

The role of **consumer** **R & D** in a **successful** brand launch

CASE STUDY

BRAND DEVELOPMENT

THE BRAND

PSyKo SEVEN® is a premium cigar brand owned by Kretek International. It is distributed and sold internationally in retail shops, e-commerce, and with distributors.

THE RESEARCH

Leadership requested new, contemporary brands for their proprietary cigar portfolio. I started with consumer research to identify the target audience, taste preferences, and brand positioning. I identified the 25 to 34 year-old market segment and developed a brand style similar to Ralph Steadman's "Gonzo" art.

"PSyKo SEVEN is one of the most successful in-house brands we've ever launched."

Mark Cassar,
President, Kretek International

Additionally, consumer research indicated that non-traditional packaging & advertising layouts had the most impact. Further research suggested the key demographic regularly visited cigar blogs and enjoyed in-store events both of which significantly influenced their buying habits. We learned bright white boxes and a giant cigar band were the most disruptive retail packaging, and an \$8.00 per cigar price point was most preferred among retail outlets.

THE LAUNCH

From the research, I knew the targeted consumer demographic relied on cigar blogs for brand information. To generate interest in the brand I developed a plan to utilize cigar websites and social media to spread the word about PSyKo SEVEN. At the industry's largest trade show I distributed press kits to bloggers. Each kit contained two cigars in special packaging, branded promotional items, PR photos and marketing copy. In the 6 weeks between the trade show announcement and the consumer ship date I launched an influencer campaign. I sent PSyKo press kits to dozens of bloggers, social media personalities, and magazines. When the brand shipped to retailers, demand was so high that it sold out within weeks. Media writers in the cigar space wrote dozens of articles including one in Cigar Aficionado about the cigar's oversized band.

SUCCESS METRICS

- 50+ PSyKo SEVEN articles written
- 92-Point rated cigar (top 5%)
- 1,000,000+ cigars sold
- \$1,000,000 Revenue in 18 months
- \$5M+ in retail revenue annually
- 3,500+ points of distribution in US & Europe
- 250+ retail cut & light events
- 18 SKUs in three line extensions



INDUSTRY & CHANNEL

Tobacco, FMCG

BRAND PROFILE

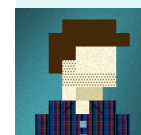
- \$15M Market Valuation
- 3,500 Retail Locations
- 18 SKUs
- 92-Point Rated

SKILLS DEMONSTRATED

- Product Development
- Consumer Research
- Product Positioning
- Logistics Planning
- Trade Marketing
- Marketing Strategy
- Media Planning
- Project Management
- Event Planning
- Sales Training
- Website Design
- Influencer Marketing
- Consumer Advertising

APPLICATIONS USED

- BaseCamp
- HootSuite
- MS Office
- MailChimp



KEVIN D. NEWMAN
805.256.0113
KEVINDNEWMAN.COM