Of Tea, Bengali and Sugar

How ABP added a new recipe to the Tea menu of the Bengalis
The Chinese may have discovered, the Englishmen made it a habit but a Bengali's passion about tea is unparalleled.
A Bengali's quintessential adda* would be incomplete without a storm in the earthen tea cups served by the neighbourhood Tea stall

*rendezvous
‘Chaayer Dokaan’

Kolkata, the capital of the Indian state of West Bengal is dotted with numerous ‘chaayer dokaan’ or the neighbourhood tea stalls where the citizens deliberate over everything from rising prices, to the crisis in national politics.
‘Chaayer Dokaan’

These stalls often range from modest shacks to slightly bigger permanent shops which offer steaming hot cups of tea to customers throughout the day.
Tea is cooked not brewed

There are 3 types of Tea that a neighbourhood Tea stall serves:

– Tea with milk and sugar
– Tea without milk and sugar
– Tea with milk and no sugar
However, a change in the Tea consumption pattern is evident

Sugar is the new Tobacco
- Tea without milk and sugar
- Tea with milk and no sugar
Sugar is the new Tobacco

Thanks to the consistent promotion by WHO to reduce sugar intake among adults and children, Bengalis have now started to consciously avoid having sugar in their Tea.
And that’s a compromise!

The deliciously sweet tea laced with Indian spices suddenly lost its sheen. The numerous rendezvous of the Bengalis have suddenly became dull and gloomy!
Our advertiser’s problem was not very different

Sugarfree Natura is the largest selling sugar substitute and is considered generic to the category with over 97% market share.
However in Bengal, they were plagued with low penetration numbers resulting in single digit secondary growth primarily due to inadequate new consumer acquisition.

Our advertiser’s problem was not very different.
In short, no body was trying them out since most of their audience had shifted to sugarless tea.

Our advertiser’s problem was not very different.
Sugarfree approached Anandabazar Patrika* – the largest read Bengali daily

*Anandabazar Patrika is the largest Bengali newspaper with a total readership of more than 1.25 Lac readers
At ABP, we re-articulated the problem statements
The Bengali Tea consumers were opting to go sugarless rather than trying a sugar substitute.
The Bengali Tea consumers were reluctantly trying to develop a taste for tea that wasn’t sweet.
Problem statement - 3

Consumer acquisition for the brand was suffering since Sugarfree was viewed as a means of treatment for the Diabetics amongst the TG
Our approach to the problems

We conducted a study that indicated Sugarfree as the highest recalled (close to 82%) brand amongst sugar substitutes.
Our approach to the problems

We realised that we needed to position Sugarfree as a preventive tool rather than a curative one; in short we needed to convert sugarless tea drinkers into sweet tea drinkers to acquire new consumers.
Drop the sugar, stay with the Tea

We activated a new campaign for Sugarfree. We called it ‘cha chaluk chini noy’ meaning ‘drop the sugar, stay with the Tea’
Drop the sugar, stay with the Tea

The new communication was aimed at driving trials for Sugarfree
A fresh item in the Menu Card

We added a 4th type of Tea in the neighbourhood Tea stall’s Menu:

- Tea with milk and sugar
- Tea without milk and sugar
- Tea with milk and no sugar
- Sugarfree Tea
Suddenly the Tea stalls were abuzz

Over 150 Tea stalls across the nook and crannies of the City started selling Sugarfree Tea
Consumer education

We posted Sugarfree volunteers who spoke to the Tea drinkers and briefed them about the Product
We kept popularising the campaign through our medium
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We kept popularising the campaign through our medium
Finally, Kolkata discovered 2 things

By the end of week 8, Tea drinkers across the city realised

That sugarless Tea could also be tasty

That Sugar = Sweetness
but
Sweetness ≠ Diabetes

A lot of the Tea drinkers took to liking the taste of Sugarfree Tea
Sugarfree’s problem too was solved
The quarterly sales numbers* spoke

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<th>Q1'17</th>
<th>Q2'17</th>
<th>Q3'17</th>
<th>Q4'17</th>
<th>Q1'18</th>
<th>Q2'18</th>
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The stagnating (single digit) secondary sales growth numbers jumped to 14%, the highest growth ever in the last 7 quarters.
And as they say…

“Because no matter how tough the world becomes, you must never run out of your sweetness”

Kathryn Bernardo