

**Helping Build a Global Super-Premium Brand**  
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### Context

Bacardi, Ltd., a major spirits marketer and manufacturer, acquired Grey Goose Vodka, a fast-growing super premium brand from a small company.

None of the personnel who had created the brand moved with the brand to Bacardi. Most of the institutional knowledge about the brand resided in the advertising and marketing agencies.



### Challenge

Part of the opportunity in the brand acquisition was refining the marketing approach and globalizing the brand, without damaging the imagery that had led to its initial success. Three things were needed:

- an understanding of what made the brand so special with its users;
- an ability to capture that essence in a clearly defined brand positioning and subsequent marketing programs so that the brand could be expanded into markets consistently and effectively.
- a seamless transfer of knowledge from the previous owners' marketing and advertising agencies

### What We Did

Trailguide Consulting worked with the brand team to develop a brand transition and growth plan. It began with a series of facilitated sessions with the brand teams and the legacy agencies to fully understand the brand and the insights behind its success. The agencies were concerned about their retention on the brand and were initially reticent to share information with the acquirer. An important part of the engagement was designing it so the brand team and agencies worked together to foster a trusting relationship. Through a series of highly interactive facilitated discussions, we 'leveled the playing field' to allow substantive discussions to transpire. All major agencies were retained, solidifying the brand's foundation and allowing the team to accelerate brand development more rapidly.

Once the brand positioning was developed, Trailguide helped the brand team and agencies develop a highly-targeted marketing plan to experientially engage with the desired consumers when and where they were open to the brand's message. We facilitated ideation sessions that generated a wide variety of ideas of how to best present the brand, and then developed action plans for the most promising ideas.

After solidly growing the Grey Goose in the U.S., Trailguide worked with a global team to plan the global expansion of the brand that captured the spirit of the Grey Goose, while also allowing needed levels of localization.

The engagement included a cadence of meetings to develop the brand and the marketing programs to continue to propel the brand, both within the US, and globally. The meetings allowed the free flow of marketing ideas from the global brand team to the markets and vice-versa. Importantly, the meetings drove a unified brand image globally while also ensuring actionable marketing plans at the local level.

### Result

Under Bacardi, Grey Goose Vodka continues to flourish, doubling its case sales in the first four years, without any margin erosion. This occurred during a time of intense competitive pressure.

The further development of the brand was so successful that it crushed all the acquisition models, paying back the acquisition costs well ahead of schedule.

Today, Grey Goose is the leading super-premium vodka in the world.

*"Continuing to expand Grey Goose® is a key priority for Bacardi. Trailguide Consulting helped us effectively bring the brand into our portfolio and then worked with us to help create energy for the brand worldwide, developing consumer and trade programs to fuel its growth. The result is that Grey Goose® has continued to grow in the U.S. and has been successfully rolled out to major markets around the world."*

— Global Brand Director, Grey Goose Vodka