CASE STUDY | PREMIUM DRINKS | DIRECTOR OF MARKETING

Making a 120-year-old brand unmissable again

Three years leading marketing for Fentimans across brand, trade and NPD: a new brand character, new formats and a stronger range, building the business through to its sale to AG Barr.

CLIENT
Fentimans, botanically brewed premium soft drinks and mixers, Hexham

ROLE
Director of Marketing, senior leadership team

REMIT
Brand, trade marketing in-home and out-of-home, NPD

TIME
Three years, October 2022 to October 2025

+6pts
brand awareness, restored to its highest level nationally

Double-digit
category growth across grocery and on-trade

3 awards
including Marketing Director of the Year

WHAT I FOUND

Fentimans had 120 years of heritage, a loyal following and drinks people loved. But it was being saved for special occasions, household penetration was in long-term decline, and a recent rebrand hadn't fully landed.

The business had also seen high turnover in key roles, and faced new HFSS regulation and rising packaging costs. It needed a clear direction, and a marketing team that could deliver it.

MY APPROACH

Reporting to the CEO and owner, I led an 8-strong team and a full agency roster, owned the A&P budget, and worked hand in hand with sales and category teams across UK grocery, on-trade and 70 international markets.

I set three priorities: **make the brand distinctive**, **keep the range relevant** and **make every channel pull in the same direction**.

1
MAKE THE BRAND DISTINCTIVE

BOTANICALLY BREWED. FENTIMAN APPROVED.

DIAGNOSIS Soft drinks is a noisy, low-attention category, full of brands talking about botanicals, many with far bigger budgets. Our audience loved Fentimans but reached for everyday brands the rest of the time. To stand out, we had to own what made us different: our craft.

ACTION With creative agency Drummond Central, I developed Fentiman, an Ambassador of Exquisite Taste: a handcrafted puppet who pops up whenever someone is about to make a fizzy faux pas. With linear TV out of reach, I put the budget where it would work hardest: streaming TV including an innovative pause ad, social video on Meta and TikTok, outdoor, a branded vending machine in three cities, and a proud local push in the North East: "Brewed in Hexham. Enjoyed all over the world."



Meet Fentiman

RESULT: quality of awareness up from 38% to 43% nationally, beating the 3-point target, and up 11 points in London, 7 in the North East and 6 in the North West where media was upweighted. 89% of those who saw the campaign would consider Fentimans, versus 67% who didn't, and 61% said they had bought it.

2

KEEP THE RANGE RELEVANT

NPD, NEW FORMATS AND REFORMULATION

DIAGNOSIS A heritage range has to keep earning its place. New HFSS rules affected key lines, glass costs were rising, functional drinks were growing fast, and the classic Fentimans bottle kept the brand out of the chillers and front-of-store spots where impulse purchases happen.

ACTION I oversaw the annual NPD pipeline from insight to launch: new flavours such as Rhubarb, recipe upgrades and cost improvements across the range, and reformulation to meet HFSS rules. I moved key flavours into cans alongside the classic bottle, and launched a new functional drinks range.



From bottle to can

RESULT: a range fit for the rules and the shelf. The functional range won a Tesco listing straight away, and the new cans an immediate listing with WHSmith Travel.

3

ONE BRAND, EVERY CHANNEL

TRADE, EARNED MEDIA AND PROTECTING THE BRAND

DIAGNOSIS Brand investment only pays if it shows up where people buy. With a modest budget, every channel, retailer and distributor had to amplify the same story.

ACTION I owned go-to-market plans for UK grocery (Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose), foodservice and on-trade (Mitchells & Butlers, Whitbread), and guided distributor plans across 70 markets. I shifted the mix towards earned media, created an annual Soft Drinks Trends report to open conversations with retailers and kept the brand front of mind with retailers, distributors and the trade press.

CRISIS When the brand was targeted by saboteurs, I drew on my crisis communications experience at Carnival Cruise Line to help the business take control of the narrative quickly.

RESULT: double-digit category growth across grocery and on-trade, and one consistent brand from Newcastle to Chile.

ALSO ON MY WATCH

World's Longest Advert

the brand's largest-ever TV shoot: a 7-day location production

New website

one global platform balancing local customisation with brand consistency across international markets

Fenwick pop-up

two years running in Newcastle, part of reclaiming the North, our home market

WHAT CHANGED

In three years, Fentimans restored brand awareness to its highest level nationally, halted a long-term decline in penetration and won three marketing awards, including Marketing Director of the Year and B2C Campaign of the Year. The business was in strong shape for its sale to AG Barr.

Persuading the owner to hand his family's brand to a puppet took eight months. Worth it.

> “ Good job you are stubborn, young lady. This was the right thing to do.
>
> **The Fentimans owner, December 2024**

Campaign figures from Fentimans brand tracking and pre and post campaign evaluation.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

Behind a famous name, Fentimans was a lean business where every pound had to work hard. That is the experience I bring to every client: joined-up marketing leadership that builds a distinctive brand and delivers results the board can see.

Jayne Andrews

Jayne Andrews FCIM

Fractional Marketing Director. 30 years' experience, agency and client side. Global campaigns, with experience working in the UK, Australia and the USA.

Need an interim senior marketer?

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