

DAIRY MADE



Research confirmed this brand's distinction was its buttermilk base. Dominant blue evoked that meaning—predecessor green did not.

Hidden Valley got the blues... and the competition started crying.

And it was just in time. Deep-pocketed competitors were crowding the shelves. Consumer attitudes were changing, and Hidden Valley—the originator of ranch dressing—was losing its originator status.

Guided by extensive consumer research and visual studies, we came up with a radical design solution: ditch the segment's dominant color convention of salad green, and replace it with a unique blue palette, which consumers told us evoked "dairy freshness" and "authenticity."

The result? An immediate and potent shelf-blocking effect that captured visual dominance and never let go. It was a bold, revitalizing change of direction for a brand that introduced the first buttermilk-based salad dressing to the world more than 50 years before. Today, Hidden Valley sits firmly on top of its segment—and its competitors remain blue with envy.

BRAND-MEANING RESEARCH

Using a combination of focus group methodology and projective techniques, we explored Hidden Valley's brand meaning—both primary and intrinsic—as it lived on the package.

We asked consumers, "So, what does 'dairy' say to you?" The answer was something that was absent from all the labels—the color blue. The link between dairy and blue is a culturally-conditioned cue.



BRAND PROFILE

The brand profile was based on our research, the brand strategy and the visual drivers required to evoke it. The profile demonstrated how moving to a new blue color palette affected Hidden Valley's brand meaning on almost every dimension.

PACKAGING

We redesigned the label to capture the spirit of place—after all, Hidden Valley was a real California ranch where the dressing was first created in 1954. Competitive brands had more conventional salad-y imagery and carried fanciful names. “The Original Ranch Dressing” claim now clearly relates to the brand's origins through its pairing with the revised illustration.

ICONIC ILLUSTRATION

The short version: More blue sky. Less green valley.