

Diva Cup Brand Analysis

Background

In the 1930s, the first menstrual cups were developed as a reusable externally worn cloth pads. The cups were made of natural gum rubber and enjoyed brief popularity until the advent of disposable cotton tampons, which could be discreetly worn and tossed out without the hassle of cleaning. As tampon technology increased, the cup fell by the wayside.

Fifteen years ago, Francine Chambers saw the need for an environmentally sound, dependable alternative to contemporary pads and tampons. She and her daughter, Carinne, founded a company bringing rubber and latex cups back to the market. In 2003 they developed a modern redesign, made from soft, top-quality silicone, to meet the needs of today's woman. They launched their own company, Diva International.

The Diva Cup is a medical-grade silicone menstrual cup. It is non-absorbing, non-reactive, and free of dyes, perfumes, additives. The Diva Cup is the only menstrual cup that meets the strict market approval guidelines of Health Canada.

Competitive Analysis

The Diva Cup is one of many options for menstruating women. Products can be broken up into two classes: Mainstream (which tend largely to be disposable) and

Alternative (which tend to be reusable).

Mainstream Competition

Tampax – By far the 800-lbs gorilla of feminine hygiene, the company currently holds the lion's share of the feminine hygiene market with its rayon-based tampons. The tampons come in absorbencies ranging from light to heavy, and are available with cardboard, plastic and compact applicators. The Tampax brand relies heavily on its history and the reliability and discretion of its products.

Always – Always is the leading brand in sanitary napkins, ranging in size from panty liners to "overnight" length and absorbencies from light to super. Their brand is associated with the comfort and absorbency of the pad materials and the extra protection afforded by oversized "wings" which keep the pad firmly in place.

o.b. – o.b. has the third-largest market share of the U.S. feminine hygiene market, and currently they are the only brand which carries applicator-less tampons, thus cutting down on waste and bulk of the product.

Kotex – Kotex makes both pads and tampons, and the brand touts the superior comfort of their products as well as the range of products offered, catering to girls' first periods, post-partum needs and menopausal-related needs.

Alternative Competition

Lunette – Lunette is another silicone menstrual cup manufactured in Finland. The cup is slightly narrower and taller than either of the two Diva Cup sizes. It is advertised as providing "Natural Freedom."

Moon Cup UK – The Moon Cup is a United Kingdom product, and is billed as "the healthy alternative to tampons." It is shorter and wider than the Diva Cup, and

includes a much longer retrieval stem.

The Keeper – The Keeper is identical to the Moon Cup except that it is made from latex rubber, and thus has a lower price point.

Instead Softcup – The Instead Softcup has more in common with a prophylactic diaphragm than the other menstrual cups (though, its packaging cautions, it cannot be used for that purpose). A plastic pouch connects to a stiff rubber rim, which is set behind the pubic bone right under the cervix. Instead cups are meant to be discarded after 12 hours of use.

Trends and Culture

Due to current economic and socio-political forces, there is a growing trend among nearly all consumers to more ecological and environmentally friendly products and services. Colloquially known as the “Green Movement,” the trend aims to reduce landfill waste and carbon emissions from transportation and production means. Many retail companies have responded by banning plastic grocery sacks in favor of paper or reusable canvas bags. Companies such as Fiji Water have taken measures to offset the carbon production of its remote bottling operations. In general, companies which offer durable, reusable products packaged with as little waste as possible and manufactured with as little environmental impact as possible stand to do well with consumers concerned with the overall health of the planet.

Consumer Profile and Research

Traditionally, menstruation is a taboo subject for public discourse, but given the anonymity and "safe space" generated by the Internet, women will talk about their periods in spades. I pitched an open-ended question to a popular news-aggregator

web site and received no less than 800 responses. Some were in jest, some just outrightly mocked the topic, but all provided key insight on the culture of menstruation. A similar query on a more targeted messageboard yielded fewer results, but responses were more on-point and no less surprising in their content.

Of the general news-aggregator site responses that were not snarky, rude, facetious or downright hilarious, the clear preference among women on the forum was for tampons, with a slight preference for overnight/long pads for night wear to prevent leaks. A lot of women use o.b. applicatorless tampons, citing that they produce less waste and are more discreet to carry in a small purse or wristlet (Tampax Compak was similar for the same reason). Others didn't have a specific brand preference, but stuck to cardboard because it was flushable, reliable and comfortable to use. Many used Tampax Pearl or Platex Gentle Glide because of the ease of insertion. Of those who primarily used pads, Always Ultra Thin was a popular brand, named for its comfort and function and it's tendency not to "unstick itself" once placed. There were a few cup users on the forum, and many other forum members quizzed them about how to use a cup, specifically how to change and clean it in a public restroom. Many people said they were hearing about menstrual cups for the first time in that forum.

Side discussion veered off into several menstruation-related phenomena, such as increased bleeding with the onset on menopause (referred to as the Brown Towel Phase), premenstrual dysphoria requiring hospitalization, and the circumstances surrounding one's first period and first use of sanitary products.

In a query submitted to a LiveJournal forum of dedicated menstrual cup users, approximately 45 of the 60 responses were on-topic and contained between three and five reasons for cup use. The tally breaks up thusly:

Environment:	34	Anti-corporate:	9
Cost:	27	Discreet:	8
Health Reasons:	18	Odor control:	4
Comfort:	17	Travel:	2
Duration:	15	"Liked the concept:"	2
Ease of Use:	15		

Of the places where most people learned about menstrual cups, the results were pretty evenly split among friends and relatives, travel abroad to Europe, and various Internet forums, including the LiveJournal group itself. One person cited restroom graffiti in the form of a sticker advertising a cup got her to try the product

What struck me most about the tone and eagerness of the LiveJournal responses is that cup use seems to be almost a badge of pride among users; an outward sign that one is comfortable with their femininity and body functions. These women were more than eager to spell out in detail how cup use had solved so many of their problems, from odor to discretion to supply problems.

SWOT Analysis

Please see attached

Brand Hierarchy

Target Market

The Diva Cup is targeted to menstruating women between the ages of 17 and 35. Cup users are intelligent, often holding higher education degrees, and are

information seekers when it comes to issues about their health, their families, their personal finances, and current events. They make decisions based on their personal values and the facts at hand. They like to try new things and experience cultures different from their own. They are not afraid to break from the herd mentality and depart from the status quo. They hold moderate feminist views. They may or may not have children of their own, and they tend to be close to their family members.

Brand Attributes

The Diva Cup is clean, medically safe, and ecologically responsible. It produces no waste and, when used correctly, is more reliable than absorbency-based menstrual products. Its use requires the users to be comfortable with her own body. The company behind it came into existence solely to offer women an alternative to potentially harmful disposable products.

Key Benefits

The Diva Cup can be safely used for up to 12 hours at a time, which is four times longer than the average safe use time for tampons. Its air-tight seal inside the body prevents odors from escaping. There are no documented cases of Toxic Shock Syndrome, which has been linked with the prolonged use of high-absorbency tampons. It leaves no trace in the body after use is complete, and can be completely sterilized between uses.

Brand Personality

The Diva Cup stands for independence and control over one's own body and sexuality. It is a trustworthy, dependable and smart menstruation option. The freedom

afforded by cup use can be empowering for some women.

Brand Essence

“Good for you, good for Mother Earth”

Brand Recommendations

Branding aside, the highest hurdle the Diva Cup must clear is overcoming the average consumer’s ignorance of menstrual cups as a class of products. The resurgence of the cup is a relatively recent phenomenon, and the hegemony of disposable products available on the shelves of major chain stores does little to encourage consumers to seek out health and environmental alternatives. Because many of the cup users interviewed found out about the product either from a friend or relative or by their own personal research, Diva Cup can benefit greatly from a word-of-mouth style campaign to alert women to the benefits of cup use.

Magazine Write-Up

Women’s periodicals frequently contain “editor recommendations” culled from hundreds of thousands of products. By sending product samples and releases touting the “green” benefits of cup use to the editors of these publications, more women can be exposed to the benefits of cup use. Suggested magazines include *Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*, *Elle*, *Marie Claire*, *Seventeen*, *Self* and *Jane*.

Doctors’ Endorsement

Similar to product endorsements from magazine editors, doctors and nurse practitioners can also be encouraged to recommend cup use to their patients. The authoritative weight carried by these individuals can lend some credibility to the Diva Cup, smoothing over skeptic's fears about a relatively unknown method.

Graffiti Campaign

Public graffiti can be a blight on the urban landscape, but there are a few circumstances where it is to be expected, and a properly executed and encouraged guerilla campaign can do wonders to spread awareness to a rather captive audience. Bar bathrooms are typically rife with all manner of communications, from intentionally placed stall door advertisements to scrawlings denigrating an individual's bedroom habits. By creating Diva Cup stickers and distributing them to current cup users, the message can be placed very near to potential consumers, particularly while they are in a mindset receptive to news regarding feminine hygiene.

Tell-A-Friend Promotions

In a classic rewarding of word-of-mouth campaigning, promotions can be set up where prizes and coupons can be sent to those who refer a friend to a web site to purchase their own Diva Cup. This also taps into the cup users mentality that alternative menstrual product use is a badge of pride, allowing users to feel smart and rewarded for their decisions.

Infiltrate the Tubes

Finally, the Internet has already been used to great effect to spread awareness of the Diva Cup, and a further extension of that would help reach even more potential

consumers. Current discussion of alternative menstrual products is often relegated to forums and message boards specifically geared to the topic. In effect, cup users find themselves “preaching to the choir”. The same product testimonials and planted questions (“My sister told me about the Diva Cup, has anyone ever used one?”) on less targeted forums can bring awareness to a wider audience. Example sites include WebMD, Yahoo! Answers, Digg, and Fark.com.

References

Museum of Menstruation

<http://www.mum.org/MenCups.htm>

Wikipedia Entry: Menstrual Cups

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menstrual_cup

Menstrual Cups - Livejournal Community

http://community.livejournal.com/menstrual_cup

Fark Thread No. 3678967 ("TFettes: Got a question about feminine hygiene products. LGN DIT. Boys, just keep on walking"), archived at

<http://www.socialchameleon.com/school/TFmenstrual.html>