

RESEARCH & STRATEGY

### **History and Demographics**

Badger Balm was founded by Bill Whyte in 1995 while he was working as a carpenter in New Hampshire. The goal of the company was to create products that would “blend the finest organic plant extracts, exotic oils, beeswax, and minerals to make the safest, most effective products possible to soothe, heal, protect and otherwise treat your body” (Badger Balm). In 2018 Bill passed the CEO position to his daughters Rebecca and Emily, making them CEOs or “Collaborative Executive Officers.” (Badger Balm). The product line has grown to a staggering 100 products where years of tradition and research goes into making each item. Badger Balm ships products domestically and internationally while maintaining a community-minded business with ethical and charitable social principles (Badger Balm). The company strives to maintain its natural and organic product line and keeping its brand friendly, relational, and consistent with its family-owned theme and face.

### **Touchpoints**

The two most accessible and well-used channels appear to be the company’s website, their blog, and their Instagram account. Badger balm boasts 49k followers on Instagram with a total of 1,180 posts and a frequently updated story feed (Badger Balm [@badgerbalm]). Their Instagram posts photos and videos of customers, products, events, social commentary, company principles, and of course, lots of pictures of badgers. In addition to their social media, their website is friendly and interactive, full of information and detail about the company, their values, product information, promotions and offers, and a well displayed product page. They also have a FAQ section which can be helpful for numerous customer concerns. The site is engaging, but it’s their “Badger Blog” that really connects with new and loyal customers. The Badger Blog offers tips and tricks about product use, environmental impact and relief, new products and their benefits, and ways their customers can be involved in ways to help the community. Given its communicating and narrative nature, the blog is by far the most interactive and engaging, however, it is most likely read by returning and loyal customers for Badger Balm products. Although the company is present on multiple sites and social media networks, the company could stand to improve their targeting for specific audiences.

## **The Competition**

Badger's two main competitors are Burt's Bees and Dermstore. This trio is always striving, in intense competition, to gain leadership in the world of healthy, safe, and organic products. Each one of them there tells a unique story of how the company was founded, its philosophy, and how they create a wonderful lifestyle for their employees and clients. Both Burt's Bees and Dermstore focus on a variety of skincare products and keen on providing the consumer with the best and healthiest products, rather than the run-of-the-mill, these company's offer an experience of true authenticity, that which Badger Balm is striving to replicate and produce for their audience.

## **SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)**

*Strengths:* Opposed to their competitors, Badger Balm still keeps its face of an authentic, healthy, and humble skincare store started by a family that truly cares about family. Badger Balm does not feel corporate, detached, and comprised of scientists and suits, but appeals to the organic, authentic customer that wants to engage with the company and their products. Additionally, Badger Balm is a philanthropic company that gives to both the community and various charities. This is a company that connects and engages with their audience and strives to continue to do so.

*Weaknesses:* Badger Balm fails to have any aesthetic value on both products as well as their sites (website and social media). The company's graphics are poorly designed and sets a "something my grandma would buy" tone for their product line. Subsequently, this art design of personal paintings and flowers fail to attract the male audience that could be buying products made for them. The product and site design does not appeal to men whatsoever, nor does it appeal to young and trendy women.

*Opportunities:* Conversely, the Badger Balm can rebrand themselves, offering different design and appeal for men and women interested in their product. There is a lot of opportunity for an attractive men's product line. The name "Badger Balm" is already a great sounding name and attractive to men looking for a more masculine balm product, but only if there are major changes to the brand design for site and products. Splitting into two different product lines, for men and women, allows a greater concentration on women's products and curating the art and graphics for the women's demographic without compromising any attraction or appeal for men.

*Threats:* Considering external threats, the mentioned competitors are widespread on the web, especially on Amazon, as well as numerous retailers of all sizes. Competitor products are easily deliverable, high quality, aesthetic in their design, and reaching both women and men. There is also an internal threat considering their lack in engagement with browsing consumers (which may have to do with their distasteful graphics), as they are at a bounce rate of 58.48% (SimilarWeb).

## CONSUMER RESEARCH

### Demographics & Psychographics

Considering the desired demographic for Badger Balm's product line and interest, the emphasis will fall mostly on middle-class millennial women as well as millennial and Gen Z men. The Gen Z and Millennial men's demographic focus considers the advertising tactics, brand design, and outlined personas from similar brands reaching into the men's hygiene/skincare industry. The rising success of the all-organic, all-natural soap company Dr. Squatch focused on men aged 25-45 who they considered "The Outdoorsman," as their goal was to change the consumer's choice of chemical-based soap products to their all-natural (and all-masculine) products (Shorty Awards). Badger Balm's target is the younger male audience, considered Millennial and Gen Z who are concerned with authenticity and organic products that work.

The market share of Gen Z in the skincare region shows that the dominating and influential demographic is deeply concerned with the science and ingredients of their skincare products (In-Cosmetics). The Gen Z generation also favors brands that have a strong identity and purpose, and they are very conscious about brands that are eco-friendly, considerate of the social climate, diversity, equality, and of course, savvy with online shopping and navigation (In-Cosmetics). Millennial men, opposed to the Gen Z feeling-good philosophy, are primarily concerned with looking good: they want good products that give results (Chiquoine). The targeted man in the Gen Z and Millennial range appreciates ads with "normal guys in extreme situations" and "slapstick, edgy and sarcastic humor," as promptly seen in many of the Dr. Squatch viral advertisements (Nielsen). The target for Badger Balm's men's product line is Gen Z and Millennial man that wants to look good, feel good, and buy from companies that are funny, smart, scientifically, ethically, and environmentally conscious and backed. These men are single, cost-conscious, about to enter or just starting their career, middle to upper-middle class, educated, and conscious about their image and style.

The second target audience is the woman who cares about her skincare as well as her possible husband's skincare and health. The age range is approximately 26 to 35, which is considered in the millennial generation. While much of the marketing for the married men is equally applicable from the

information gathered about the unmarried millennial male demographic, this target audience concerns the married woman who carries significant influence as well as the single millennial women that share mutual interest and brand loyalty habits. This demographic is mostly made up of urban living, middle to upper-middle class, educated, cost-conscious women who engage in frequent social encounters with friends and family. The urban millennial woman cares about customer engagement, convenience of purchase and attainment, quality customer service, brand engagement, and reviews (Sharkey).

From a point of convenience, 25% of millennial women do their online shopping from their smartphones, navigating a store's mobile site to purchase items (Sharkey). Considering the brand aesthetic of Badger Balm, millennial women prefer graphics that exude minimalism, as "complex packaging is difficult to process and requires higher engagement that hinders purchasing" (Tjarks). The millennial woman is attracted to brands that are clean, simple, and easy to engage with. The millennial woman is also concerned with social buzz around the product, as they will be swayed to or against a product based on reviews, social media critique/praise, and personal testimonies about the product's results (Tjarks). The millennial woman is quick to dismiss a brand if it misses the mark on social media. Women in this range make an average of \$44k, hold a bachelor's degree. A study showed that 42% of women between the ages of 25 and 34 say they "regularly worry about signs of aging" (Wonder). Women in this millennial range are working, cost-effective, caring about their health and aesthetic, and are primarily seeking instant gratification with their products.

### **Current Benefits & Values of Badger Balm**

Badger Balm does a fantastic job with producing engaging and helpful content for their customers (both loyal and first-time). This engaging content is seen in the transparency of the product's production, company foundation and outlined values, as well as the extensive blog that covers topics from social climate and change to DIY projects for discontinued products, and how-to guides for current products. Compared to its competitors and most corporations in the skincare market, Badger Balm is extremely transparent and authentic. Even with the size they have grown to be, the Badger Balm social media and site still maintain the face of a family-loved and owned corporation (which it still is), but the theme and tone of the brand is more important for the consumer's sake. Badger Balm can specialize in producing articles, videos, and pictorial diagrams for their products use, results, and production, which can be shared on platforms such as Tik Tok, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Badger Balm can engage especially in personal content production and management, making videos and posts about personal testimonies to the product that will entice millennial women, and with the right humor and wit, Gen Z and Millennial men. Badger Balm also has a great aspect that it could capitalize on, a cute and cool aspect,

and that is having a Badger as its face. Considering putting badgers into production and more posts will engage the cute satisfaction of women, and creating funny, witty, and manly commercials with badgers will appeal to men. The name by itself is a masculine name, if used with the right context, enough so that it could be the selling point for a lot of men.

### **PUBLICS/CONSUMER GROUPS**

1. Gen Z Men
2. Millennial Women
3. Millennial Men

Of the three groups mentioned above, the most beneficial group will be the Gen Z men demographic. While women are historically (and still consistently) the larger market share of the cosmetics/skincare industry, the interest in organic, niche, health-oriented products are most attractive to Gen Z men. While Gen Z women are also ripe for these characteristics in a skincare company, Gen Z men is a demographic that is emerging and new to the skincare market, which means they are more likely to be attracted to brands that are not entirely popular, corporate, but that are engaging, helpful, and communicating with their customers (especially those that are new to taking care of one's skin).

As much as the Gen Z or Millennial Woman is concerned and attracted to Badger Balm's product, a new product line of Badger Balm for men only will be more attractive to men who are searching for new and intriguing brands that speak directly to them. The name "Badger Balm" is also a brand name that works well with men's product (if designed properly), and men will be drawn more to the brand name more than women who are more attracted to more feminine brand names like Laurel, Avalon, Monat, Ulta, Sephora, etc. Although the women demographic would benefit greatly, it appears that Gen Z's habits, interests, habits, and masculine interest falls more in line with Badger Balm's product line.

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