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Bayer Aspirin Reclaims 'Wonder Drug' Image

New Positioning, Tagline Aimed at Boosting Flat Sales

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NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- Faced with flat sales, Bayer is repositioning its iconic aspirin brand with a new campaign that revives an old idea.



Spending on the new effort for Bayer Aspirin will be 'comparable' to the \$40 million the brand currently spends each year.

Photo Credit: Bayer

The new positioning and theme line is "Expect Wonders," a nod to the iconic tagline "The wonder drug that works wonders." In addition, the brand will receive new packaging, a new website (wonderdrug.com) and a promotion, which will be announced via a free-standing insert to more than 40 million homes on Super Bowl Sunday. Omnicom Group's BBDO Worldwide, New York, is handling the campaign.

Robert Schumm, category director-Bayer Aspirin franchise, said overall ad buys will be "pretty comparable" to the \$40 million the brand currently spends each year, though a good portion of that will be front-loaded in the next few months to kick off the campaign. The company said there will be a 26% increase in primetime spending.

'History of growth'

"As a brand, Bayer has had a great history of growth. In the 1990s, we doubled the business in sales," Mr. Schumm said. "But in recent years, sales have been flatter than we're used to. We want to get back to the explosive growth we had in the 1990s."

Johnson & Johnson's Tylenol led the way in over-the-counter pain relievers with \$2.1 billion in sales last year in food, drug and mass merchandisers excluding Wal-Mart, according to Information Resources Inc., followed by Bayer Aspirin (\$830 million), Wyeth's Advil (\$634 million) and Bayer's Aleve (\$235 million).

Those products, and more, took a hit late last year when the Food and Drug Administration recommended they carry warning labels highlighting the danger of stomach bleeding for people over 60 who use Bayer Aspirin, Advil and Aleve.

'Tried and true'

"We believe Bayer continues to be a wonder drug, and that's what the campaign will do -- remind consumers why Bayer is a tried and true choice," Mr. Schumm said.

The TV portion of the campaign will have three 30-second spots and two 15-second commercials, all of which feature Ty Pennington, the host of ABC's "Extreme Makeover." Bayer called Mr. Pennington, 42, a perfect fit for its target audience of adults 40 and older.

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