



By Richard D. Czerniawski

REACH TO GO BEYOND THE COMPETITION

One of the meanings of the word “reach” is to go beyond limitations or capabilities to achieve a desired goal or destination. It suggests that we must stretch or extend what is expected, perhaps, to go where you had not been able—or others haven’t been able—to go. Therefore, I was dismayed when I came into possession of the current version of the REACH Toothbrush.

I'm the father of the REACH Toothbrush brand. I introduced it throughout the US while serving as Brand Manager at Johnson & Johnson in July 1977. (We were called Product Directors at the time, but I operated as a Brand Manager, or President of the Brand, given my experiences at Procter & Gamble, which I encourage all marketers to do. I address this subject in my forthcoming book, *AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing*, due out in March 2020.) The brand achieved the number one market share in its first Nielsen bi-monthly reporting period, despite double-digit out-of-stocks. It was a huge success with consumers from day 1 of its launch. The reason for the brand's success lay in its difference—a design, which translated to being able to get those hard to reach back teeth, and between teeth, 58% cleaner than conventional toothbrushes.

The REACH Toothbrush was designed by Human Factors’ Engineers at Tufts University. As a result, "form followed function," as opposed to the other way around—function following form—which was the standard for the category. Featuring an angled neck, shaped like a dental instrument, and a compact head, the REACH Toothbrush enabled consumers to reach and better clean those hard to reach back teeth. Its compact head was designed with two layers of bristles, longer soft bristles to clean along the gum line and reach in between teeth, and shorter hard bristles to scrub teeth clean. It was designed to brush away debris that others could not reach.

Today's REACH Toothbrush is nothing like the brush I introduced in 1977. What is it like? It's like every other toothbrush in the category. It has a straight rather than angled neck and handle. It does not have a compact head nor two layers of bristles. Moreover, the bristles are of one grade—soft, medium, or hard. Instead of reaching to go beyond capabilities and other toothbrushes, the brand has regressed. There's no reason to purchase it on any basis other than a more favorable price point.

It's critical for us, marketers, to always reach to improve our performance and those of our brands so as not to be neutralized or, worse yet, overtaken by the competition. It is also essential that we never allow our products to slide into the realm of every other product in the category. Reach to go

beyond the competition and create brand loyalty.

Richard Czerniawski



Richard D. Czerniawski

1812 Yates Avenue
Pensacola, Florida 32503
847-312-8822
richardcz@bdn-intl.com
richardcz@me.com
www.bdn-intl.com