

COUNTRY: MALAYSIA  
BRAND: HEINEKEN  
2009

**WE  
SELL  
IN  
RECE\$SION  
OR  
ELSE**

COUNTRY: MALAYSIA  
 BRAND: HEINEKEN  
 PRODUCT TYPE/ DESCRIPTION: BEER  
 CAMPAIGN TITLE: GIVING UNBOTTLED

## MARKETING CHALLENGE

The year was 2008. And suddenly the economic downturn had become everyone's concern.

Consumer confidence reached an all-time low in Malaysia, falling 9 index points in 6 months, from 97 to 88<sup>1</sup>. And with that, Malaysians became the world's third greatest savers<sup>2</sup>, with more than half choosing to cope with rising costs by cutting down on their spending. Entertainment venues, bars, and restaurants were amongst those most affected. By Christmas, things had not improved.

As expected, an aggressive fight for Share-of-Throat began.

Consumers drink less during an economic downturn<sup>3</sup>. Already, Carlsberg Malaysia recorded that its fourth-quarter net income had plunged 61%<sup>4</sup> and could not pay special dividend for the first time in 9 years<sup>5</sup>.

Desperate to ensure Christmas remained a profitable period, the majority of beer brands hoped to win throats by pushing major price promotions. Value-brands Anchor and Skol started advertising more<sup>6</sup>, while new value-brands such as Jaz beer were introduced. At RM13.50, a bottle of Heineken® costs 33% more than a bottle of Anchor<sup>7</sup>, making it an immense challenge for Heineken® to stay true to its positioning as a 'premium brand, worth its premium price'.

How do we get drinkers to reach for a Heineken® this season?

## MARKETING OBJECTIVES

1. Increase sales whilst maintaining a premium price, as measured by an increase in incremental sales by 15%, compared to the same period last year.
2. Strengthen affinity with Heineken®, by an average of 20% increase in scores, on the following key brand equity measures:
  - “A brand worth paying extra for”
  - “Premium Brand”
  - “For people like me”
  - Number of Heineken® high-value drinkers

## CREATIVE IDEA

### The spirit of giving, unbottled

Heineken®'s target audience, 18-34 year old urban male drinkers, has low brand loyalty when it comes to the beer they choose to drink. Heineken®'s beer brand tracker showed that Heineken® high-value drinkers drink an almost equal amount of Heineken® to Carlsberg and Tiger, with Carlsberg actually being the number one beer they consume<sup>8</sup>. Choosing a cheaper product is the most likely decision for them, especially during this festive season. Therefore price promotions seemed the best way to gain consumer share.

Heineken® however, decided to do the unexpected.

Christmas marks the end of a year's hard work, and the beginning of fellowship and feasting, giving and receiving - and a time to splurge and spoil too. Unfortunately, with the signs of a worsening economy, many held back on unnecessary spending. Restaurants and shopping malls were visibly less frequented and year-end office parties were cancelled. Another commercialised Christmas was not what people were looking for.

So we decided to go back to *what Christmas is all about: giving.*

## COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

In an era of commercialised Christmas, Heineken® unbottled the spirit of giving, engaging consumers on several levels.

### Gifts to Heineken® Members

Loyal Heineken® Members received festive EDMs that drove to a microsite, while non-members could learn about this site through web banners. PR coverage also helped drive to web.

At the microsite, we created a digital advent calendar called “Crate Expectations” that bore the visual of a crate of Heineken® bottles. Every day, for 30 days, one of these bottles would light up at a random time, indicating that it is ready to be popped for a gift of the day. The first 50 of the day to click on the bottle received this gift!

All gifts were in the form of little luxuries, such as party privileges at nightspots, meal vouchers, movie vouchers, Heineken® merchandise and even short holidays. In the spirit of giving, there was no contest or promotion tied to the microsite at all. *Anticipation of gifts drove 440% more site visits than the previous year<sup>9</sup>.*

- Loyal Heineken® Members enjoyed an added advantage of getting the gifts - they could download a widget that animated, once a bottle was ready for popping. During this campaign, 78% of those who downloaded the widget actively used the widget – *setting a new record for Heineken®, with the highest percentage of widget users ever recorded for any of its campaigns<sup>10</sup>.*
- Non-Heineken® Members were encouraged to start a relationship with Heineken® through a short form that captured their essential information. *Acquisition of new Heineken® Members doubled compared to the previous year<sup>11</sup>.*

### Gifts of words to friends

At the microsite, users could also create their own e-greetings for friends – neon letters that lit up once opened.

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### Gifts to the community

Dazzling Christmas trees, made entirely out of Heineken® bottles, were set up along popular drinking belts in different locations in the country. Again, these trees had no contest or promotion linked to them. They were there to add to the spirit of Christmas – and build affinity amongst passersby.

### Gifts to the less fortunate

As part of the brand’s belief in the spirit of giving, the Heineken® brand team had their own charity drive for underprivileged children. A mini Heineken® bottle tree was set up in the Heineken® office foyer and decorated with tags that each bore a name of a child. All the staff needed to do was pick a name and buy a gift for that child. At a later date, the staff then visited these children and gave them their gifts. This was done without any commercial return. The positive reaction from staff showed such passion and belief in the spirit of giving, that Heineken® decided to repeat this drive the following year<sup>12</sup>.

And last, but definitely not least, Heineken® regained majority share-of-throat from Carlsberg to become the number one beer consumed by Heineken® high-value drinkers<sup>14</sup>, proving that Christmas really starts with giving.

### CAMPAIGN RESULTS AND MEASUREMENTS

While Heineken® expected to give through this campaign, it received a whole lot more in return.

#### Objective 1

Increase sales whilst maintaining a premium price, as measured by an increase in incremental sales by 15% compared to the same period last year.

Results: Heineken® sales increased by 46%<sup>13</sup> compared to the same period last year, more than 3 times the target.

#### Objective 2

Strengthen affinity with Heineken® by an average of 20% increase in scores on key brand equity measures:

Results:

Key brand measures	Heineken® past 2-year average (2007-2008)	Post-campaign (Jan 2009)	Growth
Brand worth paying extra for	23%	34%	+39%
Premium Brand	38%	51%	+34%
For people like me	33%	40%	+21%
'Adorers' (High Value Drinkers)*	15%	32%	+53%

\* This is the highest ever level of high-value young drinkers recorded by Heineken® (who agree with the statements 'It's the only brand I drink' and 'It's almost always the first brand I consider')<sup>14</sup>.



<sup>1</sup>Source: The global consumer confidence survey, 2008 (Nielsen). <sup>2</sup>Source: How Malaysians intend to spend their spare cash, 2008 (Nielsen). <sup>3</sup>Source: Alcohol business feels the pinch too, 2009 (Business Times). <sup>4</sup>Source: Carlsberg dives on profit slump, downgrade, March 2009 (Business Times). <sup>5</sup>Source: Carlsberg dives on profit slump, downgrade, March 2009 (Business Times). <sup>6</sup>Source: GAB competitive brand review, April-November 2008 (Agency research) <sup>7</sup>Source: Competitive brand pricing 2009 (Agency research). <sup>8</sup>Source: Beer Brand Tracker, Heineken, 18-34 year olds, Q4 2008 (Synovate). <sup>9</sup>Source: Heineken Christmas post-mortem study, Feb 2009 (Advertiser data). <sup>10</sup>Source: Heineken Christmas post-mortem study, Feb 2009 (Advertiser data) <sup>11</sup>Source: Heineken Christmas post-mortem study, Feb 2009 (Advertiser data). <sup>12</sup>Source: Heineken Christmas post-mortem study, Feb 2009 (Advertiser data). <sup>13</sup>Source: Ex-Dealer sales, Actual, in hls (Guinness Anchor Malaysia Sdn Bhd (GAMSBS)). <sup>14</sup>Source: Beer Brand Tracker, Heineken, 18-34 year olds, Q4 2008 (Synovate)