



Boroline Branding: More Than Cosmetic Changes

Today you have to run faster to stay in...place. — Philip Kotler¹

While at the market, Bhavna Batra,ⁱ a cosmetic industry expert, examined a new Boroplus advertisement.ⁱⁱ Batra had used Boroplus occasionally, but preferred its competitor and past market share champion, Boroline—a Bengal multi-purpose cosmetic cream brand. Having recently returned to India after residing in the United States for several years, Batra had gained significant knowledge about the expansive international skin care market and was excited to be able to readily purchase her favorite skin care cream again. But Batra was concerned; consumer demand for Boroline in India was eroding rapidly. As an industry expert, Batra had seen the growth of several skin care products and was deliberating Boroline's potential for a brand revival to create market dominance once more.

Boroline had come a long way since its launch in 1929. The brand had enjoyed a near-monopoly in the Indian cosmetic industry from the 1930s to 1980s, withstanding stiff competition from both international and local rivals. The evolution of this heritage-like brand and its survival puzzled many industry experts, including Batra. Despite Boroline having been a staple in almost every Indian household, the brand was facing extinction in the global cosmetic market as alternative product selections grew. Was this the result of evolving consumer preferences toward newly specialized products or the fallout of a wrong strategic operational choice by Boroline? Was it the product, its market positioning, or its brand-associations and promotional style that had led to its dwindling fate? Batra could not help but consider these factors as she recollected the downfall of Boroline.

Could Boroline leap from barely surviving the market to touching the pinnacle of its success again? Batra thought Boroline had a couple of options: It could reposition the cream for general-purpose use, exemplifying its medicinal value; or it could further extend the brand into the Indian market. Perhaps the

ⁱ Bhavna Batra is a fictional character developed by the authors for the purposes of class discussion. Any similarities toward a real person are coincidental and unintentional.

ⁱⁱ This case has been written on the basis of published sources only. Consequently, the interpretation and perspectives presented in this case are not necessarily those of GD Pharmaceutical or any of its employees.



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