



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT AND MANAGEMENT

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VICKS VAPORUB - MOTHER'S TOUCH THERAPY: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT


FMHG industry in India is worth around ₹4500 crores. This market is dominated by products like Rubs & Balms, medicated skin treatments, cough syrup and drops, digestives and health. Vicks is a leading brand in the Fast Moving Health goods (FMHG). An exceptionally trusted brand - generations and generations of cold sufferers have used it for almost 100 years. Recognized all around the world - Vicks is available in more than 66 countries. Globally Vicks brand is worth around ₹3000 crores. Vicks commands a market share of over 60% in the cold balm/rub category¹. Vicks is the 25th most trusted brand in India². Yes, there are some controversies regarding usage of vicks vaporub but there is no doubt that it is the no 1 cough & cold brand in India.

The case study basically focuses on market position of Vicks vaporub. It describes the reasons for Vicks Vaporub to be a no 1 brand in cold rub market & the controversies regarding it. Some brands are not easy to forget. They setup in the minds of customers in such a way that as the related problem comes, immediately they strike in mind. There are number of examples, Like Vicks (for cold & winter), Itch guard (for heel cracking), Johnson & Johnson (Baby products), All-out/Good night (Mosquitoes) etc. As such above problem we face, the related product immediately strike in our mind. It is not that these products do not have competitors, but actually they have a very strong position in the market & it is not easy to wash these products from public mind & one among them is Vicks Vaporub, a very strong brand in cold rub market.

KEYWORDS

FMHG, Johnson & Johnson, Itch Guard, Vicks VapoRub.

VICKS VAPORUB: BETTER THAN ANY COLD RUB EVER USED

 Vicks was launched in 1890 as Vicks Corp and Pneumonia Salve for babies by Lunsford Richardson in North Carolina. In 1918, the brand became famous as the world was suffering from enfluenza, that proved to be a big dream for the company & its demand increased so much that the company was not able to meet market demand even after the company started to work 24 hours. It was entered in India in 1951. In 1964, a public limited company, Richardson Hindustan Limited (RHL) was formed which obtained an industrial license to undertake manufacture of menthol & peppermint oil, the main elements of vicks vaporub. Vicks vaporub is colourless, but it is blue. The blue container means that the main colour for the vaporub thing is blue, but the rest of the vaporub in it dilutes the blue. Basically the blue colour represents spirituality, peace & happiness.

Vicks is India's No.1 Cough & Cold Brand. In the pain balm segment, the company faces tough competition from Zandu Balm. But now the overall balm market (including cold) is dominated by Vicks. Vicks commands a market share of over 60% in the cold balm/rub category.

Vicks VapoRub has been the market leader in the vaporub industry in India for long. It has ensured that competition does not creep up by considerably reducing its cost of marketing and distribution. However, there is still a considerable share of the market that needs to be tapped by the company. In 2009-10 the company P&G earned revenue of (in healthcare business) at ₹381 crores (vs. last years ₹344 crores) posted a growth of 11% this year across Vicks VapoRub, Vicks Cough Drops, Vicks Action 500 and Vicks Inhaler³. Vicks VapoRub had a record year posting the highest ever market share. The growth in the brand was driven primarily through continued focus and augmented media spends on the successful blanket of warmth advertising and on our ongoing strategy of upsizing consumers to drive consumption - viz. the timely promotions on jars which help in encouraging consumers to purchase larger packs⁴.

"NO WINTER MEAN NO VICKS"

The total business of Vicks Vaporub depends upon the winter season. If there is no winter, there is no requirement of any product of Vicks. The brand focus on special features, always prove to be a powerful brand. The value of Vicks brand in world market is ₹3000 crore & it adds 12% value in health cold business of P&G. In India, every year it earns around ₹170 crore. In 2005 the company completed its 100 years. Vicks pioneered the farming of Mentha Arvensis in India, and the manufacture of Menthol, which is the key active ingredient in all Vicks products and because of which today, India is the largest exporter of menthol in the world.

A good positioning helped the firm, Vicks Vaporub to emerge as the market leader. In early 1950s Richardson Hindustan Ltd. identified the need for a cold remedy in the market. At that time Amrutanjan was the market leader in the balm market. The company tried to carve out a separate niche and they decided to position it exclusively as a rub for colds. Realizing the fact that children's were the prime concern of parents. Vicks Vaporub was positioned as a rub for Child's cold. The product was clearly distinguished from balm was much stronger and hence suitable for adults and being a mild formulation Vicks Vaporub is more suitable for children.

In few years Vicks Vaporub became the largest selling brand for cold remedies and the success can be attributed to its proper initial positioning. That Vicks does not count solely upon its share as a market leader. It is aware of the presence of other competitors and thus it has not remained static in terms of its promotional strategy and has also simultaneously been incumbent upon increasing its market share by indulging into intensive promotions strategies such as free Vicks Inhaler along with Vicks Vaporub, discounts, 20% extra on each pack of 50g. Thus it has constantly tried to lure the consumers to stay with it while penetrating the market deeper Vicks vaporub is the market leader with a share of 60%. Vaporub was initially targeted at children but later the company found out that it is used mostly by adults. Vicks Vaporub is positioned along Mother's Love platform. Vaporub pioneered the concept of "Touch therapy" linking it to the rubbing of vaporub on the child's chest. Vaporub advertises itself as having 6 key benefits: Clearing blocked nose, Cough relief, Body ache relief, Head ache relief. Relaxing muscle stiffness, easing breathing difficulty.

Recently Consumer Research conducted by P&G and market research firm NFO-MBL (National Family Opinion? Market Bureau Ltd.) Consumers rated Vicks VapoRub comparatively higher on parameters such as: Fast and Long-Lasting Relief. In addition, they also rated Vicks VapoRub significantly better on key product attributes stating that it is less greasy and smells better and almost 80% of the respondents rated Vicks VapoRub as Better than any Cold Rub Ever Used. It was rated as 'India's Most Trusted Brand' by the 'Advertising & Marketing' Magazine and continues to be on top of the charts of Brand-Equity surveys till date. According to Procter & Gamble Hygiene and Health Care Ltd said, "Consumers have rewarded Vicks with sales of over ₹170 crores, annually making it the biggest health care brand in India⁵.

FEW SURPRISING USES OF VICKSVAPORUB

• Decongest Your Chest

The most common use of Vicks is to decongest your chest and throat area. When applied to the upper chest, it provides excellent relief of cough and congestion symptoms.

- **On Your Tootsies**

Applying Vicks to your feet provides nighttime cough relief. Generously rub VapoRub all over your feet and cover them with socks. Within moments your cough will subside.

- **Get Rid of Nasty Nail Fungus**

Rub VapoRub on your toenails if you suspect you have a fungus. Within days, the nail will turn dark—this means the Vicks is killing the fungus. As your toenail grows out, the dark part will grow off and you will have fungus-free feet

- **Headaches Be Gone**

Rub a small amount of Vicks VapoRub on your temples and forehead to help relieve headaches. The mentholated scent will release pressure in your head and instantly relieve pain.

- **Paper Cuts and Splinters**

To prevent infection and speed up healing time, dab a small amount of Vicks on any small cut or splinter.

- **Go Away Mosquitoes**

Vicks wards off mosquitoes. Apply small dabs of Vicks VapoRub to your skin and clothes and mosquitoes will steer clear.

INGREDIENTS OF VICKS VAPORUB

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

Camphor 5.26% (Cough suppressant and topical analgesic)

Eucalyptol 1.2% (Cough suppressant)

Menthol 2.82% (Cough suppressant and topical analgesic)

INACTIVE INGREDIENTS

Cedarleaf oil 0.44%

Nutmeg oil 0.69%

Special Petrolatum

Turpentine oil 4.68%

Thymol 0.09%

COMPETITORS OF VICKS VAPORUB

1. Cold rub - Amarutanjan
2. Chest rub (Tea tree herbal)
3. Milan rubs (India mart- Milan trading co.)
4. Zandu Balm (The Zandu pharmaceutical works limited)
5. D'Cold (Paras Pharma)

MKT. MIX - VICKS VAPORUB

PRODUCT

1. Available in different sizes according to market demand
2. Emotional mkt. - Not selling Vicks, selling mothers love.
3. Unique shape of Vicks inhaler

PRICE

1. Low prized
2. Special coupons/offers during promotion

PLACE

1. Available all around India
2. Available almost at all general & medical stores in India

PROMOTION

1. Happy Birthday Mummy
2. Chotu ko sardi ay jayegi
3. The Vicks VapoRub Doll
4. A Mother touch Therapy

DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS OF VICKS VAPORUB

Vicks Vaporub is marketed by one single marketing channel, organized and regulated by the company namely, Proctor and Gamble Hygiene Products Ltd.

The commission for each intermediary is as follows⁵

(i) Dealer \pm 16%

(ii) Distributor \pm 4%

(iii) Super Distributor \pm 1 - 1.5%

What is here important to note that the person who actually sells the product to the consumer gets the maximum i.e. 16% on the sale of the product. The distributor, who makes the goods available to the dealer gets 4% i.e. one-fourth of the share of the dealer. Also this fact has to be understood in the light of the peculiar fact of the existence of a Super Distributor. In our context, this implies the actual link between the company and the distributors. Generally there are only one or two of super distributors in each state, depending upon the size and demand in the state. These super distributors are bulk distributors and actually account for the market building of Vicks or P & G products as any increase in market share of Vicks or and increase in demand in the market earns them handsome incentives for Vicks. Thus without actually getting into the hassles of dealing with local dealers and distributors, Vicks Vaporub actually gets a higher share in market by using the area specific knowledge of these super distributors.

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTH

1. Leading market position
2. Increasing demand in past years
3. An innovative product
4. No. 1 cold rub brand

WEAKNESS

1. Quality control problem
2. Decreased revenue in the northern Asian market

OPPORTUNITY

1. Developing markets
2. Increasing Health problems (specially cold problem in winter)

THREATS

1. Competitors
2. Increasing cost(as high prices of menthol)
3. Increasing controversies

CONTROVERSIES REGARDING VICKS VAPORUB**Avoid applying Vicks Vaporub to babies, pediatricians' says⁷**

According to WebMD, there have been a few complications in children when Vicks is used inappropriately. A few children reacted negatively and ended up hospitalized when Vicks was applied directly under the nose. According to a study; "The ingredients in Vicks can be irritants, causing the body to produce more mucus to protect the airway," Some of the ingredients in Vicks, notably the menthol, trick the brain into thinking that it is easier to breathe by triggering a cold sensation, which is processed as indicating more airflow," **"Vicks may make you feel better but it can't help you breathe better."**

According to Vicks vaporub, this is extremely rare and only happens to those who are sensitive to Vicks. consumers should use caution when applying it to the face or on young children. Parents should not apply Vicks VapoRub to children under the age of two. Procter & Gamble's product label also warns it is not indicated for children under two. But some parents may still choose to use it. Actually, the product is safe and effective when used according to package directions. Where marketed, it is in compliance with the applicable health and safety regulations."

Sumeet Vohra, marketing director of P&G India, told TOI, "Vicks VapoRub has a long standing history of being safe and effective when used according to package directions. Its safety and efficacy has been demonstrated in multiple human clinical trials, which have included more than a thousand children aged between one month to 12 years." Vohra added that a recent survey also found how seven out of 10 doctors trusted Vicks for their own cough and cold. Vicks VapoRub has about 5% of the Indian respiratory health market. About 60% of Indian households use Vicks for cold relief⁸. According to market sources, Vicks has an approximately 60 per cent share of the cold rub market, with players such as Amrutanjan's cold rub, Cold Snap, and Paras Pharma's D'Cold as competition.

CONCLUSION**Vicks Vaporub: "We don't sell Vicks VapoRub, we sell mother's love.**

Over the years, Vicks has launched various heart-tugging ad campaigns that have struck an emotional chord and left an impact of love and care for which the brand stands. According to a P&G spokesperson, "Ever since its launch in India in 1952, Vicks Vaporub was strategically positioned as a child cold rub, and all communication to consumers, employees, trade etc. has always centered round the mother child loving relationship." The brand surely reigns supreme on the trust parameter, which no competitor can take away from Vicks. The effect, accordingly, has been that the consumers have sought to rely on Vicks as a part and parcel of their daily lives as such. In almost each and every household, a pack of Vicks Vaporub can be located. And what is important to note is that where it is not present, consumers still refer the other ointments (which they use) as Vicks only. By this it can be understood as to how dominating the effect of Vicks has been. Vicks VapoRub has endeared itself to the Indian consumer and finds its place in every Indian home, due to its proven performance over the years against cold.

According to the company P&G, "We don't sell Vicks VapoRub, we sell mother's love. The Vicks portfolio caters to different consumer needs and Vicks has become an integral part of every home and family in India. The consumer-brand relationship has been built over many years of trust and care and Vicks has lived up to its promise of a superior quality cough and cold relief product that consumers can enjoy for another fifty years and many more, to come. Vicks will last as long as Mother's love lasts."

ENDNOTES

¹<http://www.financialexpress.com/news/p&g-to-increase-prices-board-to-mull-stock-split/694597/2>

²<http://hubpages.com/hub/Top-100-Brands-of-India>

³<http://www.moneycontrol.com/annualreport/procterandgamblehygienehealthcare/directors-Report/PGH>

⁴<http://www.financialexpress.com/news/p&g-to-increase-prices-board-to-mull-stock-split/694597/2>

⁵<http://pharmaceuticals.indiabizclub.com/catalog/220400~vicks+vaporub~mumbai/20/01>

⁶<http://www.cbc.ca/health/story/2009/01/13/vicks.html#ixzz1Ch112VUm>

⁷News<http://www.cbc.ca/health/story/2009/01/13/vicks.html> January 13, 2009

⁸<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Vicks-can-cause-respiratory-distress-in-infants>

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