



## Market

Pain relief is a practice that goes back many centuries, when early physicians and medical professionals used plants and tree barks to alleviate pain. The modern practice of pain relief and Over The Counter (OTC) medication took the responsibility of pain management away from the physician and put it in the hands of the patient. It is a complex transition, but this big step is what opened up the era of branded pain and fever medication, analgesics, modern delivery methods and trusted brands.

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) is a leading pharmaceutical marketer in Sri Lanka. It commands 90% of the OTC analgesic market with its brand Panadol (Source: LMRB Household Panel). The analgesic market in Sri Lanka consists of many interactive categories such as allopathic drugs, Ayurvedic medicines and topical applications.

Thanks to a great product, continued support from the medical profession, and clear and consistent messaging in media advertising, Sri Lankans now place their trust in Panadol. This acceptance has been reinforced through the support of opinion leaders' and doctors' recommendations.

Further, the allopathic sector comprises two major segments: the adults' and children's ranges. The children's range is known as Panadol For Children (PFC). The PFC range, too, accounts for 90% of the paediatric market for pain and fever relief in Sri Lanka.

## Achievements

Panadol is the core brand in GSK's product portfolio. It believes in continuous improvements and setting standards by way of launching extensions and variants to strengthen the brand franchise. With the relaunch of the paediatric range in 1985, Panadol became an

accepted family brand. Today, it enjoys a dominant position in all households.

Panadol is available in more than 130,000 outlets around the country. It is number one with regard to availability for all categories (Source: Retail Sales Audit – ACNielsen). While Panadol's brand awareness is 100%, it has an 85-90% spontaneous ad awareness (Source: TNS Market Whys).

And its success stems from its ability to fulfil consumer expectations vis-à-vis effective pain relief.

## History

In the late 1800s, the scarcity of quinine sparked a search for a less expensive synthetic substitute for fever relief. This led to numerous discoveries, including Aminophenol derivatives – one of which was N-Acetyl-P-Aminophenol (now called Paracetamol), the active ingredient in Panadol. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, sufficient clinical work had been completed to demonstrate the clinical safety of Paracetamol. In 1956, Frederick Stearns & Co., by this time a subsidiary of Sterling Drug Inc., launched its own brand – Panadol.

At that time, Panadol was marketed as a prescription product to relieve pain and fever. It became the first serious challenge to Aspirin and Aspirin/Phenacetin combinations. It was promoted with the clinically proven gentle-to-the-stomach benefit over other pain relievers.

In the early 1970s, for the first time, Panadol was made available only through pharmacy outlets – it was marketed as a prescribed medicine. In 1994, through a worldwide acquisition, SmithKline Beecham acquired the Consumer Health business of Sterling, together with Panadol.

Today, the Panadol brand continues to grow from strength to strength, with convincing



testimony of unwavering, consistent support for the brand by consumers and health professionals alike.

## Product

Panadol has led innovation in pain relief. After its introduction in tablet form in 1956, a constant flow of new presentations and forms have been introduced to offer the consumer a variety of choices. In 1971, the round tablet in the cellophane pack made history in the progression of Panadol. This was followed by the blister pack in 1992. Later, in 1998, the caplet in the blister pack replaced the familiar round tablet.

Panadol has believed in continuous improvement and setting standards by way of launching extensions and variants to strengthen its brand franchise. As a result, several line extensions have been added to a growing market. These included PFC – relaunched in 1985 with no sugar and no alcohol, quite unlike other variants available at the time. In 2004, recognising the need for Paracetamol that acted twice as fast to keep up with the fast-paced lives of consumers, Panadol ActiFast was introduced to the market.

All Panadol's adult products are manufactured in Dungarvan, Ireland – the manufacturing hub for many markets. Stringent quality controls are in place during its production process. Panadol is brought to Sri Lanka in bulk form. It is then repacked into blister cards at Ratmalana. This process ensures that customers receive an effective, high-quality product.

The range of children's presentations include infant drops, children's liquid and chewable tablets. This range has been marketed along the No, No, No concept that stands for No alcohol, No sugar and No aspirin. Its success can be measured by



Panadol's market leadership in the paediatric range.

Panadol ActiFast tablets are manufactured with a film coating that makes swallowing easier and to circumvent any bitter taste. ActiFast also includes Sodium Bicarbonate, which accelerates absorption into the body. As a result, it is absorbed into the body twice as fast as the standard product.

## Recent Developments

Since the relaunch of Panadol in October 2005, and due to clear visual differentiation, consumers can now easily recognise the product. This differentiation was brought about by the double-sided printing of foil and a blister card in landscape design. Such clear brand identification ensures that consumers will not be misled by lookalikes. As a result of the relaunch, its market share has risen from 87% to 91% in Sri Lankan households (Source: Household Panel – LMRB).

The relaunch of PFC also incorporated several new changes. New regulations stipulated by the Drug Regulatory Authority (DRA) influenced changes in the PFC range. At a cosmetic level, images of children were removed and replaced with new floral graphics. At a technical level, a new method of administering dosages was printed on all material.

As a result, PFC adopted the international standard for child dosage – to dose by weight rather than age. According to the new dosing system, children now have to be given fifteen milligrammes of Paracetamol for every kilogramme of body weight, for effective relief from pain or fever. This ensures that mothers will not overdose children by giving a second dose too soon, expecting the pain to be relieved or fever to reduce quickly.

## Promotion

The rationale for the relaunch of Panadol was market saturation, with the advent of many

lookalikes.

Owing to the visual similarities of competing products, a clear differentiation of the pack was also needed. Panadol believed that the lookalikes were deceiving consumers as being their trusted Panadol. The company's mission was to ensure that the customer is given Panadol when he or she asks for it. This strategy was a tremendous success – it was, in fact, evidenced by sales data which reflected rapidly rising demand.

To achieve this, GSK launched a 360-degree campaign. This was achieved by establishing what is now known as the ripples of relief, which are a part of the new design and use characters from varying social levels and skills. They provide messages of product usage in the form of testimonials. The campaign was able to strongly reinforce the message that Panadol was, and still is, Sri Lanka's trusted brand for pain and fever relief.

For PFC, the brand's packaging design became a key element of communication. The new packaging still had the look and feel of a children's product, while instructing the consumer – via a visual chart – how to dose by weight rather than by age.

The campaign for PFC demonstrated these points. It featured objects that depicted the age and size of children; then conveyed that though they may be the same age, they may not weigh the same. This imagery helped reinforce the message in the minds of consumers that PFC should be dosed by weight rather than age.

In November 2004, a new Paracetamol variant called ActiFast was introduced. It was marketed exclusively through GSK's medical marketing team. This tactic was a conscious decision made by GSK, to inform the medical profession first.

It was a move that gained the support of the medical profession. An extensive 360-degree campaign ensued, which successfully established the brand as an OTC drug.

## Brand Values

The brand is supported by ongoing research conducted to ensure that its value and relevance to consumers do not change. Panadol's key value is the trust consumers place in the brand. This has evolved over its 40 years in the pain-relief market. As a result, GSK's Panadol has become the market leader.

Supporting this trust is the gentle-to-the-stomach safety profile of the Paracetamol ingredient, the medical recommendation to which consumers refer when purchasing pain relievers. Recent research confirms that Sri Lankans have grown up with Panadol and that the brand continues to be their most trusted pain reliever.

[www.gsk.com](http://www.gsk.com)



## THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT

### Panadol.

- ▶ Panadol's dissolution profile is superior to other paracetamols in Sri Lanka.
- ▶ Panadol is the most widely distributed pain reliever in the world. It is marketed in over 80 countries.
- ▶ It is also the most widely distributed brand in Sri Lanka, boasting a brand awareness of 100%.
- ▶ The 'dol' in Panadol is derived from the Latin word dolor, meaning pain.

