

# Marketing

Edited by Joshua Levine

*Natural selection normally favors the biggest and strongest on supermarket shelves. But a tiny, tenacious New Jersey jam company shows how the small can thrive, too.*

## Sorrell Ridge makes Smuckers Pucker.

How can you "market" yourself when you're a 92-year old family business in jams and jellies with a name that sounds like something a New York cabbie just snarled at you? You can embrace the name, roll out commercials that say, "With a name like Smucker's, it has to be good," and walk off with 38% of the market.

But what do you do when you're a tiny, unknown jam maker trying to market against this marketing giant? If you're smart and sassy Sorrell Ridge, you do

two things. First, develop a product with a real difference. Second, hire an edgy marketing firm that's going to get people excited about that product it even if it means shining a light on the competition.

This, conventional Madison Avenue wisdom will tell you, is marketing madness. It reinforces the competition's name and gets them riled up in the process. Sorrell Ridge, based in Port Reading, NJ, was beneath all that. It rolled out a line of no-sugar, all-natural

fruit spreads in 20 flavors packed in tall, slender jars and has set the market on its ear.

The product difference is clear. Smucker's, like most jams, is roughly half cane sugar and corn syrup, meaning six more calories on average per teaspoon.

Since its latest commercials started whacking Smuckers in New York last January, Sorrell's sales in the area jumped to 25,000 cases a month up from 16,000 cases a year ago. Overall, Sorrell Ridge's volume jumped 43% to 29 million in the first three months of this year while the market as a whole inched up only 3.5%. Sorrell Ridge has grown fourfold since 1985 giving it a 2% market share. It expects sales of 17 million this year.

Can Sorrell Ridge hang in for the long haul? No matter how Smucker's does with Simply Fruit, Sorrell Ridge is unlikely to disappear.

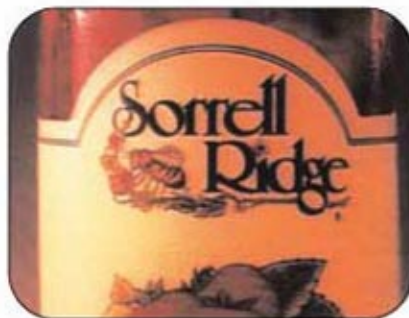
Smuckers will be hard put, for instance, to ignore the needle in the new ads set to begin this month. "To get the same amount of fruit that's in one jar of Sorrell Ridge, you'd have to eat this much Smucker's Preserves," the calm voice says while the camera cuts to a shot of eight Smucker's jars. They're not going to like that one on Strawberry Lane, either. But even in the cutthroat world of supermarketing, size isn't everything. - J.L.

With a name like  
Smucker's  
it has to be good.

With a name like  
Smucker's  
it's probably good.

With a name like  
Smucker's  
it might be good.

With a name like  
Smucker's  
is it really so good?



The competitive spot for Sorrell Ridge from Folllis.