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Great ads don't just sell—they ignite conversations, stir emotions, and leave a lasting mark on culture. These 19 iconic campaigns didn't just make waves—they set the standard. Discover their secrets, and learn how to make your next ad one for the history books. From TV spots that became cultural phenomena to experiential marketing stunts that redefined audience engagement, these campaigns represent the pinnacle of advertising creativity and strategy. Each one broke new ground, offering timeless lessons for marketers looking to make an impact. Television has long been the gold standard for reaching mass audiences with unforgettable storytelling. These iconic TV ads captivated viewers, sparked conversations, and set benchmarks for how brands could use the medium to leave a lasting impression. Apple's Super Bowl ad, 1984, was more than a commercial—it was a rallying cry. Directed by Ridley Scott, the cinematic masterpiece depicted a dystopian future inspired by George Orwell's 1984. In a dramatic sequence, a lone heroine smashes a giant screen, projecting the image of an authoritarian leader and symbolizing Apple's mission to disrupt IBM's dominance and empower individuality. The ad aired just once during the Super Bowl, yet its impact was immediate and profound. It broke every advertising convention at the time: no product shots, no features—just a bold narrative that aligned Apple with freedom, creativity, and rebellion. The Matchless launch that followed cemented Apple's identity as a brand for innovators and iconoclasts. Takeaways for marketers: Be bold. Revolutionary campaigns often defy the status quo to make a statement. Tell a story compelling narrative resonates far deeper than a list of features. Align with values: Position your brand as a champion of ideals your audience cares about. 1984 Apple's Macintosh Commercial (HD) Nike's Just Do It campaign redefined the brand and athletic marketing. The first commercial featured 80-year-old marathoner Walt "Iron Man" Shack jogging across the Golden Gate Bridge, paired with the now-iconic slogan: Just Do It. The ad's brilliance lay in its simplicity. Instead of focusing on elite athletes, it connected with everyone, from casual joggers to professionals. By highlighting the universal desire to push limits and overcome challenges, Nike positioned itself as more than a shoe company—it became a motivational brand. Takeaways for marketers: Find universality: A message that resonates broadly can expand your audience. Use simplicity: Simple, powerful slogans like Just Do It stick and endure. Show real stories: Authenticity in storytelling builds trust and emotional connections. Nike - Just Do It (1988) - Very first commercial Pepsi's Gladiator commercial was a cinematic spectacle that brought pop culture to the Super Bowl stage. Set in a Roman coliseum, the ad featured Beyoncé, Pink, and Britney Spears as gladiators who defied the oppressive emperor, played by Enrique Iglesias. The women overthrew the ruler and reclaimed their power, distributing Pepsi to a roaring crowd—all to the beat of Queen's "We Will Rock You." This ad stood out for its star-studded cast, larger-than-life production, and bold storytelling. It flipped traditional gladiator tropes on their head by showcasing women as empowered heroes in a typically masculine setting. The blend of music, rebellion, and pop culture aligned perfectly with Pepsi's bold, fun, and youthful brand identity. Takeaways for marketers: Think big: High-energy, cinematic campaigns grab attention and stay memorable. Subvert expectations: Challenge stereotypes or conventions to create impactful narratives. Leverage star power: Using cultural icons and music amplifies a campaign's relevance and appeal. Pepsi Commercial Hi-Ye Will Rock You (feat. Britney Spears, Beyoncé, Pink & Enrique Iglesias) Old Spice revitalized its image with this humorous, fast-paced ad starring Isaiah Mustafa. In just 30 seconds, Mustafa effortlessly transitioned from a shower to a boat to a horse, delivering witty one-liners about masculinity and confidence—all while promoting Old Spice body wash. The ad's absurd humor, sharp writing, and charismatic delivery made it a viral sensation, bringing a legacy brand back into cultural relevance. It also sparked a campaign of follow-up videos directly responding to fans' social media comments, setting a new standard for audience engagement. Takeaways for marketers: Use humor: Bold, unexpected humor grabs attention and sticks in people's minds. Be memorable: A distinct tone and voice help your brand stand out. Engage directly: Interacting with your audience extends the life of a campaign. Old Spice | The Man Your Man Could Smell Like Snickers hit a home run with its Super Bowl ad starring Betty White. In the ad, a group of friends plays a rough game of football, with one player, portrayed by White, performing poorly and getting tackled into the mud. A teammate hands her a Snickers bar, and after taking a bite, she transforms into a young man, highlighting the message that hunger can make you act out of character. The campaign's mix of humor, nostalgia, and relatability made it an instant hit. The concept was so versatile that it continued for years with new scenarios and celebrities, making "You're Not You When You're Hungry" one of the most successful taglines in modern advertising. Takeaways for marketers: Be relatable: Universal truths like hunger resonate across demographics. Leverage nostalgia: Familiar faces evoke strong emotional responses. Create longevity: A flexible concept can evolve into a long-term campaign. Snickers - Betty White (Super Bowl 2010 Commercial) - [HD] Print ads have long been a canvas for bold ideas, relying on striking visuals and clever messaging to make an impact. These iconic campaigns demonstrate the power of simplicity, humor, and creative risk-taking. Pepsi's Halloween ad delivered a playful jab at its rival, Coca-Cola. It featured a Pepsi can dressed in a Coca-Cola cape with the tagline, "I don't wish you a scary Halloween." This tongue-in-cheek visual clearly framed "Coke as the scary" (choice while retaining Pepsi's bold and irreverent brand personality. The ad stood out for its humor and simplicity. It wasn't a heavily-handed commercial—it was lighthearted and fun, engaging audiences without alienating Coca-Cola fans. Takeaways for marketers: Subject humor: Grab attention and helps establish a right-hearted connection. Healthy competition: A playful nod to competitors can create buzz without alienating audiences. Stay true to your brand: Always reinforce your core identity—in Pepsi's case, boldness and fun. Volkswagen flipped automotive advertising on its head with Think Small, a minimalist print ad celebrating the Beetle's small size as a virtue. While other car brands focused on power and size, Volkswagen embraced its difference, positioning the Beetle as practical, economical, and approachable. The ad's clean layout and self-deprecating tone became a blueprint for modern advertising. It turned what might have been perceived as a weakness into a compelling strength, proving that honesty and simplicity can win over audiences. Takeaways for marketers: Keep it simple: Clear, straightforward messages cut through the noise. Turn weaknesses into strengths: Highlight unique qualities, even those perceived as disadvantages. Embrace authenticity: Honesty resonates more than overstated claims. IKEA's print ad pushed boundaries by inviting women to urinate on it. Yes, you read that right. The ad incorporated a pregnancy test; if it detected pregnancy, a discount for a baby crib was revealed. This unconventional approach connected IKEA with expectant mothers in a deeply personal way. It was bold, interactive, and used technology to create a unique experience, making it one of the most talked-about campaigns of the year. Takeaways for marketers: Be bold: Sometimes, breaking norms is the best way to stand out. Use technology creatively: Integrating innovation can elevate a campaign's impact. Personalize the experience: Engage your audience on a personal level to forge deeper connections. The iconic "Uncle Sam" poster is one of the most recognizable ads in history. Featuring Uncle Sam pointing directly at the viewer with the message, "Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly," it was an emotionally powerful and highly effective piece of advertising. The ad's direct gaze and simple, compelling message resonated deeply with the public. Takeaways for marketers: Be direct: Clear, targeted messages are highly effective. Evoke emotion: Emotional appeals motivate audiences. Incorporate strong imagery: Iconic visuals amplify recognition and impact. When KFC faced a chicken shortage in the UK, the brand turned a crisis into a moment of humor and transparency. The brand featured an empty bucket with the letters "FCK" replacing the KFC logo—a cheeky acknowledgement of their misstep. The ad's humorous, self-aware tone diffused frustration and won public sympathy. It showed that admitting mistakes with a sense of humor can strengthen, rather than harm, a brand's relationship with its audience. Takeaways for marketers: Own your mistakes: Acknowledging errors builds transparency and trust. Use humor wisely: Humor can diffuse tension and humanize your brand. Be authentic: Genuine responses strengthen customer loyalty, even in tough times. Billboard ads transform everyday spaces into unforgettable marketing moments. These campaigns show how bold visuals, interactive elements, and clever concepts can captivate audiences and create lasting impressions. Examples include: Target's "The Dress" billboard, which featured a single red dress on a black background, sparking curiosity and conversation. McDonald's "I'm Lovin' It" billboard, which used a red bull to represent the brand's energy and fun. Nike's "Just Do It" billboard, which featured a woman in a red dress, symbolizing empowerment and resilience. Takeaways
for marketers: Focus on personalization: Tailored campaigns create strong emotional connections with consumers. Encourage social sharing: User-generated content amplifies visibility and strengthens brand engagement. Leverage simplicity: A straightforward concept, executed well, can achieve global appeal. Red Bull took experiential marketing to unprecedented heights—literally. The brand sponsored Felix Baumgartner's record-breaking freefall from the stratosphere, which was streamed live to millions worldwide. The feat showcased Red Bull's association with extreme sports and cemented its reputation as a brand that pushes boundaries. Takeaways for marketers: Think big: Ambitious, once-in-a-lifetime experiences can elevate your brand's image. Align with brand values: Ensure your campaign reflects your core ethos—in Red Bull's case, daring and adventure. Leverage media buzz: Events that capture public attention naturally generate widespread coverage. The Pepsi Challenge invited consumers to participate in a blind taste test comparing Pepsi and Coca-Cola. By placing the decision directly in the hands of consumers, the campaign shifted perceptions and highlighted Pepsi's taste superiority, sparking conversation and loyalty in the competitive soft drink market. Takeaways for marketers: Engage directly: Real-world interactions build trust and create memorable experiences. Use competition strategically: Comparing your product to rivals can be impactful when done tactfully. Empower consumers: Letting audiences make the call fosters confidence in your product. The "Share a Coke" campaign personalized the brand by featuring popular names on bottles, encouraging customers to find and share bottles featuring their own or their friends' names. The power of great advertising lies in its ability to move, engage, and surprise. As a marketer, you hold the tools to create campaigns that don't just sell but inspire. Use the lessons from these groundbreaking ads to experiment, innovate, and connect on a deeper level. The next iconic campaign? It's yours to create. In today's marketing world, cultural relevance is key to everything from getting your content seen by the right people to creating communities and, ultimately, conversions. You're no longer competing with just your competitors; you're competing against the latest memes, and cat videos, and don't forget the platform algorithms. Social listening is your fast-track way to becoming a culturally relevant brand. What is social listening? There's been a lot of buzz about social listening recently, but what does it actually mean? In short, social listening just means tracking conversations on social media platforms. Many brands use social listening to track brand mentions, analyse sentiment and track comments to respond to (brand monitoring). While this is extremely useful, social listening's often overlooked value is in the consumer and cultural insights it can uncover. In fact, many social listening tools allow you to listen to multiple other digital sources such as video sites, blogs, review sites, news, and even some messenger services, ensuring that you can find your online audience, wherever they are. How can it help my brand be culturally relevant? Social listening has many uses for different teams, but it excels in four ways for marketers who are looking for cultural relevance. Understanding your audience. This is incredibly important to marketers, and social listening can help you do that in real time and with real data. Moving beyond marketing personas, you can see what your audience is actually saying about your brand, and what they're interested in. You'll learn what your customers like and dislike, what they're excited about, and what they're not so much. Expectations and social listening. You can use social listening to see what your customers expect from you. Summer vacation. How people are cleaning? Whatever you're interested in learning about, social listening allows you to quickly tap into conversations about the things that matter to you. You can analyse this content to identify pain points, white spaces, and moments of opportunity. Tracking Trends. We all know how important trends are to social media, regardless of the platform, but how do you know which trends are relevant to your brand and your audience? Social listening can help you identify the right trends for you and stop you from making mistakes or posting after a trend has peaked. Optimising your social strategy. Once you've gathered all your data and uncovered game-changing insights, you can apply these to your social strategy, ensuring that your brand moves at the speed of culture. The same audiences often engage in different ways on different platforms. Using social listening to supercharge your social strategy with robust data is the best way to ensure success. Isn't social listening just for huge brands? No! It's a common misconception that you need a team or specially trained analysts to get started with social listening. While all brands can benefit from social listening, smaller brands with more limited budgets often see the biggest benefits, as a social listening-informed strategy can help you cut through the noise and even identify the best ways to spend your social ad budget. Getting started is easy. Setting up a social listening search in YouScan, a top-rated social listening tool, is intuitive and simple. It is suitable for both beginners and seasoned professionals. Right from the homepage, you can see what's trending in your search, what the sentiment is, and where in the world the posts are coming from. Traditionally, to analyse social data, you'd already have to have some understanding of the topic that you were investigating. But with YouScan's AI agent, Insights Copilot, you're able to use an AI chat function to analyse and interrogate your data for you, removing the need for in-depth topic understanding. Ask CoPilot to perform a SWOT analysis. The strategy of demonstrating that said value is clearly communicated and desired by the target audience. Brookline's "The Internet's Favorite Sheets"—a New York City-based home goods retailer that sells luxury sheets and other bedding items. In an interview with SocialDaily, founders Rich and Vicki Fulop said Brookline dedicated some marketing investment to subway advertisements and paid social media campaigns, but it primarily depended on word-of-mouth as a way to express the value that customers place on Brookline products. Customers hype the value of Brookline's products across the brand's social media accounts. 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"We've always tried to blend this idea of quality and quantity," Gregorys Coffee CEO Gregory Zamosit told Forbes. "We can give a boutique coffee

our executive presence, our comprehensive offerings empower you to excel in today's competitive landscape. If the personal brand management insights shared today specifically struck a chord with you, our newly launched MA Business Communication and Leadership degree program is tailor-made for marketing professionals like you. Take the next step in your professional journey and embark on a transformative learning experience with Edgewood College. **ELEVATE YOUR BRAND THROUGH EDUCATION** Private labels (PLs), also known as store brands, own labels, or retailer-owned brands, have been around in almost consumer-packaged goods markets for decades. In 2023, PLs held an average global value share of 19.4%, a number that rises to 36% when singling out Western Europe (NIQ Brandbank 2024), and there is no indication that the ceiling has been hit. Gielens et al. (2023) recently projected an average growth of 16.9% share points across over 2,000 markets (category-country combinations), although not all markets are expected to gravitate toward the elevated PL shares that are seen in Western Europe. Over the last four decades, over 700 papers have explored strategies to either increase PL share for retailers or protect national-brand share for manufacturers, with the price gap between PLs and national brands and the inherent characteristics of the product category being the most frequently studied drivers of PL share. Comprehensive reviews of these drivers have been offered by Keller, Dekimpe, and Geyskens (2022) and Sethuraman and Gielens (2014), among others. Get this article as a PDF Historically, PLs were seen as inferior to national brands and positioned as low-cost or budget-friendly alternatives. However, over the last decade, many retailers have started to strategically position their PLs beyond just price as also fostering emotional bonds with consumers. A survey from Numerator (2025) found that 59% of U.S. consumers believe PLs offer an above-average value for their price, indicating a growing appreciation of and emphasis on quality and brand attachment beyond mere affordability. This shift in consumer attitudes is evident across diverse segments. Younger shoppers are increasingly choosing grocery stores based on their PL offerings, demonstrating that store brands are now seen as genuine competitors rather than mere substitutes (De Jong 2024). Similarly, high-income consumers are prioritizing PLs at growing rates, with 70% of shoppers earning over \$100,000 annually selecting their grocery store based on PL products (Sheehan 2024). These changes have enabled retailers to prioritize their own labels over national brands. They allocate PLs more favorably in store placements, such as Costco's Kirkland Signature products, which are often placed at eye level or in high-traffic areas within the stores. In addition, retailers are promoting PLs through targeted discounts and loyalty programs. For example, Kroger regularly offers 10%-20% discounts on its Simple Truth organic PL line through digital coupons, while Walmart+ members receive exclusive savings on select Great Value products. This prioritization of PLs, often at the expense of national brands, is particularly visible in online platforms, where the practice of self-preferencing—where a retailer's own brands are favored over third-party brands—has sparked significant antitrust scrutiny (Long and Amaldoss 2024). As a natural outcome of these strategic evolutions, some PLs, such as Costco's Kirkland and Loblaw's President's Choice, have become trusted brands in their own right and are no longer viewed as mere budget options. Following these evolutions, academic research on PLs has also shifted, moving from a value-based focus to a more quality-centered approach, where various elements of the branding toolkit are gradually being infused and explored. This transformation, known as "PL brandification," has unfolded in three key steps: first, a focus on quality as the initial step toward PL brandification; second, differentiation as a critical next phase; and finally, the full embrace of PL branding as the third and most advanced stage in this transformation. Already more than twenty years ago, Corstjens and Lal's (2000) seminal paper in the *Journal of Marketing Research* emphasized that product quality should be a critical factor in PL strategy. Their findings show that in markets where consumers are sensitive to quality and where inertia affects brand choice, a quality-focused PL strategy enables retailers to succeed. In contrast, a "cheap and nasty" PL approach intensifies price competition. Crucially, they argue that PLs must exceed a certain quality threshold to build long-term profitability. After improving PLs' objective quality, it is essential that consumers also perceive a reduced quality gap between PLs and national brands. Steenkamp, Van Heerde, and Geyskens (2010) demonstrate that in countries in the PL development stage, marketing tactics such as advertising and distinctive packaging are especially effective in managing the perceived quality gap between PLs and national brands. In contrast, in PL-mature countries, focusing on manufacturing fundamentals is more impactful, as the belief that national-brand manufacturers produce PLs is more effective in reducing the perceived quality gap than in PL-development countries. Not surprisingly, in mature PL markets like Spain, retailers are likely to heavily rely on national-brand manufacturers as their PL suppliers. This is evident as more than 70% of PL suppliers across all retailers in Spain are dual branders, producing both national brands and PLs (Ma et al. 2024). Another way to foster this belief may be through copycatting. Arbach et al. (2014) show that copycatting increases consumers' preference for PLs. Yet, when a well-known retailer name appears on a copycat product, this may inadvertently weaken the appeal of the imitating PL. However, the dissemination of these insights has not been uniform across the globe. While some regions have embraced quality-focused strategies, others have been slower to adopt these approaches. In particular, the quality gap between PLs and national brands remains significant in the United States and emerging markets. According to Steenkamp (2023), PLs have not yet achieved quality equivalence with national brands in these regions, limiting their competitive potential and consumer acceptance compared with more mature markets. As PLs evolved beyond their initial focus on price, differentiation emerged as a crucial strategy in shaping their competitive positioning. Choi and Coughlan (2006) were among the first to introduce the notion of differentiation as a key factor in explaining how PLs should position themselves relative to national brands. According to their framework, when national brands are differentiated, a high-quality PL should align itself closer to the stronger national brand, while a lower-quality PL should position itself closer to the weaker national brand. However, when national brands are undifferentiated, PLs must distinguish themselves from both stronger and weaker competitors. Importantly, PLs cannot afford to remain undifferentiated in terms of either quality or features if they wish to remain successful. As such, their work hints at two distinct paths for differentiation: vertical differentiation, which focuses on quality tiers such as economy, standard, and premium PLs, and horizontal differentiation, which emphasizes unique product attributes. We now turn to the academic work that further explores these two differentiation paths in greater depth. Acknowledging the importance of quality differentiation, many retailers now offer multitier PLs, as illustrated in Figure 1 for two leading retailers, Tesco and Kroger. Standard PLs (depicted in the middle column) typically mimic mainstream national brands by offering comparable quality at lower prices, while premium PLs (shown in the right-hand column) offer superior quality at higher prices, often with unique ingredients, flavors, or packaging. In contrast, economy PLs (shown in the left column), focus on cost reduction by cutting back on expensive ingredients, allowing retailers to pursue enhanced quality without neglecting the economy-seeking segment of their shoppers. Figure 1Examples of vertically differentiated PL lines Many retailers have fully embraced this shift, moving away from a single-tier PL approach. In the United Kingdom, premium PLs already account for 8.4% of total PL sales, while economy-tier PLs make up 4.7% (NIQ Brandbank 2024). This strategy enables retailers to capture a broader audience, from budget-conscious shoppers to high-end consumers seeking premium PL alternatives. Ultimately, this results in a product portfolio that is vertically differentiated in both price and quality, but it must be carefully managed to avoid unintended cannibalization (Amaldoss and Shin 2015; Geyskens, Gielens, and Gijbrecchts 2010). While PL tiers help retailers cover the full price-quality spectrum, their introduction may also trigger cannibalization. Economy PLs may pull customers from both national brands and higher-tier PLs, while premium PLs can challenge premium national brands. Geyskens, Gielens, and Gijbrecchts (2010) suggest that to minimize cannibalization, retailers should counter the brand-type similarity effect by positioning PL tiers on different shelves or using stand-alone brand names instead of subbrands. Interestingly, national-brand manufacturers' concerns about PL proliferation are often overstated. Geyskens, Gielens, and Gijbrecchts find that PL tiering can sometimes even increase national-brand choice share. Premium national brands should emphasize quality and avoid price cuts, while mainstream national brands should leverage mixed displays alongside other PLs and national brands to encourage favorable consumer comparisons. What should the quality levels of multitier store brands be? Amaldoss and Shinn (2015) suggest that retailers align the quality of their different PL tiers with national brands to reach all types of consumers. This approach helps reduce overlap between their own PL products, but it increases competition with national brands. Although this added competition can affect profitability, retailers can manage it by carefully adjusting the prices of both their PLs and national brands. In fact, with their control over pricing, retailers can even position one of their PLs as the top-quality choice. However, when national brands dominate a category, retailers may allow a national brand to take the top spot, ensuring their PLs can still appeal to a wide range of consumers. As PLs evolve, retailers are increasingly turning to horizontal differentiation to stand out in the market. A key approach involves incorporating nontraditional, intangible attributes such as organic, eco-friendly, health, and fair trade into their PL offerings. Figure 2, for instance, highlights how Carrefour prominently emphasizes the organic attribute within several of its food categories. Similarly, Tesco prioritizes the eco-friendly attribute in some of its nonfood categories, while Kroger underscores health through its Simple Truth product line, which is distinguished by the avoidance of unwanted ingredients. Figure 2Examples of Horizontally Differentiated PL Lines A: Examples of Products in Carrefour's Organic PL Line B: Examples of Products in Tesco's Eco-Friendly PL Line C: Examples of Products in Kroger's Health-Friendly PL Line In this respect, Maessen (2025) highlights the growing trend of introducing organic PLs. These PLs are horizontally differentiated from conventional standard PLs by offering unique qualities that only appeal to some consumers. By focusing on such attributes, retailers can compete more effectively with (organic) national brands and lower the risk of cannibalizing their existing PL lines. As PLs increasingly benefit from horizontal differentiation, their new product lines are becoming strategic weapons not only to sustain their own sales but also to steal share from leading national brands. Over 80% of grocery retailers identify innovation as the top strategy for growing PL market share (Rafferty 2023). For instance, Target's Good & Gather has introduced over 2,500 new PL products, while Kroger launched 680 new items in 2023 and Albertsons added more than 800 PL products in 2021. In Spain, Mercadona operates 23 "co-innovation centers" that test 11,000 products annually, showcasing a sophisticated, data-driven approach to product development (McOuat et al. 2024). Research by Gielens (2012) demonstrated that standard PLs, in particular, are more likely to compete directly with national brands, with their new product introductions capturing share from both rival national brands and other PL tiers within the retailer's portfolio. To transform PLs into true, competitive brands, retailers must take an additional leap beyond quality improvement and differentiation by fully embracing comprehensive branding strategies. Bronnenberg, Dubé, and Sanders (2020) highlight that while consumers expect PLs to perform well, they are still less likely to choose them over national brands due to their deep-rooted loyalty to established national-brand names. To fully capitalize on their PLs' potential, retailers must therefore integrate more branding elements into their strategies. Doing so can help break through the aforementioned brand-loyalty barriers and create stronger, lasting consumer connections with PLs. Both brand naming and advertising play a crucial role in this transformation. To build effective PL brands, retailers must carefully choose brand names that enable consumers to more easily differentiate among various PLs. After all, the key to branding is that consumers perceive differences among brands within a product category. An important decision for retailers involves whether to align their PL brands with the store banner or use a stand-alone brand name. With store-banner branding, the link between PL product and retailer is explicit, enhancing the likelihood of positive spillover effects. Germany's Edeka, for example, has its banner name in the naming of both its economy (Edeka Gut & Günstig) and premium (Edeka Genussmoment) tiers, consistent with the branding strategy used on its long-standing standard tier (Edeka). The Spanish retailer Mercadona, in contrast, opted to use the stand-alone name "Hacendado" for its standard PL products in the ambient and frozen food categories. For the standard tier, Schnitzka et al. (2015), using a survey in Germany, conclude that store-banner branding increases PL recognition and PL attitude. Geyskens et al. (2018) demonstrate the benefits of store-banner branding for standard PLs by examining a Dutch retailer's strategic relaunch of its entire standard PL portfolio. Overall, the PL rebranding was a success, with PL sales soaring by 27% in the first quarter after rebranding, and profits also experiencing an increase. The rebranding initiative drove PL growth in product categories where PLs are traditionally weaker than national brands. By leveraging its banner name on its standard PL, the retailer effectively capitalized on its strong reputation. For the economy and premium tier, Keller, Dekimpe, and Geyskens (2016) studied a large pan-European sample of over 220 PL-branding decisions made by over 150 retailers across more than 25 countries. They conclude that retailers benefit most from store-banner branding their premium PLs when they possess high brand equity or follow a hi-lo price format. However, for retailers with lower equity or an everyday-low-pricing strategy, stand-alone branding for the premium tier becomes more effective. Importantly, even when using stand-alone branding, retailers can benefit from using a common (umbrella) brand name for all categories, rather than working with multiple category-specific brand names, as this may facilitate consumers' mental categorization and credibly signal positive intercategory quality correlations. Keller, Geyskens, and Dekimpe (2020) studied three substantially different retailers that switched to an umbrella brand name for one of their (economy or standard) PL tiers. Figure 3 shows in this respect how SPAR, a leading Dutch convenience store chain, switched from a diffuse set of category-specific brand names to a single unified name, "OKE." In all three instances, the rebranded PL tier's intrinsic brand strength increased. Figure 3SPAR's Rebranding of Category-Specific Brand Names to a Single Unified Name As a final frontier in branding, PL retailers can explore advertising to elevate their PLs. Historically, PLs relied on price and shelf placement to drive purchases, since advertising campaigns for a wide variety of PLs across various categories were seen as cost-prohibitive. Recently, however, Kroger invested \$2.5 million in an advertisement highlighting its PL products. In this campaign, it seeks to complement its core focus on value and product features with stronger attitudinal and emotional appeals (see Figure 4, Panel A). Moreover, the rise of social media and new retail advertising platforms offers fresh opportunities for cost-effective advertising. For example, Kroger actively leverages its Instagram account to prominently feature its PL products in an engaging and entertaining manner while also providing additional product information (see Figure 4, Panel B). This approach reflects a broader trend among leading retailers, who are increasingly using digital channels to tell the stories behind their PLs. These narratives often highlight key aspects such as ingredient sourcing, production methods, and product origins, enabling brands to deepen consumer engagement and build trust while distinguishing their offerings in a competitive market. Such efforts help create stronger brand awareness and build emotional connections. Yet, the academic study of advertising's role in PL branding remains largely unexplored, opening new avenues for research in this area. Szymanski and Gijbrecchts (2012), for example, found that a retailer's PL is not entirely private, in that consumers use their positive experiences with one PL to upgrade their beliefs about rival retailers' store brands. It would be interesting to study to what extent messages with different content, or through different media (see also Danaher et al. 2020), may help to better appropriate advertising's branding benefits. Figure 4Examples of Kroger's Advertising Campaign Dedicated to Its PLs A: Kroger's Television Advertising Campaign for Kroger Peanut Butter 2023 B: Kroger's Instagram Account The transformation of PLs into fully-fledged brands, holding significant equity on their own account, unfolds in three steps prioritizing (1) quality, (2) strategic differentiation, and (3) full-scale branding. First, quality remains the foundation of successful PL strategies. Retailers must ensure their PLs consistently meet or exceed consumer expectations to foster long-term loyalty. Beyond objective quality improvements, bridging the perceived quality gap is equally critical. In markets where PLs are still developing, advertising and distinctive packaging are effective tools to enhance perceived quality, whereas in PL-mature countries, leveraging consumer beliefs that PLs are produced by trusted national-brand manufacturers plays a more significant role. The second step in PL brandification is to differentiate with purpose. Retailers achieve this through a two- or three-tiered approach, structuring PL portfolios into economy, standard, and/or premium tiers to cover the price-quality spectrum. At the same time, they may harness the power of horizontal differentiation by embracing attributes like sustainability, fair trade, and ethical sourcing. This approach positions PLs as compelling alternatives to national brands while curbing the risk of cannibalizing existing products. The third and final step in PL brandification is to choose the PL's brand name wisely. Aligning the naming strategy with each tier's objectives is crucial—while a banner-aligned name reinforces trust and strengthens the retailer's overall brand image, a stand-alone name can provide greater flexibility, particularly for premium tiers seeking independent positioning. In addition, the naming strategy should align with the store's format. In a hi-lo pricing model, store-banner branding is particularly effective for premium PLs, leveraging positive spillover effects from the retailer's reputation. Conversely, in everyday-low-price formats, stand-alone branding for premium tiers helps create a distinct premium perception without overly relying on store credibility. Retailers should also evaluate the benefits of umbrella branding, as using the same brand name across an entire PL tier can reduce consumer uncertainty and enhance the overall sales performance of the PL brand. As PLs continue to evolve, several research gaps warrant further exploration. First, the role of advertising in PL brandification remains an open question. It is unclear how different advertising strategies—such as storytelling, influencer partnerships, or targeted social media campaigns—affect consumer perceptions of PLs. Further research could explore how advertising effectiveness varies by PL tier. Understanding the long-term impact of PL advertising on PL equity would provide valuable insights for both retailers and researchers. Second, while prior work has examined individual elements such as tiered pricing and store-banner branding, there is limited understanding of how these elements interact with shelf positioning, promotional intensity, and category management to influence the PL brand's equity. For example, does a premium PL benefit more from prominent shelf placement than a standard-tier PL, or do price promotions have a stronger impact on lower-tier PLs? A more integrated perspective on these dynamics could help retailers optimize their PL strategies to maximize brand equity. Finally, the rise of e-commerce and algorithm-driven recommendations raises new challenges and opportunities for PLs. Online environments enable new forms of self-preferencing, where retailers promote their own PLs over national brands, a practice that has drawn increasing regulatory scrutiny. Future research could explore the effects of digital shelf placement, targeted advertising, and algorithmic bias on PL success, shedding light on how these strategies influence consumer decision-making and retailer performance in an increasingly digital landscape. Amaldoss, Wilfred and Woochoel Shin (2015), "Multitier Store Brands and Channel Profits," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 52 (6), 754-67. 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