

Viagra: A Brand That Won't Go Away

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Ever mistake a ED commercial for a Miller Lite Commercial? You are not alone. In the last five years Erectile Dysfunction has become mainstream marketing material. What does Viagra do to win in this newly competitive market? Why is Viagra still the market leader? And lastly, how can that tiny little pill make an erection last for more than four hours?!?! Remember that brand? Well...it's back.

Content:

Remember That Brand? Well It's Back! One would have to travel to the back woods of the Appalachians or perhaps to the cave dwellings in the Southwestern canyons to find anyone who has not heard of Viagra. Viagra, the market-leader of male erectile dysfunction prescription drugs, continues to occupy valuable space in the mind of the male

consumer. What is so enchanting about an erectile dysfunction pill? How does Viagra have such appeal when it is the focus of late night comedy and radio morning shows? As consumers we seldom question a successful product. (Or maybe we just would rather not have to address or explain male erectile disorder more than we have to).

The consumer is exposed to a pill with a split personality. Viagra lives a double life: one of in-your-face comedy and one of universal solution. Despite the advertising that continually tests our comfort elasticity, Viagra's brand works harder than any other "miracle drug" to be accepted by the tempestuously self-conscious male population. Viagra's branding adheres and accommodates to the male population as a whole, not only to males with sexual difficulties. Viagra evaluates precepts regarding acceptance and community before considering the shock thresholds of consumers in general.

No one was prepared for the introduction of male erectile dysfunction pills into the mass market. No one anticipated the chain-reaction commercials of multiple brands, all of which utilizing paradoxical humor to attract attention. Even consumers desensitized to long lists of side-effects had to turn their heads at the possibility of a "four hour erection." That kind of threat stops the music and eye contact among the group of people in the room is avoided like the plague until the "funny guy" severs the tension by making a crass comment about a baseball bat. The Viagra brand applauds him.

Viagra, the pioneer pill for erectile dysfunction, assumed an initially subtle brandface of advice, information, and medical concern. This initial brand messaging tossed Viagra into the big black cauldron with Claritin, Lipitor, and other drugs. The brand was not reaching out to the male population effectively and subsequently had to consider how men think, feel, and most importantly, what they believe to be true.

What do advertising agencies and mass media companies do best? Raise the stakes and provide entertainment, which are characteristically male standards. Viagra had to exude coolness. Viagra had to force the brand into the public eye, and the best solution was laughter. Consequently, Viagra's logo was slapped onto the hood of Mark Martin's number six car, spokesman Bob Dole's stiff posture took on a whole new meaning, and professional baseball star Rapheal Palmero of the Baltimore Orioles assured men that it was okay to be batting a little below average. With slogans like "Remember that guy? Well, he's back!" Viagra took the market by storm and made erectile dysfunction look as "hip" as possible. In turn, Viagra became the laughing stock of the drug market. Afflicted males enthusiastically bought into the brand, embarrassed as ever.

Cialis, Levitra, and a few others surfaced, invading the market with imitations. Cialis and Levitra soon became the Miller and Coors of male erectile dysfunction, producing the same, if not more over-the-top messages in order to compete. Levitra featured Mike Ditka coaching affected men to "stay in the game to come out champions." Levitra also launched an attack from the female perspective. During halftime the consumer would see a highly attractive woman on the screen reveal how her man can last longer than the Energizer Bunny. Levitra pulled out all the stops to compete with Viagra, and they were not alone. Cialis, the brand that suggests, "He will never know when a moment will become the right moment," took up arms. After all a man never knows when his soldier will be called to duty.

Viagra is consistently in the consumers considered set for prescription drugs, and more importantly, Viagra has secured a positive space as "the solution" in the minds of all men. The male ego does not allow men to admit disability to anyone, including himself. Viagra's brand targets precepts of acceptance and community in a seemingly unorthodox manner, making jokes, providing endless comedic material. Viagra breaks consumers with its initial shock value and quickly proves to be a catalyst, lowering the

anxiety of men wanting help.

A man is more likely to go into a physician's office and request a prescription for Viagra than he is to ask for a solution for his erectile dysfunction. He is also more likely to ask for Viagra than to seek information for himself on the Internet or in a magazine. Perhaps Viagra provides security in the way that it labels the solution as opposed to describing the problem. Men with erectile dysfunction want to feel as though they are suffering from something ordinary like arthritis. Everyone has it. Everyone accepts it. Everyone gets help for it. The importance of "everyone," even if everyone is laughing at Viagra, is significant enough to raise the consumer temperature.

Viagra's commercials drops jaws, and erectile dysfunction is still taboo in our sex-crazed society, but Viagra will go down in history as one of the most influential drugs of all time because the brand succeeded in dropping anchor in the mind of the male consumer. The acceptance of Viagra confirms that the precepts prevail as miracle drugs for products of even the most self-conscious nature. The consumer may gaze at the screen contemplating how much money Viagra pays its spokesmen, but at least he knows that everyone is watching.

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