questions:

- What are the performance and benefit deficits of that specific brand? How well is the core benefit of the product category satisfied? Which additional benefits are associated and how relevant are they for brand choice? (⇒ increase in brand loyalty)
- Do other brands exist which are able to satisfy better the needs of your brand users? How dangerous are these competitive offers for your brand?
- Which deficits perceive non-users of your brand or non-main brand users?
- Are these deficits primarily product performance or product claim related?
- Or are the deficits primarily emotional or influenced by the personality image of a typical user associated by that brand? What should be improved to enhance identification with that brand?
- How many consumers do exist who experience these deficits in a similar way? What possibilities are there of satisfying these needs by a new brand or offer?
- How large is the size and the usage frequency of your new (repositioning) target group? Is the volume size big enough for economical success?

Information requirements for new brands

- Are there brands which show definite weaknesses both in brand loyalty and in the distinctiveness of their positioning? Are these weaknesses universal or do they affect only a specific proportion of consumers?
- If such weaknesses exist, what would a new brand have to do in order to attack this brand directly, in order to be clearly and obviously "better" for the consumer?
- Is a superior benefit communication the most promising route to success? Or is it possible to demonstrate a superior product performance? Do market niches exist which are not yet occupied by existing brands? Can unsatisfied needs or need profiles be identified?
- What product attributes are required in this category? What brand benefits are expected in this market?
- Are the new brand's chances more due to its product performance or more due to emotional benefits?
- How large is the size and how intensive is the usage frequency of your new brand's target group? Is it big enough for profitable marketing?

The potential effects of strategic analysis for your brand

Brand guidance research analysis explores all relevant areas by means of both open and closed questions. It has also proved helpful to measure always both rational and emotional benefits as well as reason whys. Important conclusions for your brand can be obtained from subsequent data analysis.

- Brand loyalty increases when the difference between consumer wishes and brand performance is perceptibly reduced.
- Consumer coverage increases when the brand is perceived to satisfy relevant needs better than other competing offers.
- Usage frequency increases the more your brand succeeds in dominating the core category benefit
- The uniqueness of the brand depends on whether the brand can occupy a relevant benefit for itself in the consumer's perception. If it succeeds in doing so, then it is virtually impossible for subsequent brands to steal significant market share from the "original".

International brand guidance research leads to success in the ice cream market

Ice cream market segmentation and positioning surveys were carried out in five European countries: in France, Italy, Germany, Great Britain and Sweden. In total 5.200 face to face interviews were conducted, which were spread across each country.

The two major markets - impulse ice cream (away from home) and the household tub sector (in home usage) were treated separately. These two ice cream markets differ widely in occasions for consumption, benefit expectations and target groups. In this publication we will focus on the market for household tubs (in home usage) only. This market again can be segmented into two sectors: family packs and multi packs.

Overall objectives of the international market segmentation and positioning deficit analysis

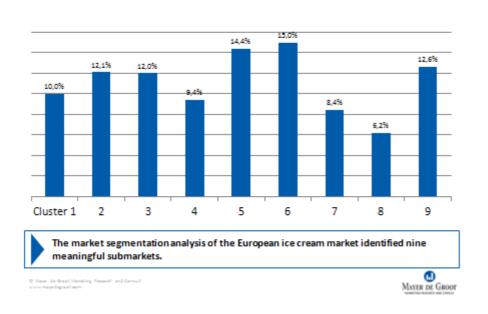
The international ice cream manufacturer intended to concentrate its marketing support on a limited number of European brands, which should meet all major motives for ice cream consumption. The key market research objectives were:

- to quantify different ice cream usage motivations and segment the market
- identify market gaps with unsatisfied needs or need profiles
- to identify differences in eating and usage occasion by brand
- to determine which brands best satisfy specific motivations in different usage occasions
- to identify target "clusters" of consumers in terms of attitudes and usage and determine their sizes
- to identify and prioritize "need or desire gaps" in the consumers ice cream brand repertoires
- to identify potential new usage occasions and usage occasions in which consumption frequency could be increased

Nine relevant European ice-cream submarkets

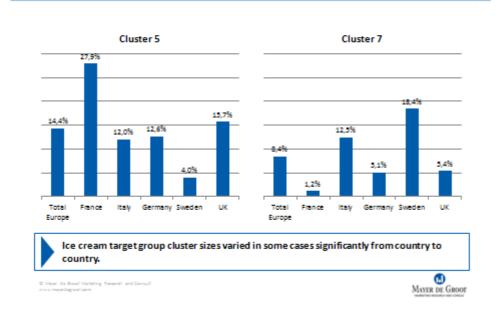
In this publication we would like to concentrate on a few key findings. The market segmentation analysis of the European ice cream market identified nine meaningful submarkets.





However, target group cluster sizes varied in some cases significantly from country to country. This proves that a "typical American" approach to treat Europe as "one country", would have caused unsatisfactory results in some countries - as we have observed in the past.

Sizes of specific target group segments in different European countries

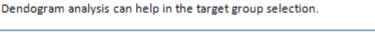


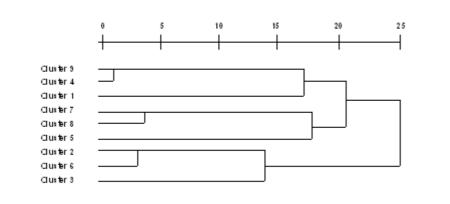
Classical market gap analysis

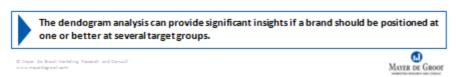
The analysis of the nine target group clusters per country often showed that some clusters were really crowded by different offers. In some countries client's brand(s) enjoyed a dominant position for example in the premium ice cream submarket, whilst in other countries this position was held by one of the competitor's brands. On the other hand some clusters were neglected. In one European country, for example, a huge target group existed, but its specific need structure had not been met so far by an appropriate product. The client used this "golden opportunity" to full advantage.

Should a brand be targeted at one or several target groups?

Dendrograms are the graphic representation of groupings calculated using hierarchical cluster analysis. In this case different target group clusters are grouped by similarities. The sooner two clusters can be joined by a vertical line the greater is the similarity between them. The positions on the horizontal line show the distances at which the target groups can be linked. The dendogram analysis can therefore provide significant insights if a brand should be positioned at one or better at several target groups.







Competitive image profile analysis provides significant insights for (re-) positioning

PIMS (Profit Impact on Marketing Strategy), the most sophisticated and extensive business information data base has proven that one factor above all others drives market success and profitability: perceived relative quality advantage versus competition. However, it has also been observed by PIMS that most companies do not have good measures of perceived relative quality.

Quality of a particular product or service offer is whatever the individual customer perceives it to be rationally or feels it to be emotionally. However, humans do not evaluate offers in absolute terms, but focus on relative advantage of one offer over another in order to reduce complexity and allow more mental rational capacity for other (vital) issues. (Ariely 2008)

For brand choice individual customers use a simple bench mark: the actual brand most often purchased, thus reducing complexity. The current main brand offers individually the "best problem solution" of all known alternatives. It determines which perceived combination of emotional benefits and

factual features at what specific level satisfies optimally the individual need structure of all competitive offers specific respondents are aware of.

In the competitive image profile analysis we use the perception of the individual main brand as "bench mark". A positive score means that a feature or benefit has achieved a better evaluation than the main brand on that image dimension within a certain group of respondents. On the other hand, a negative rating identifies a relative weakness. From a brand's perspective this analysis provides valuable insights. For example: Does your brand has a taste, an appearance (e.g. appetite appeal) or a creaminess problem which should be addressed in your next relaunch in order to realize the highest additional growth momentum for your brand? Or is it better to address a perceived emotional weakness of your brand? — Brand guidance research provides you with concrete answers. Four case studies indicate the opportunities.

How Languese Cremissimo achieved Market Leadership in 3 Years - after 20 years of failed Attempts [German Marken (Brand) Award 2003]

Langnese Cremissimo definitely belongs to the best and **most successful brand re-positionings** in recent years in Germany and has been awarded with the "Brand (Marken) Award" in 2003. This case study proves again that **superior knowledge of emotional and rational consumer needs and barriers establishes sustainable key competitive advantage.** In absence of that information it is nearly impossible to lead a brand systematically to higher turnover and profitability, because more than 95% of all brand choice decisions are taken subconsciously (modern brain research).

Until 1979 Langnese (sister company of Walls in UK) dominated all relevant ice cream market segments in Germany. This situation changed significantly when Schöller-Mövenpick was launched which created a new premium ice cream segment. The success based on perceivable ingredient chunks such as pieces of nuts, fruit or chocolate which were unique at that time and provided proof of superior quality.

In the following two decades Langnese has launched five attempts to regain market leadership in premium ice cream segment. However these failed to achieve that objective in spite of superior a & p support. Langnese Bouquet and Langnese Superbe were more or less instant flops. Maxim's launched in 1982 performed somewhat better. In 1989 Carte D'Or (which achieved great success internationally but not in Germany) and later I'Cestelli followed. But over time Mövenpick succeeded to strengthen its market leadership even further.

Langnese Cremissimo:
Success with the superior Reason why of Creaminess



Langnese's problem was that they didn't unearth the real emotional and rational reasons for brand choice using numerous traditional qualitative and quantitative research techniques.

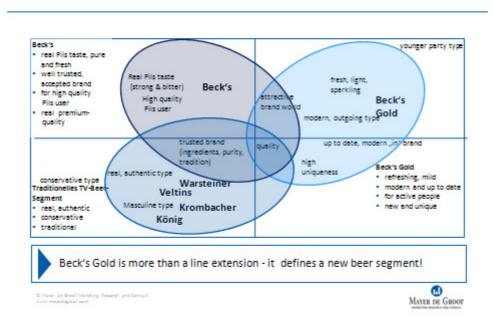
Innovative projective (nonverbal) techniques and market segmentations identified emotional market drivers and the most effective cause-and-effect-chains. Using this insight advantage Langnese Cremissimo succeeded in capturing the strategic high ground. Langnese Cremissimo concentrated their efforts on establishing the superior "creaminess" reason why for the core indulgence benefit within the premium ice cream segment.

In only three years Langnese Cremissimo became market leader in the premium ice cream market. An outstanding achievement - which has eluded the previous attempts with Langnese Bouquet, Superbe, Maxim's, Carte D'Or and I'Cestelli – since the launch of Schöller-Mövenpick in 1979. Volume source of Langnese Cremissimo were mainly Schöller-Mövenpick and private label premium ice creams.

Beck's strikes Gold with German Precision - German Marken (Brand) Award 2004

Beer was supposed to be old fashioned and did not fit the modern life style of young people in Germany, until Beck's Gold was created. The Beck's brewery showed the industry how a new beer can be launched successfully – against the general negative development trends in the German beer market. Beck's Gold instantly succeeded to become one of the hip drinks via unearthening and appealing to the true desires of younger target groups coupled with an innovative marketing mix.

It may be appropriate to point out that Beck's (in the green bottle) enjoys a somewhat different image in Germany compared to a lot of other countries, partly due to a different advertising history. Beck's is perceived in Germany as a rather *strong*, *slightly bitter* beer which initially restricted the available growth potential. After all, the size of the *slightly bitter* beer segment is only around 10%. - 90% of all German beer drinkers prefer a somewhat milder beer. To make matters worse, there is also a general trend towards milder beers, mostly amongst younger consumers who grew up with sweet soft drinks.



BECK'S GOLD creates a new Beer-Segment

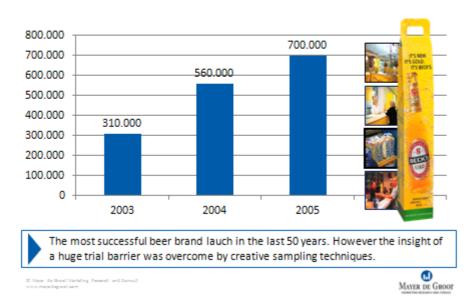
Having taken heed of this knowledge, Beck's planned to develop a Beck's branded new product (by no means a replacement for the existing Beck's!) for people who find the Beck's brand world appealing, but who up until now have felt excluded on product level.

Consumer attitudes and perceptions played a key role throughout the total product development and research process. In each phase various tests and analysis were carried out. The research technique

used in this case (nowadays called *\$ales Effect test system methods*) yielded unusual good fit between forecasted and real market values. The deviation of predicted sales and real sales volume, which exceeded 310.000 hl in the first year, was only 1,719 hl (=0.1%). In addition the low cannibalisation rate was forecasted reliably. The surveys also provided sound advice in other marketing decisions. Beck's Gold delivers the proof that superior qualitative market insights and reliable quantitative market research methods can pave the way to even greater success of new brands and products.

In 2008 Beck's Gold enjoyed a market share of more than 85 per cent in its segment in spite of numerous me too products launched in recent years. Beck's Gold is considered to be the most successful new product launch in the last 50 years in the German beer market.





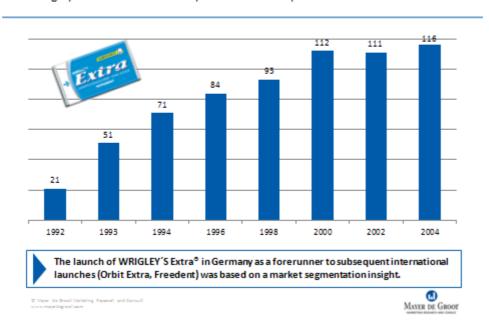
How to achieve and defend successfully a 90% segment share. WRIGLEY'S Extra / Orbit Extra / Freedent

The success story of WRIGLEY'S Extra and its international sister brands started with an observation in the early 90's: The majority of adults stopped using chewing gum in public when they started to work because they perceived it as socially not acceptable. Therefore innovative qualitative techniques were used to unearth adults' motives as well as barriers to chew gum. The benefit of reducing the incidence of tooth decay showed promising market potential, namely within the target group of people above 20 years of age.

The launch of WRIGLEY'S Extra in Germany as a forerunner to subsequent international launches was well qualified through qualitative and quantitative research tools. On the qualitative side projective market research techniques provided in depth insights into the emotional and factual needs as well as barriers of relevant target groups. These insights ensured that all marketing-mix elements, such as on pack communication, advertising and below the line activities, had initial and sustainable impact.

On the quantitative side market segmentation proved that a larger target group was interested in dental care benefits of chewing gum. Subsequently simulated market simulations checked various launch scenarios for economic viability, which indicated substantial market potential.

These assessments proved to be true also in the long run: In 2008 Wrigley's Extra enjoyed a share of 34 per cent in the total German gum category and a share of more than 90 per cent within the dental care chewing gum segment. Sales of Wrigley's Extra to consumer exceed 100 Million Euro, making it to one of the biggest brands in sugar confectionery in Germany.



Wrigley Extra Turnover Development in Germany

WRIGLEY has also successfully exploited the dental healthcare proposition of chewing gum in numerous countries around the globe. For historic reasons and because consumer learn cumulatively, different brands have been used. In France Freedent dominates the dental care chewing gum segment with a share of roughly 70 percent in 2008 and enjoys a share of roughly 25% in the gum category. - The same is true for Orbit in the UK. - The brand Orbit is also associated with a unique success story in Eastern Europe. Orbit is the leading Chewing Gum brand from Prague to Vladivostok and from Murmansk to the Caspian Sea with market shares in the chewing gum segment around or even above 60 per cent in 2008. This innovation started in Germany and became a great international success.

Concrete Optimisation Advise paved the Way to great success: Sheba

Market segmentation studies indicated the existence of a super premium catfood segment. But several attempts of the petfood subsidiaries of the Mars group had failed to launch a new brand above its own market leading premium brand Whiskas. The last attempt some years ago in Germany resulted in a test market flop with "Cleo" in flat premium cans.

The R & D department had developed a new super premium product with high quality ingredients which was offered in an innovative packaging (deep drawn bowl).

This "last" super premium catfood attempt was tested thoroughly by the Mars group. Market simulation and a test market in northern Germany were carried out. But results were contradictory. A market simulation – based on the so called "Relevant Set approach" – predicted a flop but wasn't able to provide any concrete optimisation advice. Sales development in the test market, however, was positive.

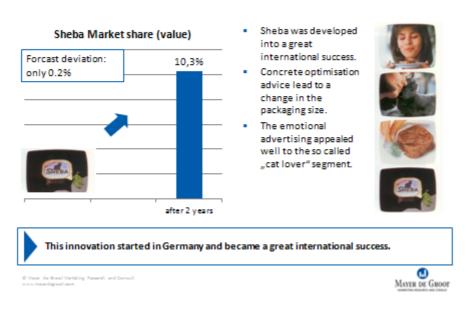
Given the strategic importance and the potential high investment in a new packaging line, it was decided to use a second market simulation method. In the method selection process the objectives, proven reliable determination of market potential and the ability to provide concrete optimisation advice, were the key influencing factors. It was obvious that these criteria would play an essential role for the strategic launch decision in Europe. Mars decided to use a method for the first time, which is nowadays named "\$ales Effect market simulation".

The second simulation forecasted a larger market opportunity. The analysis also indicated the existence of a larger optimisation potential group within the so called "cat lover" segment. These respondents didn't perceive a superior cat enjoyment compared to their current cat food main brand. – This contradicted significant cat preference results in numerous blind product tests. – Their perception was influenced by the observation that their cats didn't finish a Sheba pack size per meal (no empty "plate proof"). Additionally research indicated that the initial Sheba 150 gram size was too big for an average cat per meal. Therefore, when Sheba was launched nationally its packaging size was reduced to 100 gram. This change influenced the perceived cat preference of Sheba positively and convinced the larger optimisation potential group to switch to Sheba.

Advertising effect tests also provided sound advice in other marketing decisions. In one of the tested TV commercial alternatives Sheba was decorated with a dill weed. Cat owners with a more rational attitude to their cat disliked and rejected that idea. But for the highly emotionally involved "cat lover" segment this decoration scene was perceived as ultimate proof of quality. That scene significantly enhanced their trial purchase intention and was therefore maintained in the commercial, making it one of the most effective commercials ever broadcasted for Sheba.

The nowadays named "\$ales Effect Market Simulation" yielded a good fit between forecasted and real market values. The deviation of the predicted market share was only 0.2 per cent points. This innovation started in Germany and became a great international success.

Sheba: Market Segmentation Insights and concrete Optimisation Advise paved the Way to great international success



Management Summary (see first page)

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