

## **OCEAN STRATEGIC GROUP: CLIENT CASE STUDY**

**CLIENT: PEPPERFACE.COM**

**LAUNCH DATE: JANUARY 2006**

**Company Overview:** Pepperface is a company that has reinvented personal safety, converging innovation and style with social responsibility. Its “Prevention Purple” Campaign makes prioritizing self-defense a fashion statement by designating the Pepperface.com Edition Palm Defender as the sleek, stylish defense spray that is both an awareness symbol for violence against women and effective prevention against assault. The pepper spray device that is as at home on the red carpet as it is in the self-defense category, inspires social responsiveness and raises funds for the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence. The Pepperface website provides useful facts, vital statistics, and essential resources including help lines and links to national and statewide advocacy and counseling organizations. Pepperface creates a compelling environment that generates interest, encourages thought, and fuels action toward ending the violence and sexual assaults that affect every community in staggering numbers.

**Company Challenges:** For Pepperface to effectively achieve its marketing, branding, market penetration and sales objectives in a crowded consumer market, the Company had to overcome significant pre-existing market obstacles. The Ocean Strategic Group’s partners conducted a complete review of the market landscape, considered entrance of Pepperface into that market, and made an overall assessment of the challenges the Company needed to address and overcome to be successful. After understanding these challenges, the OSG partners constructed a strategic roadmap for business development that included website design, branding, marketing, strategic partnerships, product innovations, public relations and additional revenue channels.

### **Competitive and Consumer Market Challenges:**

- Commodity Product – Personal safety products (specifically, pepper spray) tend to be a commodity in the sense that consumers can’t distinguish between a superior product design, and tend to rely on product price-point when making purchase decisions.

- Effectiveness – Consumers were confused by the various military and law enforcement forms of crowd control and non-lethal sprays – misunderstanding the varying benefits and differences of pepper spray versus mace and tear gas, etc. These misconceptions led to the assumption by many consumers that pepper spray simply did not work (e.g. if tear gas can be “fought through” then so can pepper spray).
- Faulty Design – the poorly designed pepper sprays of the past were prone to accidental discharge, expired fill or easily damaged containers. These flaws fostered a bad impression of pepper sprays that was perpetuated with consumers.
- Legality – Due to misinformation and a lack of media/consumer marketplace support, many consumers assumed pepper spray was a restricted or illegal form of personal self-defense.
- Lack of perceived NEED – other safety solutions are enough (e.g. I live in a safe neighborhood, there is safety in numbers, small town syndrome).
- General safety misconceptions – too old, too smart, too strong, already protected.
- Container Form – General opinions of most pepper sprays – past and present – were that they are heavy, awkward, not aesthetically pleasing, cheaply made, grenade-like and bulky.
- Poor Functionality – Many consumers felt existing pepper sprays were confusing and counter-intuitive, (e.g. confusing safety switch, one-time use/disposable, imprecise spray mechanism, non-ergonomic design, lacking safe practice options).

### **Strategic Recommendations:**

Ocean Strategic Group partners implemented a strategic Pepperface brand building initiative that incorporated all facets of its business, intended to introduce its offering and become a leader in the consumer personal safety market.

- *The Pepperface.com website* is an engaging personal safety environment creating a virtual destination for consumers to learn about the need for personal safety, utilize vital resources (e.g. maps, relevant links, vital nationwide help-lines); become educated on crucial awareness issues to

end violence against women – all while learning more about the features, effects, design and function of the Palm Defender, enabling consumers to select, design and purchase their favorite Palm Defenders and accessories.

- *Advertising campaigns:* The new pepperFACE of personal safety. Through the creative development of high-fashion advertising concepts, Pepperface introduced the consumer market to the new FACE of personal safety and self-defense. The combination of these concepts and utilization of models, photographers, stylists, set designs, props, holiday themes, etc. resulted in the creation of an entirely new category in the self-defense industry: FASHIONABLE Self-Defense. Pepperface utilized fashion in the same manner that Apple and Motorola incorporated fashion into its MUST HAVE accessories, the iPod MP3 player and the RAZR mobile phone.
  
- *Media Placement / Public Relations:* In its first year, OSG developed many Pepperface media angles in an effort to reach consumers on multiple levels and create product recognition, allowing the Company to cultivate brand loyalty. We focused on multiple media outlets to reach numerous demographics. The success of this strategy placed the Palm Defender in media segments ranging from serious violence-awareness discussions to celebrity driven entertainment spots. Pepperface has appeared in the following major media outlets:
  - Television: CNBC, NBC, ABC, Fox, CBS, E! News and TBS
  
  - Magazines: InStyle, US Weekly, New York Magazine, Life & Style, In Touch, Women's Health & Fitness, Hamptons Magazine & Gotham Magazine.
  
  - Newspapers: The Wall Street Journal, Chicago Tribune, New York Post, New York Daily News, Miami Herald, Washington Post, Cincinnati Enquirer, Arizona Republic, Houston Chronicle, Dallas Star and Las Vegas Review Journal.
  
- *Celebrity Association:* Celebrity endorsements can prove invaluable to a product's consumer success and market domination. The extreme example being *Oprah*, with the *O List* and *Oprah's Favorite Things*. The influence of "A-list" celebrities can result in direct consumer response,

producing staggering results. Through a charitable campaign conceived by the partners at Ocean Strategic Group, Pepperface solidified relationships with celebrities including Lindsay Lohan, Kelly Ripa, Jaime Pressly, Gabrielle Union, Haylie Duff, Jason Lee, Stacy Keibler and Nadine Velazquez to name a few..

- *Tradeshows:* In an effort to achieve market penetration of an offline consumer base for Pepperface products, which was exclusively offered online, OSG partners developed a complete process and branding campaign for the Company to beta test at relevant consumer tradeshow events. Pepperface introduce the Palm Defender first-hand to consumers and various targeted industries. Pepperface participated in conventions ranging from smaller ‘cash-n-carry’ shows to the large national association shows i.e. NAR (National Association of Realtors® -- 25,000 attendees). The objective in attending these shows was to communicate the Pepperface message, distribute materials, gather consumer input, gauge response to the Palm Defender and naturally, sell units. Within six months, the tradeshow division at Pepperface ramped up to a significant portion of company revenues.
- *Retailers:* Based on the success of the offline sales related to the tradeshow division that OSG conceived, we further expanded their offline sales presence. In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2006 (9 short months after the launch of Pepperface), OSG developed key retail networks allowing the company to tap into an existing consumer base as well as give established businesses a vested interest to grow into primary Pepperface partners – which directly translated into viable sales channels for the Palm Defender. The retail focus was on female dominated companies, regarding both the owner/operator and the clientele. The Palm Defender can now be found in boutiques, salons, department stores and upscale apothecaries.
- *Charity & Non-Profits:* From its inception, Pepperface recognized the direct relationship with the Palm Defender’s ability to prevent individual attacks against women and addressing the macro issue of making strides toward ending violence against women. Designating the Palm Defender as the awareness symbol for violence against women gave Pepperface the platform to reach more individuals and communities with this personal safety device. Charitable efforts include a NCDSV donation of one dollar for every Pepperface Edition Palm Defender sold, fully

funding a celebrity auction from which 100% of the proceeds benefited the NCDSV, silent auction donations of Swarovski crystal Palm Defenders for various local charities and free safety seminars held in leading health clubs/spas.

### **Ocean Strategic Group / Pepperface Milestones:**

- Pepperface and the Palm Defender have successfully refocused the consumer market and general population on the need to address personal safety, effecting a change in thinking for this entire market.
- Pepperface has implemented its unique strategy to reinvent personal safety through a 'Brand Building' campaign, which included consumer education, social awareness and responsibility, significant media presence (including celebrity association) and appropriate retail venues.
  - Pepperface has established a strong partnership with the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence, one of the country's leading organizations focused on counseling, advocacy and training on the vital topic of violence against women. This affiliation is the first endorsement of its kind given to a for-profit company by the NCDSV. From this partnership evolved The Prevention Purple Campaign™ - centered on the Palm Defender as both a powerful awareness symbol and effective prevention tool.
  - Pepperface has developed retail outlets for the Palm Defender in female dominated marketplaces including boutiques, beauty salons, upscale apothecaries and department stores. This departure from the existing Palm Defender line's availability in hunting websites and gun stores manifests the strategy of showcasing the device in suitable female consumer shopping environments.
  - Through the branding campaign developed by OSG partners, Pepperface was able to introduce the Palm Defender to various online communities that control and influence the female demographic in staggering numbers. These blogs, chat pages, personal website communities, and fashion resources pages include MySpace, Daily Candy and TMZ, which are the virtual 'taste makers' and purchasing guides for online female shoppers.
  - Ocean Strategic Group has concepted and developed product packaging, product descriptions, shipping and collateral materials

tailored to the female demographic – confirming to women that the Pepperface Edition Palm Defender is the first pepper spray marketed and manufactured with modern women in mind.