Company: Hindustan Lever  
Sector: Consumer goods  
Country: India  
Project: Fighting disease clean-handed  

Resume: Diarrhea causes over three million deaths a year worldwide, mostly among children. At a rate of one child every ten seconds, mortality from diarrhea diseases represents one-third of all deaths of children under the age of five in developing countries. While Unilever has supported hygiene education programs in India for many years, in 2002 the Lifebuoy brand team devised a way to have a real impact on reducing diarrhea disease. Lifebuoy, produced locally by Hindustan Lever, is Unilever's biggest brand in India and the country's most popular soap. The Swasthya Chetna program started in 2002 in the eight Indian states where deaths from diarrhea diseases are highest and soap sales are lowest. As Hindustan Lever Lifebuoy Brand Manager said "Swasthya Chetna is not about philanthropy. It's a marketing program with social benefits".

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SWASTHYA CHETNA

Main characteristics of the Swasthya Chetna program:

- The program's objective was to educate 200 million Indians – 20% of the population – to wash their hands with soap after defecating and to achieve this goal within five years. The campaign, called Swasthya Chetna, or health awakening, is the largest rural health and hygiene education program ever undertaken in India.
- To ensure this initiative has a sustainable impact, the Lifebuoy team worked with advisers to develop a multistage program, designed to involve and educate whole rural communities. After seeking permission from village elders, the Swasthya Chetna teams, consisting of a health development officer and an assistant, visit village schools to teach children about germs and the importance of hand washing with soap.
- The program started with a Health Development Facilitator (HDF) and an assistant initiating contact and interacting with schoolchildren and influencers of the
community like village community representatives, medical practitioners, school teachers, etc.

- To help people on low incomes afford to buy soap, 18-gram bar of Lifebuoy soap was introduced, enough for one person to wash their hands once a day for 10 weeks. This sells for two rupees, equivalent to the price of four cups of tea or enough wheat for a meal for one person.

Swasthya Chetna main challenges:

- Main challenges are about extending the program to other states and beyond Lifebuoy's initial five-year commitment.

- Swasthya Chetna has also generated interest in other parts of Unilever. Unilever Bangladesh has adopted the Indian model for the past two years. Additionally, the program has been or is currently being rolled out in Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Uganda and Vietnam.

Business model

The Swasthya Chetna program business model was especially characteristic because its marketing and distribution local channels and support from different agents, like NGOs and Health Development Facilitators (HDF).

They also change the packing characteristics. Soap needed to be delivered into small portions in order to make it affordable for local population.

To get the prices as low as possible they rethought the entire cost structure. Anything that did not add value in the production, distribution and sales process was taken out.

Their multi-stakeholders relationships were an important tool to ensure that the social and educational aspects of the project were clear to the public. Also because they had to take into account and make them work so washing with soap became a kind of ritual.

Engage local actors were also definitive to help in the process, as they have the influence to get the people involved in Unilever’s program.

Local distribution in rural areas was a must to introduce the soap into the communities, while NGOs and HDF were worth to introduce the product to the peoples and the importance of washing with soap for sanitary matters. Initiates contact and interacts with schoolchildren and influencers of the community, like village community representatives, medical practitioners, school teachers etc. HDF used a number of tools like a pictorial story in a flip chart format, a "Glowgerm demonstration", and a quiz with attractive prizes to reinforce the message are used. The "Glowgerm demonstration" is a unique tool to make unseen germs visible and emphasize the need to adopt hygienic practices.
Hindustan Lever Traditional business model

Hindustan Lever business model in low income markets
*RS - rural stockkeepers