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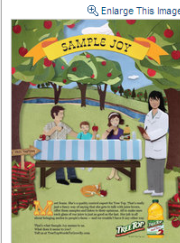
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CAMPAIGN SPOTLIGHT

Sit Under the Apple Tree With Me, Juice Brand Asks

By STUART ELLIOTT
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Want to know a juicy marketing secret? As soft drinks contend with challenges like health concerns and the economy, juices are stepping up their advertising efforts.



Mott's returned to television last year, for the first time in a decade, and is bringing out this month a new variety, Mott's Medleys Juice. Welch's has a new campaign, as does Juicy Juice.

Campbell Soup is enjoying higher sales of products like V8 and V8 V-Fusion juices. Apple & Eve has Fruitables, a blend of fruit and vegetable juices, and Ocean Spray is introducing a line of blueberry juice drinks.

Now joining the juiced-up jamboree is Tree Top apple juice, sold by Tree Top, a growers' co-operative in the Pacific Northwest that is commemorating its 50th anniversary this year. Tree Top, the co-op, is introducing a campaign on Monday for Tree Top, the apple juice, with the product's first consumer ads in several years.

The idea behind the campaign by the Tree Top creative agency, Cole & Weber United in Seattle, part of the United unit of WPP, is "Words to grow by." Consumers are being invited to share their own words at a microsite, or special Web site, which is going live on Monday.

The focus on growth is intended to appeal to the primary target audience for the campaign, which is mothers of children ages 6 and under. They are big buyers of apple juice, a staple in households with youngsters.

The campaign includes, in addition to the microsite, print advertisements, ads online and a prominent presence in social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter.

Elements of the campaign like the print ads are being concentrated in markets where the Tree Top co-op is best known, which include California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington.

The campaign is planned to appear through October, step aside during the holiday season and return after the new year begins.

As for the budget, "on a nationalized, annualized basis," it would be "a few million dollars," says Dan Hagerty, senior vice president for sales and marketing the Tree Top co-op in Selah, Wash.

By comparison, the co-op spent about \$585,000 on advertising last year, he says, which included ads aimed at encouraging food makers to use its apples in producing their products.

According to Kantar Media, a division of WPP that tracks ad spending, the Tree Top co-op spent even less on ads before that: \$203,000 in 2007 and \$184,000 in 2008.

"We have been on a bit of an advertising hiatus for the last few years," Mr. Hagerty says, and "we had to concentrate more on trade and consumer incentives to keep our business moving forward."

But "we now have the money to reinvest in the brand," he adds, and help consumers learn about the co-op origins of Tree Top products.

"We're a sleepy little co-op in Selah, Wash., that's been around for 50 years," Mr. Hagerty says, "and when people find that out, that it's owned by the growers, they think it's cool."

"The more they know about it, the more engaged they are with the brand," he adds, particularly among shoppers for whom buying American-made products is important.

That is why Tree Top ads carry the theme "Real fruit from real people" and the new campaign seeks to point out the similarities between the co-op's growers and mothers.

"The whole campaign proposition is that it's great to do a job you love," Mr. Hagerty says, and that applies to moms as much as to apple farmers and vice versa.

"Raising a family is obviously a difficult job, but you wouldn't trade it in for anything," he says in summarizing the beliefs of mothers. That echoes "the way our growers described their jobs: hard, but they couldn't imagine doing anything else," he adds.

And just as mothers tell anyone who asks that hard times are not an excuse for bailing out on their families, Mr. Hagerty says, growers would say "just because there's a bad crop, you don't rip out the trees."

(Is that the reason misbehaving children are called bad apples?)

The roots of Tree Top in a growers' cooperative are clearly an inspiration for the home-grown, homespun look of the campaign. The print ads and treetopwordstogrowby.com use a folksy type of art known as paper cuttings, in this instance created by Jayme McGowan, who writes a journal about her work at roadside projects.blogspot.com.

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Ms. McGowan, who will herself "be a mom pretty soon," Mr. Hagerty says, was found by Cole & Weber on the craft marketplace Web site [Etsy](#).

"Today, building brands is about shared values, values consumers can relate to," says Mike Doherty, president at Cole & Weber, like the "passion" and "common sense values" of the Tree Top growers.

Here, the intent is "connecting moms with the values of these authentic people," he adds, who come from "a real place, not a fake, made-up place" like, say, Nature Valley, the brand name for products sold by [General Mills](#).

One print ad, bearing the headline "Cultivate Happy," shows a farmer on a tractor, followed by a dog, with apple trees in the background.

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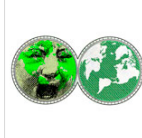
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"Meet grower John, one of our many apple growers here at Tree Top," the text begins, then continues: "You see, to John this is the best darn job in the world. He gets to play in the dirt, drive a big ol' tractor and hang out with his dog."

"Oh, and he also gets to grow and harvest some of the world's finest apples that make some pretty amazing juice," the text declares.

A 15-second video version of the print ad, which brings Ms. McGowan's cut-paper artwork to life, can be watched on [YouTube](#).

In a second print ad, bearing the headline "Sample Joy," a woman in a lab coat, holding a clipboard, stands next to a picnic table where a man, boy and girl are trying Tree Top apple juice and apples. A sign nearby reads, "Free Tasting."

"Meet Sonia," the text starts, then goes on: "She's a quality control expert for Tree Top. That's really just a fancy way of saying that she gets to talk with juice lovers, offer them samples and listen to their opinions. All to make sure each glass of our juice is just as good as the last."

"Her job is all about bringing smiles to people's faces — and we wouldn't have it any other way," the ad says.

A third print ad, with the headline "Harvest Good," is planned.

All the print ads will encourage readers to visit [treetopwordstogrowby.com](#) and describe what the phrases like "Cultivate Happy" and "Sample Joy" mean to them. The comments contributed by visitors to the microsite, along with content created by Tree Top employees, will be combined to form an online version of a quilt.

Once on the microsite, visitors will also be able to do things like vote for their favorite content, sort the material by categories (among them, quotations and stories), share content with friends and download material.

"The modern mom is plugged in," Mr. Hagerty says, "engaged in the Internet and heavy users of social networking."

During the research for the campaign, he adds, when mothers were asked to share photo journals "every other picture was sent on an iPhone or from a laptop."

"There's no way in the world we could outspend" the juice giants like Mott's, Mr. Hagerty says. "It's not in the cards."

But "if we can get moms engaged and understanding who we are and wanting to talk to other moms about that," he adds, they can serve as brand advocates and evangelists for Tree Top.

Mr. Doherty says that because mothers are "active in all these places" online, "it makes them crave grounding even more in the things that are real and authentic."

That benefits Tree Top, as a grower-owned co-op, he adds, along with "something to apple juice, pure and simple."

The print ads will run in magazines like American Baby, Baby Talk, Family Fun, Parenting, Parents and Working Mother.

The digital ads will appear on Web sites and so-called mommy blogs like [about.com](#), Baby Center, Café Mom, Circle of Moms, Facebook, [ivillage.com](#) and Moms Like Me along with sites that are part of the [Walt Disney Company](#) online network.

During the years that the Tree Top co-op was not running consumer advertising, Cole & Weber remained its creative agency.

"There were two or three years when all I did was pick up the phone and say, 'We're still here,'" Mr. Hagerty says, and at one point, he even sent "a letter of termination."

The agency replied that it would refuse the letter, he adds, "and said, 'When you're ready to advertise again, we want to be your guys.'"

Mr. Doherty recalls how Cole & Weber remained stalwart while its client "retrenched."

"We told them we would not take a retainer and 'we'll be here for you on a project basis,'" he says. "They came back at the end of last year and said they were ready to roll again."

Talk about cultivating happy, sampling joy and harvesting good.

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