

CASE STUDY

DIAGEO



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THE DIAGEO CHALLENGE

Diageo came to us with an identity issue. In a cut-throat battle for the talent they needed to reach the next stage of their evolution, they were at a competitive disadvantage. The organizations they were competing against – in-market, such as AB-Inbev, Heineken and Pernod Ricard, and outside-market, such as Google, Unilever and L’Oreal – all had strong, clearly defined employer reputations.

Diageo was well-known across Europe, but with Europe only responsible for 24% of sales, this was extremely sub-optimal for their global plans. Internationally, the vast majority of candidates knew Diageo brands – from Guinness to Smirnoff and Johnnie Walker – but that awareness conveyed absolutely nothing about Diageo’s employee offer or profile. In fact, with different audiences thinking different things, it sewed confusion.

The brief: create and launch a new, clear and compelling employer brand era for an employer out-reached by competitors and outshined by its own iconic products.

RESEARCH

Our solution needed rigorous understanding covering every angle. The research had three layers:

Internal

This covered Diageo colleagues (experienced and recent joiners) across North America, Latin America, Europe, APAC, Africa and India (as a standalone location).

The functions included were: Commercial, Supply, Marketing, Finance, HR, IT and Customer Management.

External

External professionals from the same functions as the internal research were involved from Tier 1 and Tier 2 markets.

Competitor benchmarking

Deep global and local desktop research was conducted into competitors’ employee offers and positioning.

COMPETITOR POSITIONING

Main competitors for talent led with the following talent messaging principles:

Making a better world – AB-Inbev, Google, GSK and Facebook

Career opportunity – Heineken, Unilever and P&G

A well-balanced life – Pernod Ricard

Innovation/the future – L’Oreal

THE CORE ISSUES

Even though its brands are long established, Diageo itself is very young and growing differently in diverse geographies with cultural nuances.

Diageo needed a very strong upswing in brand recognition – globally, 58% of external research contributors had not heard of Diageo.

But raising the volume wasn’t enough. Diageo needed an entirely different positioning to create clear differentiation from established competitors.

The research found the answer to all three issues.

DIAGEO POSITION

A key behavioral insight was **responsibility**. How Diageo employees felt they were picking up the torch from the founding entrepreneurs of the business – characters like Arthur Guinness, Johnnie Walker and Pyotr Smirnov.

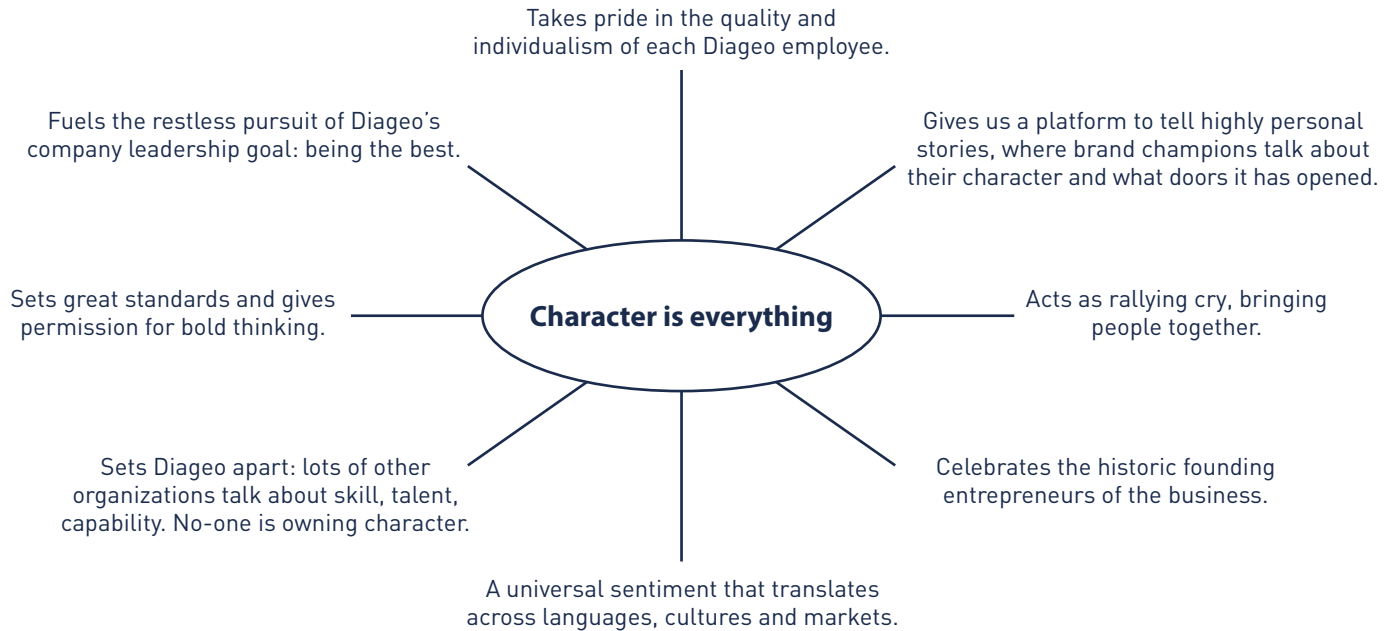
The matching cultural insight was the **endless and rapid change** experienced by employees. This was seen by some as a positive, by others as a negative, and by everyone as a core feature of the business.

Our conclusion? A behavioral employer brand that identified who was – and was not – a Diageo person. Attracting the right candidates and actively putting off the wrong ones.



DIAGEO EVP

We created an employer value proposition that was both deliberately challenging and inclusive.



STRATEGY

We deconstructed and tested the proposition for audiences across geography and job role to gain buy-in business-wide.

We created six brand pillars, ensuring our message was compelling and authentic for audiences divided by geography or job area.

We made Diageo people the brand heroes, so we could tell local and global stories, and inspire brand advocates to come forward to lead the brand beyond advertising and into their professional networks.

TAILORING THE BRAND

We fine-tuned and then launched different iterations of the brand for different geographies.

For example, in various African countries, recruiters told us that candidates responded well to messages around supporting the community.

We also translated our communications into a range of local languages.

SHIFTING PERCEPTIONS

We're gaining evidence across a number of campaigns that we're altering perceptions and boosting awareness around the Diageo employer brand – for example among sales and e-commerce professionals.

There has been a great response internally too. Not only were we over-subscribed for brand champion volunteers, focus group feedback more generally is pointing to a real upswing in pride when seeing collateral led by the *Character is everything* message. The collective view is that it's aspirational and unique, but real.

