

The Secret's Out!
TENA's mission to break the taboo
around incontinence

MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

The authors prepared this case solely as a basis for class discussion and not as an endorsement, a source of primary data, or an illustration of effective or ineffective management. Although based on real events and despite occasional references to actual companies, this case is fictitious and any resemblance to actual persons or entities is coincidental.

From clinical and medical to innovative and stylish

With Silhouette Noir, TENA, the market leader in the category that focuses on urinary incontinence and bladder issues, had the opportunity to change the associations and perceptions that haunted the stigma of incontinence. Implementing this opportunity was risky which partially is due to the fact that TENA already made small changes to its visual identity in 2009. Nonetheless, the brand aspired to express a new identity through an experimental strategy with its disruptive product, moving away from its former discreet approach.

Due to the brand's highly prioritised investments in market research, TENA was once more made aware of the insight that women feel shameful and uncomfortable about their incontinence. The information became apparent through focus groups which presented that women love to have their sense of style and femininity. They each emphasised how long they have been waiting for an alternative to the usual, unfeminine, adult diapers. The studies also revealed that one out of three women suffer from incontinence in the United Kingdom (UK). Thus, this was TENA's chance to take advantage of the acquired knowledge and introduce its latest innovation by taking the leap and follow a greater and bolder approach. With the new game-changing product, women could finally feel more confident and sexier about themselves whilst living the full life they always wanted without having to compromise this. The product offers the same functions as the company's usual adult diapers do but differs in being presented as fashionable, black and fitting underwear. This way, the brand can adhere to its true purpose to empower its consumers and make them feel good about themselves.

As a result of these insights, the brand wanted to continue to challenge the current perceptions that the brand used to be associated with being clinical, medical, not feminine and for the older population. Instead, they aimed to change such perceptions to alternatively become associated with being innovative, modern, relevant, feminine and even inspirational. The brand used its 'old' image as a starting point in order to create its new brand identity by collaborating with the agency Bulletproof. As a part of TENA's new brand identity, the brand also aimed to change its visual identity. In order to communicate its wider societal goal, TENA also collaborated with the advertising agencies AMV BBDO and Finn to determine how they could rebrand and convey this new identity, starting with the launch of TENA Silhouette Noir.

I Will Be Me

Together with the agencies, TENA created a communication platform to share their new identity and positioning which is called 'I Will Be Me'. This message came to live by showing women who are living 'full' lives regardless of dealing with incontinence. The objective was to provide directness and honesty to the consumers in order for them to resonate with the brand. A part of this new communication platform was the launch of 'Secret's Out' with Victoria's Secret inspired posters as TENA wanted to play on the language of other fashion-oriented brands that usually show perfect-looking women. Here, the secret refers to one out of three women suffering from incontinence. Instead, the brand aspired to show that women are actually not perfect at all and represents this by showing three empowered, beautiful looking women with different body shapes and ages on its posters. The meaning behind this was to say that real women have incontinence and that this secret is officially out. Anna McCrory, senior brand manager of TENA UK, reflects this vision in the following statement:

"We are incredibly proud of this new product and the exciting campaign we've devised to launch it. Silhouette Noir truly breaks new ground, helping women to feel sexy, confident and able to wear what they like without being restricted by the colour or shape of their underwear, an important step towards normalising incontinence." (McCrory, 2019)

The 'Secret's Out' posters were displayed in popular areas such as Oxford Circus in London, showcasing the new image of the brand. However, the TENA team did not perceive this out-of-home (OOH) campaign to be enough and therefore chose to step up its game by extending its reach through social media and a nationwide PR programme, making sure the new campaign blew up. On Twitter the hashtag #Iwillbeme was promoted and on Facebook people could support the campaign by tagging TENA through @IWillBeMe. Additionally, the brand collaborated with influencers on Instagram to promote their Silhouette Noir products and raise awareness (**Exhibit 1**). Beyond that, a 48-sheet billboard was put up as well as digital 6-sheet displays, showing the 40+ women wearing the Silhouette Noir all-black underwear.

Successfully challenging the stigma

The new campaign clearly distinguished TENA from its competitors, driving key performance indicators through the roof and reaching a substantial audience. As a result, the brand started a conversation amongst a wider society as, against expectations, older women are not the only ones being challenged by incontinence.

The brand even managed to reach individuals beyond their target group. After the launch, more mainstream media caught interest in TENA and started to distribute stories about TENA's bold campaign. Additionally, in the first week after the launch there was a 300 per cent increase of people visiting TENA's website. Many requested samples of the products, resulting in an immense spike of significant conversion. TENA's trial of their Silhouette Noir pants' communication strategy proved to be successful and brand statements show that TENA's image was transforming into the desired modern and innovative brand that helps consumers to feel confident and stylish.

As TENA had been working with Bulletproof on establishing a new identity and packaging design since 2016, the successful Silhouette Noir campaign gave a significant push forward and the reassurance the brand needed (**Exhibit 2**). The purpose of TENA was now crystal clear; the brand wants to actively promote and improve the lives of people dealing with incontinence through the offering of enhanced products. Its new design concept 'Reassuring Performance' has changed the clinical and medial perception that the brand's products used to have to a more empowering, modern and visual language. At the same time, TENA took the chance to change its logo and turned it into a modern version that stands for liberation from stigma. This sense of freedom is further highlighted by the flowing blue lines (**Exhibit 3**). This new logo is distributed consistently across TENA's products and illustrates the natural feel of its offerings.

During its Investor Day in 2019, the brand announced that they aspire to continue its strong innovation programme as well as increase its current investments in advertising and promotions. This indicates that TENA further pursued its new identity by challenging taboos surrounding the topic of incontinence, showing positive prospects for the company's future. To illustrate TENA's success, in 2019 the brand was valued at £127.9 million and experienced a growth of 5 per cent.

A creative and bold approach for the greater good

Today, TENA is still loyal to its new identity, including its bold approach to tackle taboos through the launch of ground-breaking campaigns. The 'I Will Be Me' campaign continued to be a highly relevant platform and allows the brand to share its values publicly in an inspiring and innovative manner (**Exhibit 4**). As this campaign was highly popular in the UK, it was also launched in other European countries and in the United States (US) in 2020. The launch in the US focused on the 'Intimates 100% breathable' product range and carried the same message, referring to empowered women with incontinence. The centre point of the US campaign was a film, starring a middle-aged woman who expresses herself in an honest and surprising manner,

saying that she feels good about herself because she is taking good care of her intimate skin. This video was particularly special as it was shot during the COVID-19 pandemic and thus being the first virtual campaign shoot of the brand.

Another campaign that represents TENA's rebranding success is the one called #Ageless. Also introduced in 2020, it is a part of the 'I Will Be Me' platform but focuses more on the perspective of sex and intimacy. The brand created an advertisement together with AMV BBDO that features women over the age of 55 that are openly talking about their perspectives on sex in relation to their bodies and incontinence. The script was actually created by the women themselves and includes their own opinions and real-life experiences. The campaign was supported by TENA's new insights, revealing that whilst 44 per cent of women below 35 years assume that incontinence will negatively influence their sex lives, it is solely 10 per cent of women over 50 years that actually state this is true.

These campaigns provide adequate examples of how TENA's new identity uses a creative and bold approach for the greater good and increases to become a valuable source of inspiration.

References

McCrory, A. (2019). Lingerie: A new bold and 'sexy' Victoria's Secret catwalk style and campaign, Available online: <https://www.themarketingblog.co.uk/2019/04/a-new-bold-and-sexy-victorias-secret-catwalk-style-ad-campaign/> [Accessed 3 February 2021]

Appendix

Exhibit 1 Silhouette Noir influencer collaborations on Instagram

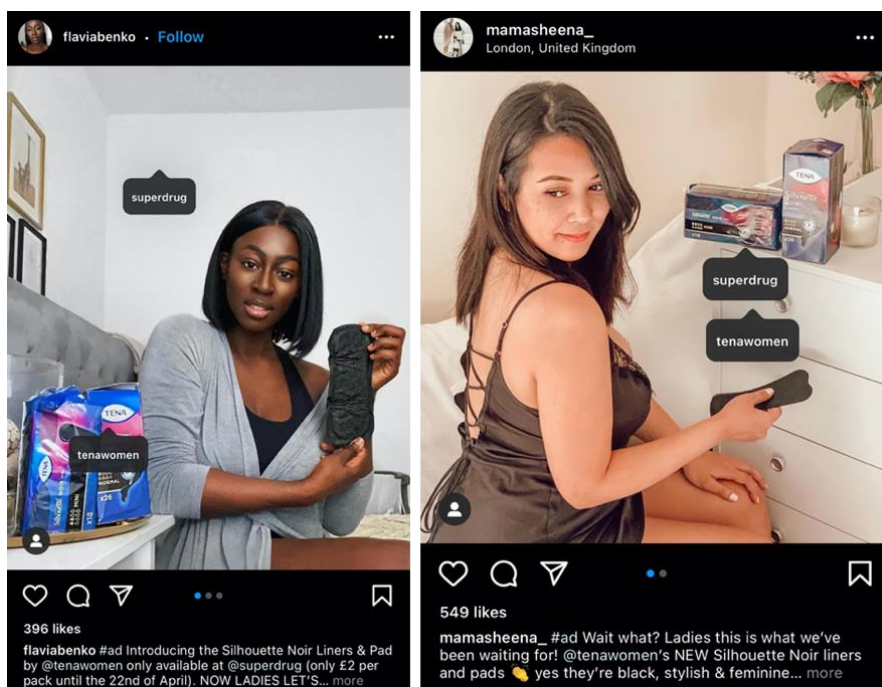
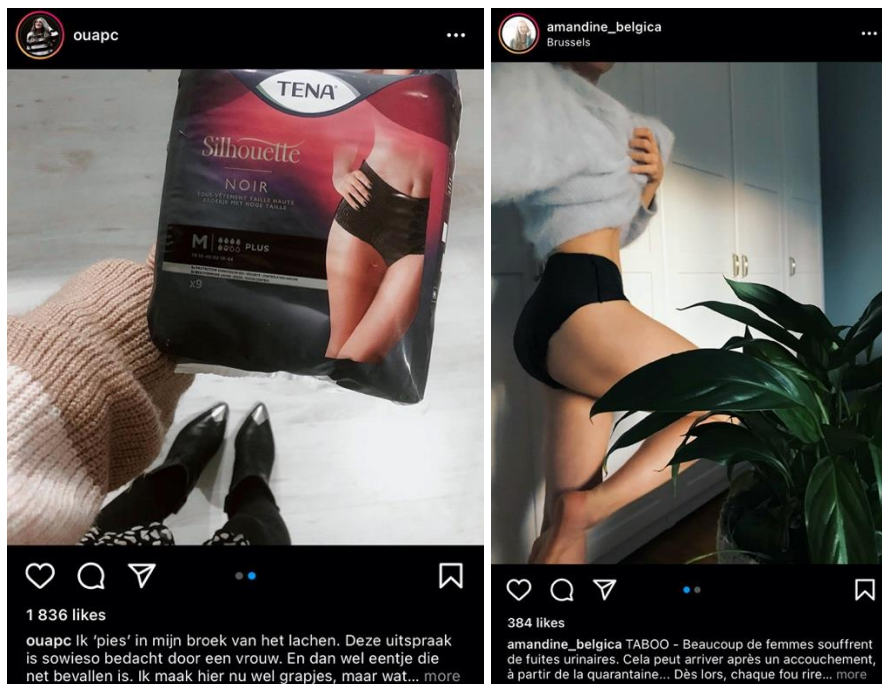


Exhibit 2 TENA's new packaging design

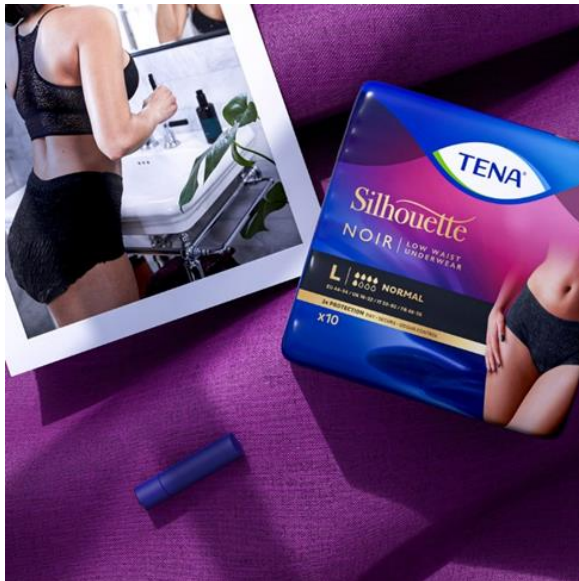


Exhibit 3 TENA's new logo from 2019 on



Exhibit 4 Video ad from the 'I Will Be Me' campaign

