Countering Infant Formula Marketing Messages

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The first infant formula had already been invented in Europe by Baron Justus von Liebig in 1867. By 1869, Liebig’s concoction of cow’s milk, wheat flour, malt flour, and potassium bicarbonate was being marketed in the US as an equal substitute to breastfeeding.

- In 1915, Gerstenberger reported a 3-year experience using “synthetic milk, adapted” that contained nonfat cow milk, lactose, oleo oils, and vegetable oils. This product represented early understanding that cow milk required alteration to improve its acceptability for human consumption and is considered the precursor to modern infant formulas.
Henri Nestlé develops his breast milk substitute. In his "Memorial on the Nutrition of Infants" printed in 1869, Henri Nestlé wrote: "During the first months, the mother's milk will always be the most natural nutriment, and every mother, able to do so, should herself suckle her children."
By 1883 there were 27 patented brands of infant food. What was originally meant to feed infants whose mothers had died or could not produce milk morphed into a product designed to simply replace breastfeeding.
Advertising became commonplace
History
“G. Mellin of London, following Liebig's suggestions, produced an article which is portable, easy of preparation, and which gives entire satisfaction. Analysis of the food after mixing shows it to contain a large proportion of grape sugar, which enters so largely into the composition of mother's milk, together with a large amount of protein and soluble phosphates, indicating flesh and bone forming nutrients of the highest type...Thus sucence finally conquered all difficulties, and produced a food that all mothers will hail with delight.”
In 1911 Mead Johnson tested a new type of formula called ‘Dextri-Maltose’ in the baby ward at a New York hospital. Such testing would never be allowed today, but shows just how much power the industry had within medical circles at the time. From 1912 administration of this cutting-edge formula was restricted to doctors.
In 1915 SMA (Synthetic Milk Adapted) was launched as a brand at a meeting of the American Paediatric Society. It had also been tested on babies in a different hospital in Cleveland, Ohio and advertisements instructed use under the care of a physician. Nestle followed suit with a prescription formula in 1924.
SIMILAC is prepared with the permission of A.W. Bosworth, according to the formula which he developed and used at the Boston Floating Hospital.

The new milk-based infant formula was named Similac®, for simulated lactation.
DECEPTIVE MARKETING

Make it appear equivalent to human milk
Why nucleotides are important

Babies typically triple their birth weight in the first year, which means their bodies are working overtime to make and use nucleotides. And the nucleotides are helping them build important cells, including ones that support the immune system. In addition to the nucleotides their bodies make, babies get extra nucleotides from their diet, whether it’s breast milk or baby formula.

GERBER® GOOD START® Protect Formula – Powder

Product Highlights
Advanced Immune Support

GERBER GOOD START Protect Formula features:
- Immune Supporting Probiotics, *Bifidus BL*, similar to those found in breastmilk
- Prebiotic 1
- Prebiotic 2

Designed to act more like breast milk than our previous formula, our proprietary dual prebiotic blend is designed to work throughout the digestive tract.
Bribe mothers with gifts, coupons, contests, give-aways

Request That Your Baby be Fed Enfamil PREMIUM® Newborn Sample®

Designed specifically for newborns through three months to deliver nutrition tailored for newborns.

Give this certificate to your baby’s nurse at the hospital.

Please make sure ______________________’s baby is fed Enfamil PREMIUM® Newborn formula in the hospital.

Certificate for One FREE First Visit Nutrition Gift™

For breastfeeding and supplementing moms.

This free gift includes:
- A sample of Enfamil® D-Vi-Sol™ Vitamin Drops for your newborn.
- Nutrition information and a feeding guide for nursing moms as well as tips for storing breast milk.
- Two 2 fl oz Invalese bottles and four single-serve powder packets of Enfamil PREMIUM Newborn should you choose to supplement. An Enfamil® nipple is also included.
- A $15 rebate offer for Enfamil® products.
- A feeding guide with a coupon for Enfamil® products.
Certificate for One FREE Sample® of Enfamil PREMIUM® Newborn

Enfamil PREMIUM® Newborn, is part of the Enfamil® Staged Nutrition line, along with Enfamil PREMIUM® Infant and Enfagrow® PREMIUM™ Toddler. Enfamil PREMIUM® Newborn formula is tailored for newborns through 3 months. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 400 IU of vitamin D daily. Enfamil PREMIUM® Newborn provides 400 IU of vitamin D in 27 fluid ounces—close to the approximate daily intake of a newborn through 3 months. It is a unique formula that also includes our Natural Defense® Dual Prebiotics® Blend, designed to help support babies’ own defenses, and has an easy-to-digest protein blend.

*Print this page as a reminder to discuss Enfamil PREMIUM® Newborn at your next pediatrician appointment. Ask your baby’s doctor for a free sample of Enfamil PREMIUM® Newborn. If one is not available, please call 1-800-BABY123 to see if you qualify for a sample from our Enfamil Experts. Limit one sample of any Enfamil product per household.

Get up to $329* in great offers

- Shutterfly® Birth Announcements
- Weekly Pregnancy Journal
- Similac® Nourishing and Nursing Kit
- Free Similac Messenger Bag†
- Coupons for Similac® Formula
- Free Formula

†Available at participating hospitals
nourish your baby’s future

Enter for a chance to win a 10K scholarship for your baby

Prize Details
Choosing how and what to feed your baby are very important decisions for every parent. We’d love to hear your Enfamil story!

You nourish your child every day, and we’d like to help you plan for their future by giving you a chance to win a $10K scholarship by sharing your feeding story with a photo of your Little One. You’ll get a coupon just for entering, and we will be sharing your stories with our Enfamil Community throughout the year!

Contest Instructions
1) Like the Enfamil Facebook page

Prize Eligibility
Only persons residing in United States who are at least 18 years of age can enter.

Contest Starts
December 17, 2012 @ 09:00 am (PST)

Contest Ends
January 15, 2013 @ 11:59 pm (PST)

Need more Details?
Read the Official Rules
“Perrigo Nutritionals got in touch with an opportunity for my readers to try some as well. They sent over a gift pack for my little one, and now we're going to hook up one lucky reader of The Rock Father with a formula gift pack of their own. Ready for your chance to win?”
Branching Out

- **Feeding Expert – Abbott Nutrition**

  Abbott is urging staff nurses to pass out contact information for mothers to call to obtain breastfeeding help from minimally trained employees (not IBCLC certified lactation consultants as the pamphlet implies) through an Abbott sponsored program.
They came. They celebrated the Gerber Generation. They had a great time!

From the Gerber Generation Celebration House Party Event

Party day has come and gone, but across the country, hosts and guests are still raving about the Gerber Generation Celebration House Party™!

Did you and your guests enjoy getting the GERBER product samples?
What did everyone seem to enjoy most about the party?
How did you like the party pack?
Did everyone upload party pictures?

Share all the fun moments with others, here!

“I was already a huge fan of gerber because all my little boy can eat is good start formula and I'm very happy that I had the opportunity to tell other moms about my success with them. Hopefully other moms have tried their products and are as fond of them as I am. This is so much fun and I can't wait to host another house party!”

“People were shocked of how much products that gerber makes and was glad to here that you now make formula!”
Moms, in your opinion what formula is closest to breastmilk? Yahoo Answers Blog

“mmm from what I had researched while pregnant I found that enfamil with lipil is the best because it has DHA and ARA, which are things found in breast milk. I hope this helped good luck!”

“The funny thing about formulas are that they are all the same. Just different calorie amounts. Your breastmilk is 20cal. So any 20 cal formula will work. They all claim to have DHA and other stuff but they are all the same. So pick which ever one you like.”

“Don't let anyone tell you that you have to breastfeed. The antibodies are passed from the mother in Colostrum in the beginning of breastfeeding, after the baby is born.....the yellow thick stuff. Once that is gone it doesn't matter what the baby eats as long as it eats. We feed our babies formula on the unit and they grow up healthy so you do what you want”

…Neonatal Intensive Care Nurse
Formula ads are ubiquitous

- With enough repetition, formula feeding appears as the norm
- It looks equivalent to breastmilk
- So why bother?
- “Baby will do just as well and it won’t be painful”
Article

Pacifier Restriction and Exclusive Breastfeeding

Laura R. Kair, MD, Daniel Kenron, MSIE, Konnette Etheredge, RN, MSN, Arthur C. Jaffe, MD, and Carrie A. Phillipi, MD, PhD

ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE: We tested the hypothesis that removing pacifiers from routine distribution in our mother-baby unit (MBU) would be associated with greater breastfeeding initiation or exclusivity during the birth hospitalization.

METHODS: We retrospectively compared exclusive breastfeeding, breastfeeding plus supplemental formula feeding, and exclusive formula feeding rates for 2249 infants admitted to the MBU at our university teaching hospital during the 5 months before and 8 months after restriction of routine pacifier distribution. Formula supplementation, if not medically indicated, was discouraged per standard practice, but access to formula was not restricted.

RESULTS: Of the 2249 infants, 79% were exclusively breastfed from July through November 2010, when pacifiers were routinely distributed. During the 8-month period after pacifier restriction, this proportion decreased significantly to 68% (P < .001). A corresponding increase from 18% to 28% was observed in the number of breastfed infants receiving supplemental formula feeds in the same period (P < .001). During the study period, the proportion of exclusively formula-fed infants increased from 1.8% to 3.4% (P < .05).
Marketing to the millennials (ages 18-29)

- Breastfeeding and the concept of “perfect”
- Time-pressed mothers settle for pragmatism rather than perfect
- Want products that give her permission to be “imperfect”
- Provide a hassle-free product that appeals to time-crunch mothers
Marketing to remove guilt

- Mothers embrace brands that give them permission to be imperfect without feeling guilty
- “permissible indulgences” seen in marketing of smack foods in 100 calorie packages

“Nine out of ten mothers use formula. According to a recent study, most new mothers (9 out of 10, actually) use formula at some point during their baby's first year. So you're not alone, not by a long shot.”... Mead Johnson
How do you compete with this?

- Targeting breastfeeding mothers with promises of free lactation consultant help
  - 800-986-8800
  - 24/7 live help

Nurses and lactation consultants available.
“There’s an app for that”

Download the free Similac® Baby Journal app.
Add a little more predictability to your life.

Download Now
IT'S FREE!

With the free Similac Baby Journal app, you can easily track your baby's eating and sleeping habits, diaper changes, and more.

Watch the overview

"For iPhone® and iPod touch®. iPhone and iPod touch are not trademarks of Abbott Laboratories."
Does formula marketing work?

- Mothers who recalled a formula advertisement message were twice as likely to feed their baby formula

- Babies were more likely to be given formula if their physician, grandmother, or other relative recommended it

Introducing a new advance for your little one’s brain and eyes

Similac® has a NEW Lutein & DHA blend. Lutein and DHA can be found in breast milk and Similac.

Learn more about Lutein and DHA/ARA ➤
Yes, formula marketing works!

After viewing marketing ads mothers reported

- Concerns that the featured scientific ingredients were not in breastmilk
- That their milk might not change in response to infant’s changing needs
- “It’s powdered breastmilk”

- Formula was a medical solution to normal infant issues
- Conveyed the expectation of breastfeeding failure
- Exclusive breastfeeding is not important
- Infant formula is equivalent to breastmilk
Discharge Packs

- Women who got packs more likely not to exclusively breastfeed at 10 weeks than women who didn’t (Rosenberg et al, 2008)

- Meta-analysis: bags decreased exclusive breastfeeding at any point in time, from 0–6 months postpartum (Donnelly et al, 2000)

- Reduced number of women exclusively bf at 6 & 13 weeks (DiGirolamo et al, 2008)
Sampling

- Sampling gets the product into the hands of the consumer
- Provides for its easy use at the first sign of breastfeeding roadblocks
- Starts the process of early weaning
- Perfect setup to creating a market where none existed before
Want soy-based (lactose-free) formula? Try Enfamil® ProSobee® FREE

Colic due to cow’s milk protein allergy? Try Nutramigen® with Enflora™ LGG® FREE

Not sure which formula? Ask your baby’s doctor for a FREE sample of Nutramigen® with Enflora™ LGG®, Enfamil® Gentlease®, or Enfamil A.R.®

Not sure which formula? Ask your baby’s doctor for a FREE sample of Enfamil® Gentlease®, Enfamil A.R.®, or Enfamil® ProSobee®

Breastfeeding? Enjoy a FREE nutrition gift

In your third trimester? We’ve got a FREE gift for you

Preparing for your baby’s birth? Get up to $250 worth of FREE gifts

Planning to feed your baby Enfamil®? Request it FREE in the hospital

» Get Certificate

» Get Certificate

» Get Certificate

» Get Certificate

» Get Certificate
Take Home Messages for Mothers

- We owe mothers the truth
- Avoid the trap of omitting information because we might make mothers feel guilty
- Infant formula is not the same as human milk
- Health outcomes are different between babies fed formula or human milk
- Random additions of ingredients to infant formula will not make it perform like human milk
Recalls of Infant Feeding Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Product Description</th>
<th>Problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Gerber Products Company is proactively recalling Gerber® Good Start® Gentle powdered infant formula 23.2 ounce plastic package from batch GXP1684 expiration date of March 5, 2013. (Nestle)</td>
<td>Product has an off odor. Infants spitting up and having other gastrointestinal problems have been reported.</td>
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<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Similac powdered formula, 113,361,078 individual units of various sizes and formulations (Abbott)</td>
<td>Affected formula contains beetle parts and beetle larvae. Babies who consume infant formula containing beetles or their larvae may experience gastrointestinal distress and refusal to eat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm initiated recall 2009</td>
<td>Neocate powdered formula, 3700 14oz cans, Lot #91877 (Naturica)</td>
<td>Deficient in protein; short-term consumption unlikely to cause immediate nutritional issue but longer term consumption might influence the healthy growth curve in certain infants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Similac Special Care 24cal/fl oz, ready to feed premature formula in 2 oz bottles; 5000 cases (Ross Products)</td>
<td>Deficient in iron, which if used for longer than one month could result in anemia</td>
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<td>Firm initiated recall 2006</td>
<td>Similac Advance and Alimentum in 32 oz ready-to-feed bottles, including one lot of hospital discharge kits, 100,000 bottles of Alimentum, 200,000 bottles of Similac (Ross Products)</td>
<td>Deficient vitamin C due to packaging error and consumer complaints of dark colored formula. Vitamin C deficiency could appear in infants who consume the formula for more than 2-4 weeks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Firm initiated recall 2006</td>
<td>Gentlease powdered infant formula, 41,000 cans, 24 oz cans, batch #BMJ19 (Mead Johnson)</td>
<td>Batch contains metal particles; if aspirated into the lungs, the particles present a serious risk to the baby’s respiratory system; particles could also damage the baby’s throat; any injuries from this problem would manifest within 3-4 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Similac Advance with Iron Formula Powder, 12.9 oz. can. The product is packaged as 6 cans per case for delivery to retail stores. Lot Number 20307RB, 82,986 cans (Ross Products)</td>
<td>The product contains rigid polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and was distributed nationwide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Enfamil LactoFree with LipoL, 13 oz concentrated liquid cans; 6408 cases (76,896 cans) (Mead Johnson)</td>
<td>May have an off odor, clumping, and product separation</td>
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“I think it goes back to your first year of life when they had the recall on infant formula because of beetle parts and larvae.”
Unwanted ingredients
Two of 17 infant formulas tested listed organic brown rice syrup as the primary ingredient.

One had a total arsenic concentration that was six times the federal limit of 10 parts per billion (ppb) for total arsenic in bottled or public drinking water.

This is particularly worrisome for babies because they are especially vulnerable to arsenic’s toxic effects due to their small size and the corresponding arsenic consumption per pound of body weight.
Manganese

- Essential trace element needed in small amounts
- Excessive exposure in children is linked to neurological disorders, lower IQ, and poorer school performance
- Infants absorb more and excrete less Mn than adults
- Breastfed infants have a low exposure

- Infant formulas contain Mn concentrations 100-fold higher than breastmilk
- Powdered formula mixed with water containing WHO Mn guidelines can exceed the health limit
- Concern of neurotoxic effect during period of rapid brain development
WHY DON’T WE SEE MORE ADS LIKE THIS?

They cost money!
Four Ps of Social Marketing

• Product
  – Find the unique quality that makes breastfeeding more desirable than the competitor

• Price
  – Emotional, psychological, physical, social costs of breastfeeding vs formula

• Place
  – Optimal venue to deliver the message

• Promotion
  – Strategies should resonate with the target audience
Approaches that turn off mothers

- Too inflexible
- Judgmental
- Pressure to breastfeed
- Lack of respect
- Strong reactions to mother’s actions
- Lack of trust
- Too restrictive
- Not flexible enough to allow for mothers’ own judgment
- Too critical
- Too confusing
Stories vs statistics
Impact of anecdotal comments

- Decisions can be biased by anecdotal data
- Anecdotes can override science
- Stories are more vivid and easier to process than hard data
- Hard-wired to process stories
- Peer testimonials
- Graphics and pictures
Interventions

- What to expect when breastfeeding
- Lifestyle changes
- Latch and troubleshooting latch
- How to incorporate breastfeeding into busy schedule
- Body changes
- How breastfeeding feels (pain has been identified as a predictor of not breastfeeding and an early reason for supplementing or weaning)
- Lifecoaching – to negotiate challenges of breastfeeding and work, household responsibilities, other children
- Set short term achievable goals
- Use social media
Explain infant behaviors that result in supplementation

- Infant fussiness
- Baby not sleeping
- Baby sucking on fists
- Fussiness when put down
- Need to assure that baby is full
- Need to make baby sleep
Recourse opportunities

- Petition to the FDA to add warning label regarding adverse effects of DHA and ARA oils

- Petition to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) regarding misleading claims

Which is paramount: a company’s unfettered right to promote their product, or the stated goal of promoting public health and welfare even where it may run counter to consumers’ freedom of choice? And at their core, these debates don’t only touch upon the scope of the government’s authority to protect consumers, but also raise the issue of manufacturers’ obligations to their customers and whether a line might be crossed when aggressive marketing tactics run counter to public policy agendas. If a state legislature can demand that a manufacturer not promote a certain product in a certain way, then perhaps it is only a matter of time before consumers themselves can hold manufacturers liable for negligence in the way their products are marketed whenever such strategies ostensibly clash with the consumer’s health or welfare or general “best interests”.

“AT WHAT COST: WHEN PROFITS ARE PUT BEFORE MOTHERS AND BABIES”

http://vimeo.com/54697462

The California WIC Association and UC Berkeley School of Public Health created a video that reveals the deceptive messages and unethical marketing practices used by formula companies.

The video will be used in a larger strategy to pressure the Food and Drug Administration and Federal Trade Commission to implement stronger policies that address deceptive labeling and messaging. Andrea W. Lee, Tanya Moss, and Jessica Watterson