

## **Dow Corning Strengthens Dual-Brand Positioning, Creates New Growth Opportunities**

*Randall Rozin, global director of brand management and marketing communications at Dow Corning, launched the Business Marketing Association's "ten talks for today's times" luncheon series on Sept. 9 at The Standard Club. The following article provides insight from his presentation.*



By [Whitney Baker](#)

A simple notion underpins the success of silicone giant Dow Corning: Even thriving business models must continue to evolve.

"True innovation doesn't just stand still," said Randall Rozin, the company's global director of brand management and marketing communications, in his talk at BMA's September MarketingMasters Luncheon Seminar. Dow Corning's current ability to progress, Rozin said, is rooted in previous transformational changes, resulting in the launch of the company's two-brand strategy.

### **Original launch of XIAMETER® brand**

In 2001, Dow Corning faced increased competition and flattening sales, Rozin explained. The economy stalled following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the dot-com burst, and parts of the company's business had matured. It was time for a change.

Customer research identified a growing number of purchasers who weren't being targeted by Dow Corning. These customers knew exactly what silicone materials they wanted to buy and how to use them, and didn't need all of the technical support and services typically offered under the Dow Corning® brand.

Dow Corning responded with the introduction of XIAMETER, a separate, online brand that provides customers an efficient and convenient option for purchasing products online.

"XIAMETER has been a great success for our organization and to date remains unrivaled in its space," Rozin said. The two-pronged brand approach continues to be a cornerstone of the Dow Corning strategy.

### **Present-day transformation**

Despite seven years of XIAMETER success, and margins that kept stakeholders satisfied, Dow Corning leaders decided in 2008 it was time to readdress changing customer needs to ensure continued growth of the company's brands.

"We knew we had to up our game to meet customer needs more exactly," Rozin said.

The company again focused on extensive customer research and identified possibilities for more segmentation and therefore more opportunities to meet customer needs. Building on the XIAMETER success, two key changes unfolded with the 2009 relaunch of the Dow Corning brands:

- **XIAMETER brand expansion:** Customers now have a wider array of efficient choices as Dow Corning increased ordering options and vastly expanded the number of products available through its online business.
- **Deeper clarification between XIAMETER and Dow Corning brands:** The company re-established its flagship Dow Corning brand as an option for customers who want highly specialized, collaborative partnerships and technical support, as distinguished from the XIAMETER brand, which completely focused on efficiency and standard silicone materials. XIAMETER remains linked to Dow Corning for brand-equity purposes, but the company carefully positions the different promises of each brand in all of its communications.

In order to stay ahead of competitors, the company needed to go beyond customer research, Rozin said. It proactively linked its new strategies to global trends critical to customers' growth, such as alternative energy advancement. Today, Dow Corning has invested more than \$4 billion in solar energy research and development, and links more than half of its innovation portfolio to sustainability.

"We are researching and developing materials and solutions that respond to the megatrends most important to our customer's current and future successes," Rozin said.

### **Focus on communication**

Dow Corning launched a full-blown, integrated communications campaign to accompany the relaunch of the two brands. The company's first priority was to communicate internally.

"We focus first and foremost on our employees," Rozin said. "We do this because we know well that if our employees don't get it, the chances that customer experience is going to be positive are more limited."

The company made "being on-brand" a corporate priority, Rozin said, and developed several strategies to engage employees, including internal branding training programs and brand touch-point workshops.

"If your employees don't get it, your customers aren't going to have a chance," said Rozin, adding that he hasn't found a job yet "that doesn't have a brand connection."

The campaign also emphasized the Dow Corning brand center, an online repository of brand information, and a XIAMETER® Media Center to help communicate up-to-date information about the transition. Tools such as online training, sample presentations and customer-only microsites helped channel partners and existing customers understand changes.

“The challenge that we had was we were flying this airplane and building it at the same time,” Rozin said. He said the company was trying to help its employees, its channel partners and its existing customers understand what was happening before it actually launched the brand to the public.

Dow Corning executed a host of global media launch events in summer 2009 and received rave third-party reviews. The company kept its message to customers clear across all communications channels. In the creative campaign, XIAMETER® ads appeared streamlined and simple, just like the brand.

Rozin said it was an incredible experience to serve on a team “that truly looked at a corporation, soup to nuts,” identified customer needs and found ways through business marketing to address those needs in a way that made financial sense.

Although Dow Corning proved innovation must stay in motion, Rozin closed his talk at the BMA luncheon by unveiling his personal formula for brand management success—an equation he said will remain forever constant.

“Brand is the summation of promises made, divided by promises kept, over time,” Rozin said. Keeping this promise in mind will unlock brand potential and create a greater gravitational pull for customers, employees and future employees.

*Whitney Baker recently completed her master’s degree at Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism and continues to freelance while seeking full-time employment.*