

## Consumer Promotions

*Hot on the heels of Make Money and the other forecourt games comes Shell's Mastermind. Michael Rines reports.*

It is a measure of the frenetic level of promotional activity on Britain's filling station forecourts that Shell does not expect its massive Mastermind campaign to have the same impact on sales as Make Money, even though it is altogether bigger in scale.

This does not mean, however, that Shell is not delighted with the way its activities have affected the petrol marketing scene, and the company is determined to continue with its promotional activities.

John Smeddle, Shell UK Oil's sales manager, told his retailers when launching Mastermind:

'When we launched Make Money our objectives included changing the marketing environment for retail petrol sales from one concentrating almost exclusively on price to one where we could create interest and excitement at the point of sale, combined with fair prices for the motorist.

'The fact that so many of our competitors followed us



James Holmes

# Cerebral promotion for drivers

into national promotions is a testimony to the power which the right promotion, properly structured, enjoys, and clearly they recognise this fact.'

What Make Money also did, partly because it was the first in the field and partly because its concept was more powerful than any of the competitive promotions that have been fielded, was to provide something more than a mere short term lift in Shell's sales.

The company is not prepared to reveal what the short term effect was, though retail

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## Consumer Promotions



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advertising manager Mike Beach says the company has 'never argued with the widely quoted figure of 25 per cent.' What he finds more gratifying is that even after the promotion had finished and the market was flooded with competitive campaigns, Shell's sales continued to run on forecast.

This is not to say that Shell and its games consultancy, Don Marketing, have not learned some lessons from the game. Shell had underestimated the impact of the game, though Don was always more sanguine.

'We had underestimated the power of sales promotion in the petrol market,' admits Beach.

'We assumed a much greater degree of sophistication among consumers than had been the case in 1966 when the

### **From the onset Mastermind was planned to be 50 per cent bigger than Make Money**

*Chambers: Mobil's Scrabble 'good looking . . .'*

original Make Money was run.

'One of the other lessons was the need for a cleaner ending.

'We ummed and ahed about whether to end on a fixed date, and in the end left it to individual sales regions, and this caused confusion. Again, some ran free draws for customers bringing in half notes after the closing dates, and some did not.

'It was a bit messy.'

For Don Marketing managing director John Chambers the importance was underlined of either having more game pieces available or arrangements in hand to print more than the forecast suggested were necessary. Fortunately, provision was made for this, because, in the event the game was so successful that

two extra printings proved necessary.

From the outset Mastermind was planned to be 50 per cent bigger than Make Money.

With three million prizes, against two million, and with 50 per cent more game pieces, it is the biggest petrol promotion ever run in this country. In structuring the game, he and Don Marketing were very much aware that the opposition had woken up and was capable of producing very effective promotions.

For example, Mobil's Scrabble game (still running at the time of the Mastermind launch) was a very playable game which, Chambers reckons, was 'one of the best looking games, with very good point of sale support.

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'It had colour and impact, though the public may not be interested in collecting large numbers of scraps of paper with letters on them.'

Beach says Shell is relieved that the game was launched by Mobil, rather than by one of the bigger petrol companies.

Playability was one of the game characteristics that the Shell team considered essential for a successful promotion in the second wave of campaigns, if public interest was to be sustained. The basic Mastermind theme seems to have been first suggested by McBain, Noel-Johnson, the design company working on Shell's promotional campaigns, alongside Don Marketing, ad agency Ogilvy and Mather, and printers Dobson and Crowther.

The idea closely fitted Shell's policy of preserving an up-market image for its promotions. In the Make Money game this had been achieved by the banknote-like design of the game piece, and this was followed through in Mastermind. The Mastermind image is, uniquely, intellectual but with an appeal to the masses and is effectively symbolised by the use of the well-known chair and the spotlight in the design.

It was something of a coup to secure the agreement of the BBC to the use of its programme name, and it is believed to be the first time such permission has been granted for commercial purposes.

Agreement also had to be reached with Invicta Plastics, which developed the board game of the same name and which holds the copyright.

Converting the basic concept into a workable game was largely the task of Don Marketing, though it is stressed that, as with Make Money, the game project was very much a team effort, with input from all the companies involved.

The game eventually devised is similar to Make Money in that any driver calling at a Shell filling station is giving one game piece per visit per day. Each game piece consists of a sealed envelope containing either one left hand question or one right hand

## Agreement had to be made with the BBC and Invicta Plastics for use of Mastermind name

answer.

To win, the motorist must match a question with a right answer and, to make the game more intriguing, there are several correct answers to each question, and vice versa.

For instance, one question asks who was capped for England more than 50 times. The answers Bobby Moore and Geoffrey Boycott are both right. Similarly, several different questions can lead to the answer 'Pass'.

The question and answer aspect of the game was devised solely to add interest and intrigue to the game, because Shell and Don Marketing feel very strongly that the public likes games that have an element of challenge and fun, rather than pure chance.

However, in Mastermind, the player does not have to know the right answer or the right question for a given answer to win. This is because matching questions and answers are printed on half notes having the same cash denomination. So players can simply ignore the questions and answers and watch instead for matching denominations, as in Make Money.

One important difference from Make Money is the prize structure. It was felt important to ensure that there were more winners and that more attention was drawn to them. That was why the number of prizes was increased by 50 per cent to three million, giving an average of 40,000 winners a day — and an average of 15 per

forecourt per day for the ten weeks duration of the promotion.

Again, because it was felt important to make the most of the publicity attending the big winners, enough major prizes were provided to produce an average of 15 big winners a week. What is more, as part of the point of sale material for the forecourt there is a poster on which the numbers of winners to date can be marked up for each forecourt, and a much bigger PR effort is being mounted to publicise the big wins.

With so much money involved, security was, once again crucially important and was an aspect of the promotion in which the games consultant, the designer and the printer were all deeply involved.

A number of security features were built into the design to make the game piece both difficult to forge and to prevent see through. And to prevent news of the game leaking out prematurely, any work that was sub-contracted by the designers was split up into the smallest possible elements to prevent anyone realising what they were working on.

Moreover, as Chris Noel-Johnson at the design house explains, the setting of the questions and answers had to be split up among several different suppliers, studios were kept locked, waste material was shredded and people working on the project were sworn to secrecy.

All these precautions paid off, because no hint of the coming promotion leaked out until just before the launch, when it was too late for anyone to pre-empt Shell's launch.

However, there was one last minute scare.

The week before the launch, the Daily Mail announced that it was about to launch a new bingo game called Mastermind, however, Shell discovered that the Mail had failed to get permission to use the name and Invicta forced the newspaper to find a new name.

As expected, the impact of the new game has not approached that of Make Money, but Shell is nevertheless satisfied with its progress, and its commitment to promo-

tion instead of price cutting is as firm as ever.

As Mike Beach explains:

'It is the second stage of a marketing programme aimed at re-awakening Shell's brand identity and getting away from the price arena into the marketing arena. To meet our competitors on a promotional platform has to be better than trading price cuts.' ■

Michael Rines is associate editor of Marketing Magazine.

Tia Maria:

## On-pack for off-trade



TIA MARIA, brand leader in the UK traditional liqueur market, is receiving continuing support through the summer with a major on-pack promotion run through the off trade.

URM, agents for the brand in the UK, is running a promotion known as 'On the Rocks' which finishes this month.

An ice maker bag will be enclosed on each neck collar and this will endorse the heavyweight activity in the on trade with Tia Maria party nights.

The move is part of URM's continuing support to the trade and the promotion is designed to emphasise the brand's versatility as an 'all year round' drink.

'We are committed to giving support to Tia Maria throughout 1984 and believe that this promotion will ensure further valuable gains for the brand,' says Keith Johnson, marketing manager. ■

# Leading the World in Promotional Games



## and for Shell...



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