Seafood Executive
Volume 1 • Issue 2 • 2012

INTRAfish Media Person of the Year 2012
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CASE STUDY

ACME’S BRAND MAKEOVER

Earlier this year, Ul-based Acme Smoked Fish Corporation relaunched its seafood brands, including Acme, Blue Hill Bay, Ruby Bay, and Great American Smoked Fish.

The new branding is designed to better convey the idea Acme is a quality Brooklyn-based brand, steeped in family tradition, with unique products that stand apart from other smoked fish brands. Acme’s Vice President of Strategy and Business Development, Gabriel Viteri, asks us inside for a look at how the company relaunched a brand that dates back to 1906.

THE CHALLENGE:

The appearance of new aggressive players in our market started to alter how the market played.

We started to realize an important category in our segment, was starting to become more of a commodity, as competition was emphasized on price.

We knew, in the long term, this could have significant repercussions on quality, food safety, and service, and consequently on the livelihood of the business. The company realized it needed to differentiate itself from a newly crowded space.

We knew products and companies are not created equal, and Acme had a family tradition of quality that was special.

THE SOLUTION:

We decided to engage in a major self-assessment project, which ignited our rebranding efforts. Our biggest asset is our brand. Although it had a strong presence, it needed to adjust and adapt to new market conditions and threats.

The main option was to rebrand the brand so customers and consumers can see with more clarity the true essence of our company and products. Before we could begin, it was critical to first gain a deeper understanding of our customer base, end-consumer base, market and competitive landscape.

The company conducted a series of preliminary consumer and customer insight market research initiatives. Thousands of surveys were completed by consumers and many more hundreds by existing customers. Symphony IRI data also played an important role in a series of analyses to better understand the scope and specifics of the competitive landscape.

After analyzing some of the results, we learned very quickly certain segments were very loyal to the company, while others did not recognize the brands or their associations with the company.

We realized as well this rebranding not only needed to find a way to associate all the brands to our company, but also required we take a closer look at all the brands, not only logos, packaging and website, but also the refinement and alignment of all brand value propositions.

RESULTS:

An important outcome of the rebranding initiative was the creation of an ACMB symbol, an “A” icon. This icon would allow all brands to be associated with the Acme Smoked Fish Company.

The new Acme logo incorporates more traditional fonts and elements that signal our roots and heritage. It incorporates the year when our founder got started in the smoked fish business, along with the term “Brooklyn,” which indicates our location from the early beginning, Brooklyn as the birthplace of the smoked seafood industry in United States. With the elements of the new Acme packaging we are hoping to give consumers a better sense of our essence and tradition.

We also saw an opportunity to introduce and educate consumers on the array of smoked seafood preparation possibilities. It became obvious our packaging needed to be the platform to introduce these new alternate ideas on eating our products.

A significant addition to the new Acme packaging was the introduction of recipes and QR codes with links to recipes and more product information.

Another significant result was the retrofit of all Acme brands (Acme, Blue Hill Bay, Ruby Bay, and Great American) with some requiring more radical changes than others.

This rebranding effort ended up becoming one of our most important initiatives in 2011/2012. We are planning to be complete with packaging for over 300 SKUs and the introduction of a new website by end of May.