

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

Gallaher Ltd

Silk Cut Packaging Development  
Qualitative Debrief

Presented by:

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Presented to:

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Date: 7th April 1998

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**Haslam Drury**

## **BACKGROUND**

- Gallaher is reviewing the packaging of the Silk Cut brand, which has been broadly unchanged for 25 years or so.
- Three agencies have put forward alternative design routes, at this stage for Silk Cut King Size only
- The new design “should be modern and take the brand forward by maintaining the Silk Cut heritage”
- It is envisaged that further pack development will be required, at least of the other variants in the range

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- To assess the overall appeal and communication of the design routes.
- To assess these in the context of feelings and attitudes towards the Silk Cut brand, and its current positioning and personality in the market place
- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of each route.
- To assess their likely strategic impact on brand identity and positioning

## METHOD AND SAMPLE

- Eight focus groups among Silk Cut smokers, structured to represent their brand's profile:

- Male

BC1, 18-34

BC1, 35-50

C2D, 18-34

C2D, 35-50

- Female

BC1, 18-34

BC1, 35-50

C2D, 18-34

C2D, 35-50

- Groups were split North and South. Fieldwork was conducted in Manchester, Nottingham, Ruislip and Wimbledon (viewed groups)
- Research was conducted w/c 16th and 23rd March 1998 by Melanie Haslam and Lindsay Kennard.

## **MAIN FINDINGS**

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## SMOKING BEHAVIOUR

- The majority were smoking 15+ a day; only a couple of women were social smokers (6-10 a day)
- The sample was fairly evenly spread between short and long term Silk Cut smokers:
  - higher proportion in the South for two years or so
  - higher proportion in the North, over ten years
- The majority came from premium brands (or brands that were positioned as premium):
  - Benson and Hedges
  - Embassy, Regal
  - Rothmans, JPS, Superkings
  - even, Park Drive, Senior Service, Woodbines (North)
  - and, Marlboro, Marlboro lights, Camel (younger, South)

## **REASONS FOR SMOKING SILK CUT**

- Silk Cut in a unique position as the only stand alone low tar brand:
  - not just a variation on a higher tar brand
  - specialist brand
  - low tar credentials and expertise
- Often the brand taken up “on the way” to giving up, but becomes a halfway compromise
- The trigger to switching often a cough, cold, bad throat and concerns about higher tar/ nicotine:
  - harshness of smoke cited as a problem with other brands
- Mixture of attitudes towards smoking. Many resigned to carrying on, others hopeful that they would cut down/stop altogether

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE VARIANTS

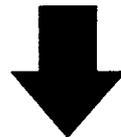
- Silk Cut King Size critical entry point to lower tar smoking:
  - product can take some getting used to, but difficult to return to stronger brands when accustomed to the smoke
  - compares very favourably with alternatives:
    - Lambert and Butler “like cardboard”
    - Marlboro and Camel Lights too strong and distinctive
- Considerable confusion evident between ‘Regular’ and Extra Mild:
  - colour coding too close, lacks differentiation
- Ultra users loyal, but often apologetic about their choice (not a real smoke):
  - for regular smokers; “like smoking air” and “makes your face ache”
- Ultra packaging very distinct from Regular

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS SILK CUT KING SIZE

- **Product** loyalty high across the sample:
  - definitive low tar brand
  - “smooth” smoke to develop a taste for
  - helps to assuage guilt about smoking
- Perceptions about product quality an important factor in brand acceptability. Assumptions driven by a combination of factors:
  - brand heritage and longevity
  - packaging and advertising
  - price point
- Feelings about **packaging** are more complex:
  - different views of men and women
  - especially when linked to social class

## VIEWS OF WOMEN

- Discrete and understated
- Classy, elegant, refined
- A little luxury, treat, indulgence:
  - sensual (like chocolate)
  - helps further to assuage guilt about smoking
- For those women with fewer luxuries in life in general, and less disposable income:
  - even more of a treat
  - and a sophisticated prop/accessory



**A cigarette mainly for women  
May be seen as effete for men**

## VIEWS OF MEN

- One group of more upmarket men responded positively to the pack:
  - like women, appreciate its discretion, understatement and classiness
  - evaluate more rationally, with far less emphasis on aspects of indulgence and sensuality
  - no real problem that it is more of a woman's cigarette
- Remaining men took a very different view:
  - discretion = boring, not eye-catching
  - classy, elegance = "poncy", "a bird's fag"
    - more gin and tonic than pint with your mates
    - just not machismo (even, decant SCKS into a B & H pack)

## EXPLORING AND UNDERSTANDING THE SILK CUT PACK

### Critical features:

White  
Purple  
Gold

### Critical benefits:

Low Tar  
Distinctive (branding)  
Quality

## USE OF WHITE ON THE PACK

- White signals the low tar category
- Correlation between amount of white, and the tar/nicotine levels of the cigarette

*“The whiter the pack, the **healthier** they are”*

*“Looks less harmful than other brands”*

- Implies a lighter, smoother smoke; less harsh and aggressive
- Also purity and cleanliness
- The opposite of Silk Cut → cited as black packs Sovereign, JPS and Death

## THE USE OF PURPLE

- Purple is unique; it symbolises and carries the brand within the market
- The purple is a **rich, dark** purple:
  - silk, velvet
  - luxury, sensual
  - quality, premium, royal
- The purple is dark and **contained**, angular:
  - **potent**
  - distinctive
  - ▶ with an inner strength/force

## THE USE OF GOLD

- Supports a premium promise
- Quality
- Classic
- Sophisticated
- Classy
- Luxury

**Note that respondents did not differentiate between gold foil and gold printing**

## IMPLICATIONS

- Low tar will always have more feminine than masculine values:
  - literally an emasculated smoke
- Critical to retain key elements of Silk Cut communication:
  - low tar (“healthy”), quality and distinctiveness (combination of gold and purple)
- Development needs to be true to the brand personality and positioning. What lets men into the brand is:
  - the strong product rationale (quality, definitive low tar)
  - some design elements - the strength of the central device; contained purple angularity and bold typeface
  - to some extent the simplicity (*“the strength of the design...”*)



**Thus care needs to be taken not to make the design too feminine,  
whilst being true to the brand personality**

## **GUIDELINES FOR PACKAGING DEVELOPMENT**

- **Amount of purple on pack**

- too much purple = higher tar, stronger cigarette, not SCKS in low tar
- too little/recessive purple = loss of brand potency and distinctiveness

- **Tone of purple**

- core Silk Cut associated with deep, dark purple:
  - distinctive, with stand out
  - quality and luxury
- light purple communicates even lower tar:
  - nor does it have the same quality associations

## Use of shapes on pack

- A square generally needs to be centred:
  - satisfaction and conditioning re: symmetry
  - *“it is like someone’s home and they’ve got a fireplace and placed a picture off centre - it looks silly”*
- More flexibility if not a perfect square (e.g. flag shape)
- If shape off-centre:
  - disconcerting if not on left (read left to right in **English**)
  - potential to reveal too much white/ focus on white → too plain/ lower tar
- If **small** square:
  - recessive, loses distinctiveness of brand
  - lower tar (less purple)
  - looks like the **back** of the pack

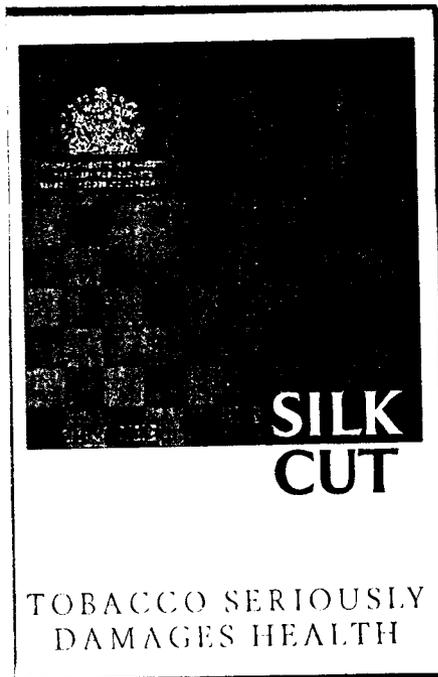
## Gold printing on pack

- White or purple typeface for Silk Cut branding tends to undermine quality; denotes cheap, downmarket, own label. For some men it does however make the pack less feminine, more masculine
- Gold typeface tends to communicate classic brand, style, quality, luxury
- Font and case contribute to brand personality. Consider what is helpful in terms of:
  - brand authority and stature
  - contemporary/classic versus fashionable
  - more feminine versus more masculine values
- Note that existing uppercase tends to be more authoritative and masculine. Although even for some men *“Quite old; square and chunky”*
- Ensure stand out, especially when gold is superimposed on purple

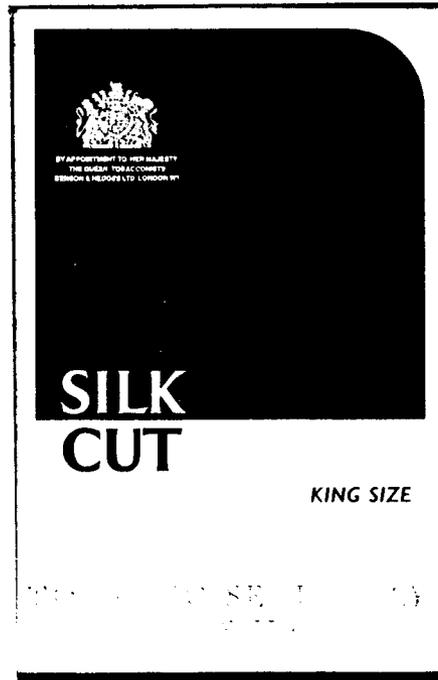
### Gold crest

- Is important
- Pack looks undressed without it
- Stamp of approval
- Authority endorsement

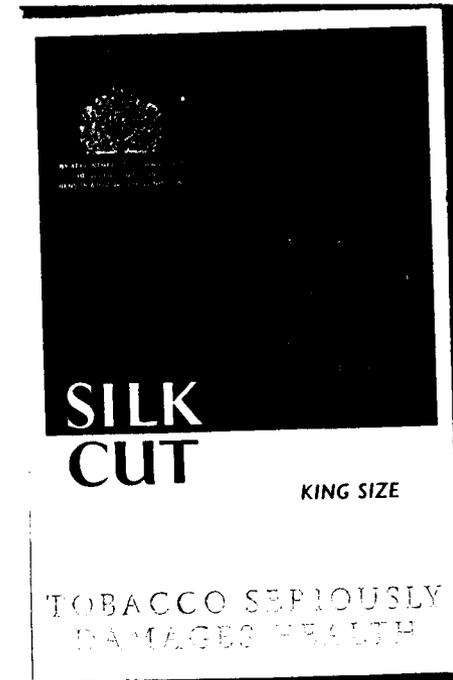
**STRATEGICALLY INAPPROPRIATE PACKS**



A



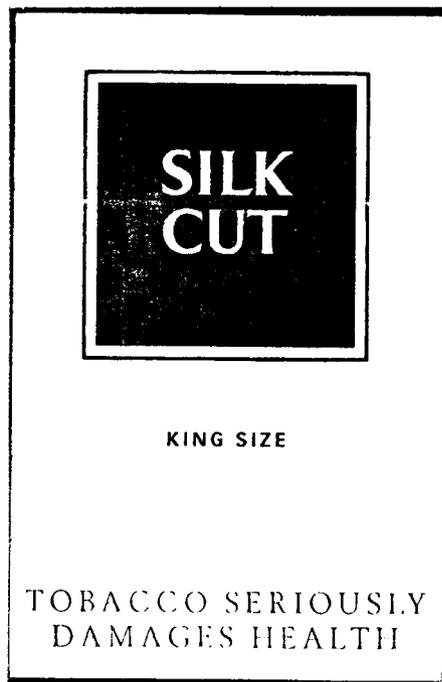
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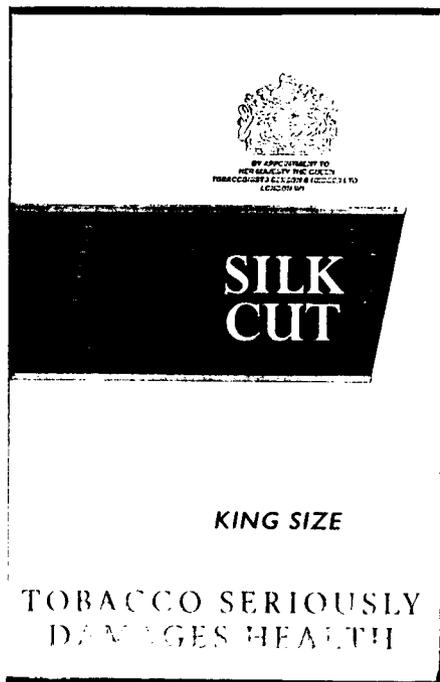
C

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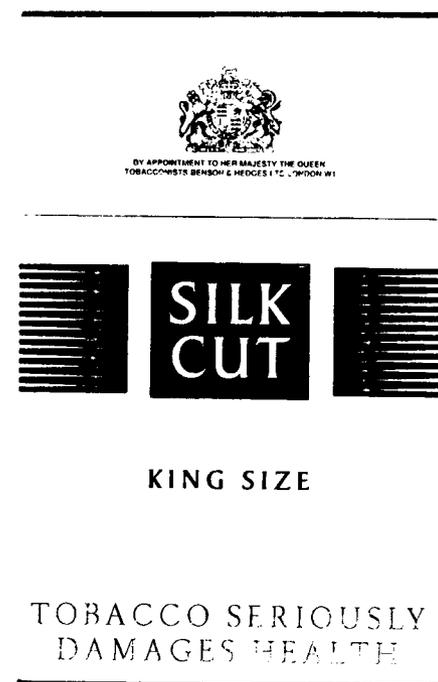
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D



E



F

## STRATEGICALLY INAPPROPRIATE PACKS

### A, B, C

- Just not Silk Cut King size. Dominance of purple repositions as a **stronger** cigarette
- Radically changes brand personality → more masculine, lacks elegance and discretion
- Lacks quality associations without gold typeface
- Too many footprints from other categories:
  - chocolate (Milk Tray)
  - perfume, playing cards
  - kids chocolate cigarettes
- 'Chequer board' pack most successful; stylish development of square devise:  
→ strongest pack overall for young men in the South

## D

- Again, repositions Silk Cut as stronger and more masculine. So some appeal to younger men
- But discomfort with design:
  - looks like the back of the pack
  - or an old push out pack
  - will split 'Silk Cut' branding in two
- Lacks quality associations:
  - no crest
  - white type face

## E and F

- Reminiscent of old cigarette brands, refers to the past:

*“Looks like something your grandpa would smoke”*

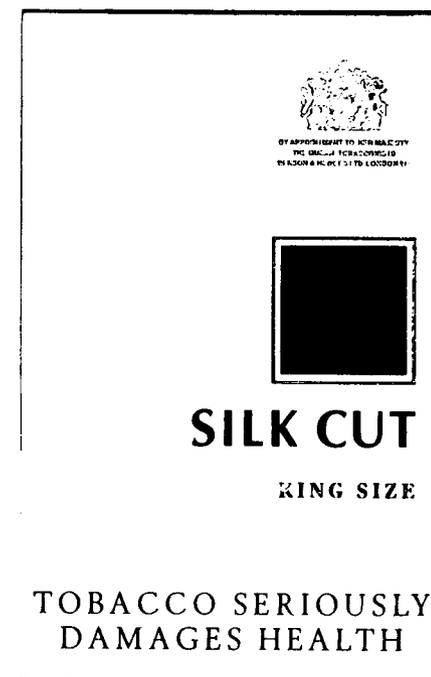
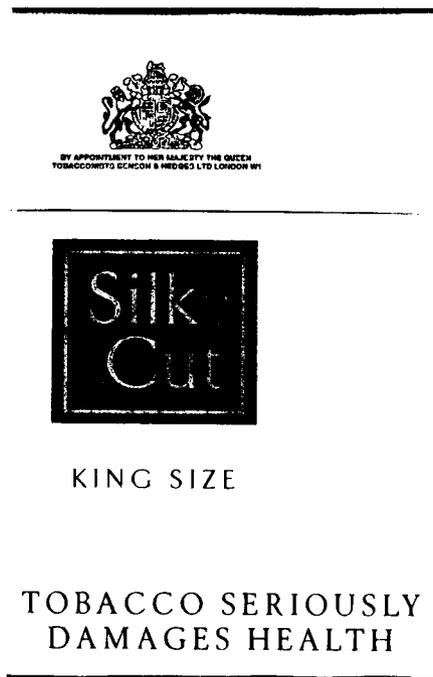
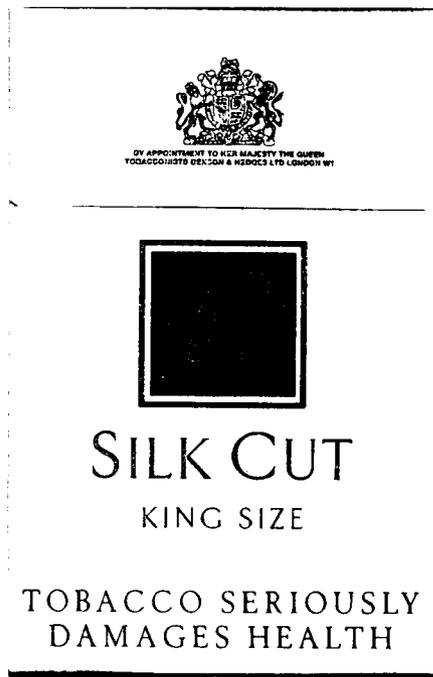
- Footprints from other cigarette brands:

E: Senior Service, Capstan, Rothmans and Red Band

F: Park Drive, Woodbines, Red Band

- Seen as very masculine, strong, cheap, downmarket

**PROBLEMATICAL PACKS**





**silk cut**

KING SIZE

TOBACCO SERIOUSLY  
DAMAGES HEALTH

J



**SILK CUT**  
KING SIZE

TOBACCO SERIOUSLY  
DAMAGES HEALTH

K



**SILK CUT**  
KING SIZE

TOBACCO SERIOUSLY  
DAMAGES HEALTH

L

## PROBLEMATICAL PACKS

### G and H

- Appeal of these packs, especially to women:
  - understated simplicity and elegance
- **G** most satisfying. Appreciated details:
  - square devise and checked effect
  - crest and gold type
- **H** tending to be **too** feminine for the men. Exacerbated by:
  - fine typeface
  - off-centre square
- But both packs possibly too conservative. Too close to original, do not move the brand on

!

- Device on right of pack creates two problems:
  - highlights white space
  - feels uncomfortable  
NB Silk Cut is a brand to feel comfortable with
  - *"looks back to front as if they are skimping to save money"*
- Note that shading purple effect has less relevance and appeal than the other methods of developing purple:
  - textured purple = silk
  - chequered effect = development of Silk Cut square

## J

- Looks odd, as if devise is “falling off” the pack
- Nothing for men:
  - very effete, and bland
- For the majority of women:
  - more stylised typeface lacks classic values:
    - insubstantial
    - too modern, would not stand the test of time
- Although some younger upmarket women liked the more overt fashionable styling of the pack

## K and L

- 'Silk Cut-ness' too recessive, not bold, not distinctive enough:
  - too much white, not enough purple
  - faded purple → anaemic Silk Cut or a lower tar version
- Not classy, premium enough:
  - needs deep purple
  - not enough gold
- Somewhat bland and uninteresting

**PACKS WITH POTENTIAL**



**SILK CUT**  
KING SIZE

TOBACCO SERIOUSLY  
DAMAGES HEALTH

7



**Silk Cut**  
KING SIZE

TOBACCO SERIOUSLY  
DAMAGES HEALTH

2



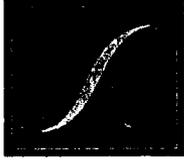
KING SIZE

TOBACCO SERIOUSLY  
DAMAGES HEALTH

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BY APPOINTMENT TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN  
TOBACCONISTS BILSON & HERGEN LTD LONDON W1

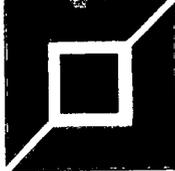


**SILK CUT**  
KING SIZE

TOBACCO SERIOUSLY  
DAMAGES HEALTH

P

BY APPOINTMENT TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN  
TOBACCONISTS BILSON & HERGEN LTD LONDON W1



**SILK CUT**  
KING SIZE

TOBACCO SERIOUSLY  
DAMAGES HEALTH

P

## PACKS WITH POTENTIAL

### M

- Different approach that drew mixed comments
- Modern, striking, different, simple, contemporary, youthful
- However potentially **too** modern, young “for my kid sister”, frivolous:
  - lacks grown up classiness
  - whilst some comment about “smudge” and “misprint” suggesting a lack of care, a slip of the pen
- Potentially paler colours suggest a lower tar variant, more for younger people
- Bold, strong typeface enhanced relevance to men, and off-set some of the youthfulness of the concept

## N

- Cut Silk not dependent on advertising, but a reminder of it:
  - perhaps pack of greatest appeal to those who recalled/appreciated advertising  
→ clever extension of a clever idea
- Young and dynamic, but not frivolous
- Might benefit from a stronger typeface

## O

- One of the most acceptable packs overall, but not for Northern men
- For the majority devise interpreted as:
  - flowing silk, “scarf in the wind” (women)
  - a flag / emblem (men)
- Fluidity of devise works:
  - contemporary, interesting, different
  - but also more feminine, too much so for Northern men
- Note that gold typeface on purple (silk) lacks stand out/difficult to read

## P

- Again one of the most acceptable packs overall, although tending to be too feminine for some of the men:
  - minority references to perfume and chocolates
- Contemporary, stylish but still a classic feel. For the majority a satisfactory development of the existing pack:
  - although for the minority does not take the brand far enough
- Logo devise compared with Nike ✓ in terms of development potential

## Q

- Polarised response, often by region
- Interesting because different but also captures some of the essence of Silk Cut
- For some (south), too flash and glitzy for Silk cut:
  - numerous comparisons with perfume packs, eye-shadow compacts
- Boldness and strength of design had some appeal especially among Northern men:
  - depth of colour and angularity of design
  - a continental feel for some

## **BACK OF PACK**

### **Benson and Hedges**

- Heritage that does provide value
- However, not essential to the brand. Silk Cut now stands on its own as a quality, premium brand and does not **need** the heritage

### **The Low Tar Cigarette**

- It **is** the brand positioning. Harder to lose than Benson and Hedges:
  - although only a minority could recall it being there
- Assumptive statement, and essentially a truth about the brand
- Note that younger respondents in particular, have a high level of awareness of tar and nicotine levels. Becoming part of the language like the alcohol content of beer

## **CONCLUSIONS**

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## CONCLUSIONS

- The Silk Cut King Size pack is a powerful design that positions the brand within low tar, with a distinct and classy image
- The existing pack has what is essentially a more feminine personality, which is perhaps inevitable within low tar (literally emasculated cigarettes). Certain features are particularly important to that side of the brand personality:
  - the simplicity of design and combination of deep purple and gold and white = luxury, elegance and refinement
- However, although many men may reject the pack overall as too feminine, there are elements which let them in:
  - contained purple; angularity and regularity brings a certain potency to the brand
  - the strength of bold upper case lettering
  - simplicity, especially for the more upmarket men

- There is undoubtedly potential to move the brand on. Even those who initially resisted the idea of change, (the existing pack has a strong and loyal following), felt that some of the new pack designs repositioned the original as old-fashioned and a little dull:

*“Having seen all the packs and putting the old one on the table, I do think it looks a bit outdated now. I didn’t before”*

- Several of the pack designs were interesting developments of the current which should be considered for further development:
  - in the context of understanding how different elements of the pack work
  - across the Silk Cut range, with a view to developing a stronger and more distinct differentiation between Regular and Extra Mild in particular

- The designs that deserve further consideration are potentially a good strategic fit with the brand, which also can take the brand on
- However, you need to recognise that there are certain constraints to design developments you may have to accept. Namely, that it may be difficult to reach a design conclusion which will:
  - appeal equally across the board to men and women
  - can appeal to some men at all, without compromising the strategic intent and personality of the brand
  - their commitment may need to continue to be product led