

# International Marketing & Customers strategy of Always

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**Abstract:** This report analyses the strategy adopted by P&G's sanitary towel brand Always in the global market. It highlights Always in its respective marketplaces whilst also including sub-brand Whisper in the marketplace of India and the challenges which existed before and during entry. In order to adapt to the different markets, Always demonstrated its positive intentions through a sustained marketing campaign, bold packaging design and name. A wide range of product categories and constant product innovation made always sufficient to gain a position in different markets. Always has enjoyed financial success alongside positive growth as well. This report provides a multi-dimensional analysis of the strategy that Always has adopted and how it has achieved its position as market leader in the industry. The report also concludes with recommendations for Always in terms of corporate social responsibility.

**Keywords:** Market; Strategy; P&G; Always; Whisper; Sanitary; India; Women; Girl

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## 1. Introduction

Always, a brand of P&G. The primary product will be sanitary napkins in which P&G have provided constant innovations towards the global market. This report will consider Always' actions undertaken from a global market perspective and contain a marketing analysis of the brand looking at its brand value, position, current presence and activities. It will highlight the relevant adaptations associated with the brand regarding how they changed their product to be accepted in the target market. Technological aspects will also be highlighted within the report alongside recommendations on how to take the brand further.

## 2. Current global presence and marketing activities

Always has made a woman's period a more positive, happier experience since its introduction in 1984. It has different names in Asian and the Indian marketplace called Whisper, however in the UK, US, Canada, Germany, France and Africa it is called Always, in Italy it is called Lines, and under the name Orkid in Turkey, under the names Evax and Ausonia in Spain and Portugal. Regarding its market size of all the feminine products, Always is the market leader in the industry. It holds 33% market share compared to other competitors.

Their marketing campaigns are segmented to specific demographics, which supports the growing independence of women, a bold but so far successful strategy. The brand constantly uses confidence to show empathy with target consumers whilst also breaking taboos and inspiring those to talk freely about something which is entirely natural<sup>[2]</sup>. Always also takes good use of digital media by developing a Facebook page called Being Girl which is designed to communicate with its 13- 17 and 18-25 years of age target audience. The Always girls can get their questions answered regarding boys, fashion, beauty, periods, school, health education and many more. It is a chance for girls to communicate with other girls who have the same problems as they do. In addition, Always also focus on sports sponsor to support women and corporate with many celebrities.

## 3. Adaptations

A way for a brand to succeed when operating in a market dissimilar to its origin marketplace is by adapting its product lines to suits the cultures, trends, tastes, and norms of the target marketplace. And consumers are more proactive when it comes to buying into

the brand [5]. Matching such criteria via marketing strategies and branding, a brand can be successful in a marketplace 'far-away' if applied appropriately.

### **3.1 Price**

The prices of Always could be different in different country by considering consumer preference. For example, the income of women in India is much lower than women in developed countries. These means that Always need to be price competitive in its entry strategy in order to not price itself out of the market. Thus, the price of Always in India (Whisper) is around 0.4 pounds in general which is much lower than the price in 2 pounds in UK. In addition, there are available different subsections such as Always Ultra, Maxi and Platinum. Always Platinum is its premium brand which is more expensive than the others and has superior technology. Always Ultra is the value-for-money product which is cheaper than the Platinum range and Always Maxi, the economy product which is the cheapest line available for women.

### **3.2 Name**

Some researchers have indicated that the target product's positive evaluations could be led by a favorable brand name [8]. As the essay mentioned before, Always has different names in different countries or area. In China, the products is known as Hushubao, which means comfort. The name of the products are more relevant towards Chinese characteristics rather than direct English translations and this has perhaps contributed towards positive performance [14].

### **3.3 Packaging**

P&G adapted their packaging strategy so that it suited the socio-cultural factors of the nation and has succeeded in taking more than half total market share in the sanitary pads sector [1]. For example, in India, one of their strategic decisions, which were a bold move by Whisper, was their 'have a happy period' design on the packaging. 'Period' within India has a long-standing taboo, and Whisper aimed to breakdown this stigma with the word period implemented on the packaging, a move which seemed to resonate and empathize with its target consumer groups [12]. This strategy, furthermore, was the first to undertake such a bold move in a mostly masculine country. It happened during a time in which established sanitary napkin companies already existed, but Whisper was the first to breakdown cultural barriers in their packaging design [3].

### **3.4 Product**

Global consumers' usage of feminine hygiene product varies significantly by ethnicity, country, menstrual cycle phase, age and age segment and in change frequency. As appendix 1 shows, consumers from developing countries like China and Mexico prefer ordinary pads to tampons and liners which is different from consumers from developed market. What's more, Asian women favor cotton sanitary napkins and American or European women may prefer sanitary napkins with Mesh surface. Thus, a wide range of feminine pads, wipes and pantliners are offered by Always. Those products are designed to fit different preferences, period flows and body types. The product lines of Always includes Always Feminine Wipes, Always Maxis, Always Infinity, Always Pantliners and Always Ultra Thins. And it provides four sizes from 1 to 4 (Appendix2 & Appendix3).

## **4. Technological considerations**

Competing globally is P&Gs, the mother company of Always's main strategic objectives, across the world. They have 19 large scale technology research centers with around 8300 technology researchers and scientists, 2000 of these are doctoral researchers, and also an annual investment into scientific research around 1.7 billion dollars is used to ensure that the company remains innovative in their product lines and is able to compete in the global marketplace [11]. With this research, they have created multiple products each with different functions to be provided to different segments of consumers across multiple economic sectors [4].

In addition, their constant innovation is continuously providing new ways to assist women with their body, targeting wide age

groups from 18-75. Their discreet liners were designed for women over 40's with sensitive bladders and has again continuously resonated with consumers based on product research [10]. What's more, Always developed a new kind of sanitary called liquid sanitary which could be an important innovation. And they have several premia, standard and economical products in the sanitary napkin industry and will continue to invest in this sector in the future.

Alongside this is a 100million dollar investment into a digital innovation center in Guangdong China, they will use technology such as big data and a digitalized supply chain to accelerate further and more optimized business operations [15], thus increasing activity across all their product lines, not only sanitary napkins. The statistics [11]offer that P&G place great value in this industry; the potential growth, particularly in developing economies, is enormous. Therefore, it is seen as a positive investment as P&G seeks to increase brand positioning and value in these marketplaces. Another positive is that these innovations can be utilized in their existing marketplaces across the world [7], not only in the focus country. Innovations create new streams of revenue by exceeding customer expectations if they can achieve this through technological investments and improving existing product lines, then all marketplaces can benefit from the improvements.

## 4. Recommendations

In order for the company to remain competitive in the global market, particularly in the category of sanitary towels, P&G and sub-brand Whisper should follow trends relative to corporate social responsibility.

The first recommendation is to invest research into a eco-friendly material sanitary pad. Global consumers are now paying less attention to the price of a product and more attention towards the story behind a product [9]. As the harm caused by environmental pollution continues to increase, environmental protection becomes more important. Although the brand has created biodegradable packaging for its product line, the product itself is currently not biodegradable and requires a specific way of disposing of them, which is harmful to the environment.

The second recommendation is paying more attention to welfare and charitable activities. Current statistics offer that although the reach of Whisper is well ingrained into distant marketplaces [11], the majority of sales however come from urban populaces. In order to increase the reach and better strengthen the continuous company mission of educating and informing, the company should increase its focus by making its products more widespread via rural consumers [13]. Always should popularize correct feminine hygiene knowledge, provide free sanitary for teen girls in poor and backward areas and try to provide work opportunities for more females in less developed area. It will increase actual sanitation and hygiene in rural areas thus enhancing their social standing amongst these marketplaces.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Always gains great success in developing and developed marketplaces. One thing which is common amongst their marketing campaigns is the empathy shown towards women regardless of cultural boundaries and taboos relative to the period or hygiene related issues. Alongside their revenue earning activities achieved through caring about their target consumers, they continuous innovate to provide new and practical products which can further help women with any such condition they deem to provide them discomfort. Always regardless of their marketplace and the cultural boundaries continue to instill confidence in women, whether it be via social media, offline events or even from an individual perspective. They have so far implemented successful strategies towards entering new marketplaces and also sustaining market share in developed marketplaces because of their bold objectives which supports a broad consumer demographic.

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Appendix 1

**Table two**

**Product wear changes with cycle phase**

	<b>Light Day</b>	<b>Heavy Day</b>	<b>Light Night</b>	<b>Heavy Night</b>
<b>U.S.</b>	liner	tampon	pad	night pad
<b>China</b>	pad	pad	night pad	night pad
<b>U.K.</b>	pad	tampon	pad	night pad
<b>Germany</b>	tampon	tampon	tampon	tampon
<b>France</b>	liners	tampons/pads	pads	night pads
<b>Italy</b>	liners	pads	pads	night pads
<b>Mexico</b>	pads	night pads	pads	night pads

(Source: Nonwovens Industry, 2011)

Appendix2 Always product type



(Source, Always)Appendix3 Always product type

Pad components	Infinity	Radiant	Ultra	Maxi	Pure
<b>Top Sheet</b> A soft fabric that is designed to pull fluid away from skin	Polyolefins, like those commonly used in clothing; with petrolatum and zinc oxide, (ingredients found in skin lotions) on Infinity and Radiant				100% Organic cotton to pull fluid away from the skin into the pad
<b>Absorbent Core</b> A layer that acquires and stores fluid, locking it away	Absorbent foam (Flex Foam)		Absorbent wood cellulose (the absorbent material used in pads since 1920s) with absorbent gel, rayon, or polyester		Absorbent wood cellulose and super absorbent gel pearls to keep fluids inside
<b>Back Sheet</b> A soft moisture proof layer to keep the fluid inside	Polyolefins, like those commonly used in clothing (printed on Radiant)				Polypropylene and polyethylene - Synthetic layer moisture proof to keep fluid inside
<b>Adhesives</b>	An FDA approved food additive adhesive similar to craft glue sticks				Glue to ensure the layers in the pad keep together and pad adheres to panty
<b>Fragrance</b> Provide a fresh scent	Fragrance ingredients. Only on versions labeled as scented				Not present
<b>Wrapper</b> Protects the adhesives before the pad is used	Printed polyolefin like that used in clothing, and paper (Maxi only)				Printed polyethylene - film to keep pad protected and convenient to carry
<b>Wing paper</b> Protects the wings adhesive before the pad is used	Printed paper				Paper to protect wing adhesive before pad is used