

THE MATING GAME

The challenge

How could marketers of a deodorant/fragrance brand aimed at young men access the private and anxiety ridden world of teenage boys? The brand needed a clear direction for future growth but getting an insight into the sensitive area of 'the mating game' was going to be particularly challenging for adults struggling to remember how it felt to be young. Working with limited time and budget we needed an approach that would get us under the skin of this consumer group and deliver the greatest insight.

The insight

We thought the depth of learning we'd get using an ethnographic approach would provide the answer, but we had to be inventive about using it in such a sensitive area. We began online, with a discussion forum of 20 young men. Through this we got to know them and gained their trust, whilst they opened up and communicated in an uncensored way. We identified occasions where the mating game was high on their agenda so we knew where to focus the ethnographic phase.

We 'cherry picked' the most interesting and articulate respondents for in depth sessions and met each of them along with a group of their closest friends in an environment that played a typical role in the mating game. We gave them specific topics to discuss and filmed and observed whilst they talked. Areas of interest were noted and probed in detail later so as not to interfere with the natural flow of the discussion. We brought the key findings to life in a workshop with the client brand team and their ad, media and experiential agencies by combining video footage from the ethnographic sessions and verbatim from the online forum.

Client benefits

Our approach was both effective and efficient. It ensured that the client brand team was immersed in their consumers' world in a short space of time, on a very tight budget. The whole project was completed within three weeks. The research provided a depth of understanding of teenage boys that has now anchored the creative development of the fragrance and has also kicked off the creation of powerful brand communication for the future.

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