

CONSUMER ACTIVATION IN INDIA, PART 2

Designing and Testing the New Campaign

Consumer demand is critical to the financial sustainability of a community water system. Based on the results of consumer research in the state of Andhra Pradesh (detailed in Part 1 of this series), we have launched a campaign to increase household adoption and safe water purchases.

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PROGRAM SUMMARY

- **Objective:** Apply findings from market research to develop a campaign that leverages a Safe Water Station's touchpoints with the community.
- **Intervention:** Health-focused messaging delivered through updated commercial branding of products and facilities, targeted videos for different audiences on electronic tablets, and public water quality demonstrations.

KEY INSIGHTS

- Presenting standardized messages on tablets effectively engages consumers while strengthening quality control over communications.
- An electrolyzer test represents a compelling means of demonstrating that two water samples that look equally clean may have chemical differences; however, it must be performed alongside other tests and with a clear explanation of scientific basis.
- Our updated iJal brand and tagline help to contribute to an overall association of safe water with health.
- Early evidence shows marked increases in both household adoption and sales volumes.



Consumers collecting water from an iJal Station in the village of Gorikothapally

Background

Part 1 of this series of *Field Insights* ("Understanding the Consumer") described our work to understand the factors shaping the decisions of safe water consumers and non-consumers in Andhra Pradesh. Based on these results, Safe Water Network and our partners have developed and rolled out campaigns to accelerate the adoption and purchasing of safe water at our India sites. The objectives are to accelerate adoption at new sites to more rapidly reach our target of 75% of households registering with the Safe Water Station, and to increase customer retention and purchasing frequency at established sites to enable sales to reliably cover operating and investment costs.

Safe Water Network develops innovative solutions that provide safe water to communities in need. Our goal is to achieve sustainable service delivery and locally-independent operations through the application of local ownership and market principles.

In *Field Insights*, we provide a focused analysis of how we've approached a particular challenge and what insights have been gained.

For more information, contact info@safewaternetwork.org.

Elements of the New Campaign

The consumer research described in Part 1 led to the following key insights:

1. | In general, women take the lead in deciding household safe water use, while men take the lead in buying and collecting water from the Safe Water Station.
2. | For most, the first measure of quality is the water's look and taste.
3. | The aesthetics of the Station are also important, particularly in the early stages.
4. | While health is an important motivator, the understanding of the relationship between water and health diverges sharply between consumers and non-consumers.
5. | Key opinion leaders, such as health workers, are highly influential on consumer attitudes. However, different categories of opinion leaders have different strengths, incentives, and concerns, and so need to be engaged through a targeted approach.
6. | Messages that directly relate safe water consumption to improved health for children resonated more strongly with consumers than more abstract "aspirational" messages of a brighter future.

Based on these insights, the marketing firm Dialogue Factory developed a campaign to enable Safe Water Network to more effectively leverage its full range of touchpoints with the community. The campaign has the following elements:

- **Updated Commercial Branding** would focus primarily on women and would provide an aesthetically pleasing message of safe water's promise of a healthy future, particularly for children (addressing insights 1, 3, and 6 above).
- **Tablet-based Video Messaging** would focus on specific categories of local opinion leaders, deepening their understanding of the relationship between water and health and providing specific messages on how they can help build adoption within their communities (insights 4 and 5).
- **Public Demonstrations** would include a variety of water quality tests to educate consumers on the forms and significance of water contamination; electrolyzer demonstrations would show this contamination in an emotionally resonant, aesthetically unpleasant way (insights 2 and 4).

Concurrent with the launch of these campaign components, market research firm IMRB conducted focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and informal discussions to understand consumers' initial reactions to each campaign element.

Each campaign component is described in more depth below.

1. | Updated Commercial Branding

In an early effort to engage consumers, Safe Water Network had previously developed the iJal ("my water") brand and its tagline, "Drops of health for me near my home." Dialogue Factory's initial assessment determined that, in villages with existing Safe Water Stations, the brand was recognized by consumers and widely associated with improved health, including reductions in fever, flu, vomiting, and diarrhea. Dialogue Factory and Safe Water Network therefore decided to retain the name while updating the brand with a simpler logo, brighter colors, and a new slogan, "Swasth kal" ("Healthy tomorrow")—all intended to reinforce the brand's existing association with cleanliness, health, and vitality. Dialogue Factory further recommended that the iJal name be used more prominently and consistently throughout each community, particularly by rebranding all Safe Water Stations as "iJal Stations."

IMRB's researchers reported that the new iJal branding and logo, and the "iJal Station" name, have been well received within the community. According to their investigations, the Station and its bright colors are a source of excitement, and the Stations have become a central meeting point for community members. The new tagline is reported to be well understood and liked by the community.

2. | Tablet-based Video Messaging

One of the most innovative aspects of the campaign was the use of small, inexpensive computer tablets to communicate tailored video messaging to different key opinion leaders. Dialogue Factory created the video content based on insights described in Part 1. The pre-recorded aspect of the video enables Safe Water Network to exercise a high degree of quality control over the content, and to include clear differentiation for different audiences. The audio-visual messaging on the tablets is presented in Telugu (the local language) and educates opinion leaders on the benefits of safe water and its link to good health, as well as the role they can play in encouraging its wide use through the community.

IMRB's initial assessment found that the modern technology of the tablet was eagerly embraced by local opinion leaders, who readily understood the devices' functioning—perhaps thanks in large part to their deep familiarity with now-ubiquitous mobile phones. Our implementation partner MARI has also reported that delivering safe water and hygiene messaging on a tablet has created a high level of excitement among its constituents.



Left: iJal branding, old (top), and new (bottom). Right: Health worker (Accredited Social Health Activist) being shown messaging on a tablet. Bottom: Community water quality test

INITIATIVE PARTNERS

- Merck Foundation, which funded the initiative and provided employee expertise in marketing through its Richard T. Clark Fellows program.
- Dialogue Factory, a creative marketing firm that designed our new consumer activation campaign.
- The Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB), responsible for assessing the effectiveness of the new campaign.
- Sangeeta Gupta founder/Director of Kairosis Consultancy, and former Executive Vice President of Consumer Strategy and Insights at PepsiCo-India, who led the screening and selection of project partners, developed the communications strategy and informed research.

3. | Public Demonstrations

On its own, the concept that clean-looking, good-tasting water may be contaminated with high levels of total dissolved solids (TDS), fluoride, nitrates, bacteria, and other substances may be difficult to grasp. To help demonstrate the presence of these hidden threats, Safe Water Network hosted public demonstrations in each community, each of which included:

- Presentation of a Water Analysis Report on Station-produced water from a certified laboratory
- Measurement of TDS, an indicator of the salt content (salinity) of a drinking water, using a hand-held meter
- Performing a fluoride test and showing the visual color change
- An electrolyzer test

Electrolysis can have a tremendous visual impact. However, the method has come under some justified criticism as a quality test, as it has in some cases been used in a misleading way by unscrupulous salespeople selling water purification systems.

The device's electrodes react with dissolved minerals, causing water to turn dark and give off foul-smelling gas. The reverse-osmosis (RO) process (used by Safe Water Network and others) removes such minerals, so treated water remains clear when the electrolyzer is introduced.

Dissolved minerals may be harmful, as is the case with the high levels of fluoride that exist in groundwater in many parts of Andhra Pradesh. However, they may also be neutral or positive, and as such a positive test result alone does not prove that water is unsafe to drink.

For this reason, we employ the electrolyzer only in concert with the other quality tests above, only after explaining what the electrolyzer test does and does not prove, and only where fluoride levels have already been publicly demonstrated to be above the permissible limit¹. This ensures that the results are, at least in part, due to dangerous fluoride levels, and not due to harmless dissolved solids alone.

The combination helps to educate the community about what constitutes good-quality water, while leveraging the power of aesthetics—identified in Part 1—to motivate change.

¹ Bureau of Indian Standards specification 10,500.

Short-Term Impact on Sales

The full impact of the campaign will be thoroughly evaluated over the course of the next year and presented in future *Field Insights* reports. However, early indications are that adoption and sales have increased substantially, as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

In August 2012, prior to the current intervention, a sales promotion led to an increase in household adoption in some sites, as seen in Figure 1. However, this growth did not result in any increase in sales volumes.

The campaigns launched in 2013 also resulted in an increase in adoption—between December 2012 and June 2013, average adoption for all sites rose from 51% to 60%. However, in contrast to the 2012 promotion, this increase was associated with a marked increase in sales volumes. Average sales volumes rose from 116 cans (20L containers) per day in the first half of 2012 to 130 containers per day at the same sites in the first half of 2013. In the peak month of May, for the first time, nine out of our 26 Andhra Pradesh sites sold more than 205 containers per day, our target for establishing reserves for maintenance and capital replacement. The June figure, though lower than the seasonal peak in May, nonetheless represents a 17% increase in volume year over year.

What's Next?

Much work remains to be done to understand the full impacts of the new campaign, and particularly the cost-effectiveness of each of its individual elements. IMRB is in the early stages of its quantitative assessment of these questions, which will include a survey of 450 households and 15 key opinion leaders across five communities.

Having received a positive early reaction to the use of electronic tablets, we will seek to expand this work by developing programs to further build consumer loyalty and increase education and health awareness. This includes new videos to educate consumers on additional topics as well as the development of interactive games related to safe water and health, to explore how these other forms of engagement may affect purchasing behavior.

The results of the above efforts will be reported in future *Field Insights*. In Part 3 of our series on consumer activation, we will shift our focus from the household to the village level, and present some of the ways we've worked with Dialogue Factory to improve our initial engagement process and more effectively encourage communities to adopt the iJal Station model.

Figure 1: Household Adoption 2012-2013 (first four sites)

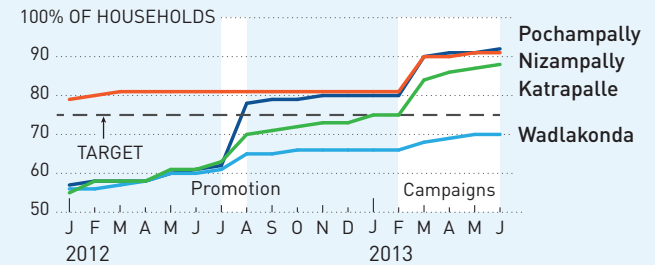
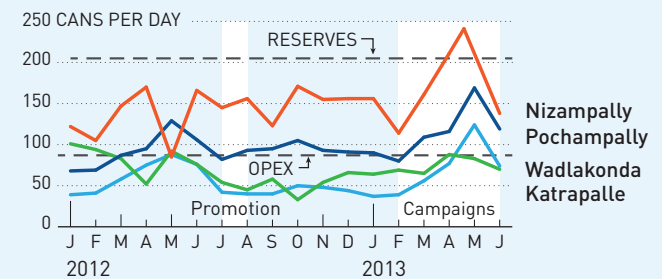


Figure 2: Sales Volumes 2012-2013 (first four sites)



FIELD STORY



“iJal is a must in the rainy season. Now that I’m back to using it, it’s hard to even think of switching to other sources.”

Name: Akula Ravi
Age: 42

Akula lives in Gorikothapally in Andhra Pradesh, and at 42 is already suffering from the joint pains of mild skeletal fluorosis, brought on by years of drinking the area’s contaminated water. He had stopped purchasing water from the Station, but after witnessing the water quality demonstration, he has started drinking iJal again.

Safe Water Network’s consumer activation program is made possible through support from:



Lead Supporters of Safe Water Network in India: Merck Foundation, PepsiCo Foundation, SRTT