



# Bisleri means Bisleri, not 'any packaged water'...

*By Abid Hussain Barlaskar , afaqs!, New Delhi | In Advertising  
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*... is the message in the brand's new spot. For years Bisleri has been synonymous with its segment - while that's a good position to be in, it can hurt sales.*

What happens when a brand becomes so well known that an entire category is identified by its name? The common perception is that the brand benefits. But that's not always the case. Not in the case of Bisleri, a bottled drinking water brand which lent an eponymous identity to the entire bottled drinking water space. Such equity brought about negative progress when the brand's rivals started riding on the 'Bisleri' identity.

For example, a thirsty customer seeks a bottle of 'Bisleri' and the shopkeeper hands out a bottle of 'XYZ' packaged drinking water. The customer accepts it without question and quenches his thirst. Thus Bisleri, despite having top-of-the-mind recall, loses out when it comes to the brand's moment of truth. It's been the same for companies like - Xerox, Surf, Sintex, Mobil Oil and many more.



***Bisleri's latest campaign - 'Samajhdaar Jaante Hain Har Paani Ki Bottle Bisleri Nahin'***

Bisleri's latest campaign - Samajhdaar Jaante Hain Har Paani Ki Bottle Bisleri Nahin - featuring a couple of camels, asks consumers to insist on a bottle of Bisleri, even if the shopkeeper offers another brand. Of course, this way it's the shopkeeper who would need to be corrected.

Also, this problem, for Bisleri, has persisted for quite some time; so why did the brand take so long to address it?



***Anjana Ghosh***

Anjana Ghosh, director - Marketing and Business Development, Bisleri International, says that the brand has been 'dabbling' with the problem for a while, trying to solve it at the seller/shopkeeper's end. "It is a problem of retailers depriving consumers of their brand of choice because they want a higher profit margin. Earlier, we thought that we'd be able to solve it via awareness and loyalty programs, but we soon realised that it's the profit margins that influence retailer behaviour," Ghosh shares.

"While some consumers specifically want Bisleri, most just want a bottle of water when asking for Bisleri. With this campaign, we are closer to the latter and are asking them to get a Bisleri bottle when they ask for it. That way, the retailer will also have to sell Bisleri instead of pushing another brand. Moreover, the consumer is paying equally for all brands in the category," she adds.

Ghosh maintains that in the ad film, the setup of a small shop/outlet in the middle of a desert stands for an extreme situation, "It is set to denote a dire situation with limited options. Even a consumer, like the thirsty camel in a desert, walks up to the outlet and does not compromise on its choice. And despite being tired and thirsty, the consumer still insists on Bisleri and takes it.

"Water is an impulse purchase; when you want it... you want it," says Ghosh.



*Bisleri ad from 2011*

She admits that the problem exists everywhere - cities, towns and rural areas. "The campaign is based on many observations. I faced the problem too, while in Delhi. Shopkeepers would lure consumers with Bisleri but offer some other brand instead. And if customers insisted, they would come up with an excuse that the Bisleri bottles were not cold," Ghosh elaborates.

"We are the only brand in the category that advertises. And since it's a low involvement category and consumers have the brand name on their minds, doing just another ad would help all brands. Our study suggested that despite the top-of-the-mind option being Bisleri, consumers would settle for another brand. Thus, we decided that it's high time we address the consumer and say 'Hey! You are the one who has to make a choice'," explains Ghosh adding that the brand wants to run the campaign for about 6-8 months. "This is the initial burst and there are two other films in the pipeline featuring the camels. One of the upcoming ads also addresses the similar problem with Bisleri's 20-litre offering," she says.

Further down our conversation, Ghosh reveals that Bisleri is already on an innovation spree, mostly aimed at involving the consumer more. "We have seen cases where retailers tell consumers that there is no delivery or supply for Bisleri 20 litre gallons and they sell locally bottled inferior quality water for a high price. For that, we are setting up a toll-free number for consumers to contact the brand directly along with a dedicated website and mobile app where consumers can order online. Consumers will no longer need to depend on retailers for their brand of water," she adds.



***Sumanto Chattopadhyay***

Bisleri has planned to invest approximately INR 7-8 crores for the entire setup.

'Har paani ki Bottle Bisleri Nahin' has been crafted by Soho Square and is slated to be a 360-degree integrated campaign.

Sumanto Chattopadhyay, chairman and chief creative officer, Soho Square, says, "We took a creative approach that is really fresh, with the idea of using camels, our very own water experts. The challenge was the idea of changing the age-old way people have been using the brand name; it was both a challenge and a creative opportunity."



***Anuraag Khandelwal***

Anuraag Khandelwal, ECD and creative head, Soho Square (Mumbai) who is also the key creative mind behind the ad film says, "From our choice of brand ambassadors to

shooting with them in May in Rajasthan, it has been an unprecedented experience, both in terms of challenge and opportunity."

**Over to experts:-**



***Jagdeep Kapoor***



***MG Parameswaran***

Jagdeep Kapoor, CMD, Samsika Marketing Consultants says, "Every bottled water is not Bisleri adds authenticity while the camels bring memorability and the thirst background with the ship of the desert brings relevance. The brand will benefit by

repositioning other brands and positioning itself in a pure branded manner rather than the on-going generic image which allows others to pass Bisleri's goodwill."

About the timing, Kapoor says that although it's late, it's better than never.

"By persisting with the campaign with various executions and not changing the theme or platform, it is different, but the strategy meets the objective of being a brand rather than being seen as a commodity. It has to be a brand and not the category. Sometimes being the first mover may not be an advantage. It has strategically moved towards the right path of being a pure brand rather than a category plus brand," Kapoor adds.

MG Parameswaran, founder, Brand-Building finds it to be a disruptive piece of communication. He says, "Since you are dealing with a low involvement category like bottled water, the brand has taken the humorous route. In one sense it drives home the point that all bottled water is not Bisleri. Who better to endorse the brand than an animal who lives in the desert. They had attempted a Loch Ness monster-based film a few years ago; this one seems better executed."

"Since it is a highly cluttered market, it makes sense not to try and be ultra-rational about product superiority. There is, of course, the other big lurking fear that consumers are moving away from PET bottles to more Eco-friendly packs. So, Bisleri will have to figure out what to do then. One other issue is pricing - Bisleri charging a 10 per cent premium over competitors. Since, all competitors charge a similar price, can Bisleri charge higher because of its differentiation? This will be the final test," he adds.

**Source:** [https://www.afaqs.com/news/story/53930\\_Bisleri-means-Bisleri-not-any-packaged-water](https://www.afaqs.com/news/story/53930_Bisleri-means-Bisleri-not-any-packaged-water)