

Schick Wilkinson Sword - Hydro

Our Best Shave for Your Skin

Opportunity/Problem:

Throughout all the recent innovations in the shaving category, our research found that men continued to avoid shaving for the simple reason of irritation during the shave (a lack of comfort) and after the shave (redness, soreness, and razor bumps). Schick Wilkinson Sword (SWS) set out to fully design its first razor from the ground up to address this specific consumer unmet need. We examined every aspect of the razor to develop the Hydro series of razors. We did this all with consumer involvement every step of the way. Our research also showed that men have a different preference for the number of blades on the razor; some prefer three blades while others prefer five blades. SWS's mission in creating HYDRO was to provide consumers with a less irritating shave.

Innovative Solution:

In order to meet the consumer's need for reduced irritation during and after their shaving experience, Schick Wilkinson Sword introduced three key innovative, science based, first to market technologies on the HYDRO razor systems.



The first innovation, "Ultragliding Blades with Skin Guards" was the result of recognizing the need to better control skin flow from blade tip to tip. Controlling skin flow means controlling the amount of skin which bulges between each of the blade tips. However, our performance data showed that simply reducing the tip-to-tip distance would put the blade tips so close together that the shave debris would readily clog the system and the closeness of the shave would become an issue. This inventive solution allows us to bridge the skin flow by adding an extra point of contact providing a close shave with less irritation and eliminates the risk of clogging. This Skin Guard innovation did not stop with the Ultragliding Blades themselves. To meet the performance requirements of the product, it required us to develop the manufacturing equipment and process capable of producing millions of these blades per day while maintaining tolerances in terms of microns.

The second innovation, "Advanced Lubrication System" was born from the idea of delivering a lubricating strip with 100% pure lubricant as opposed to the traditional method which combines it with plastic. This new innovation puts pure lubricant into an open box allowing a direct path for water to quickly combine with it, turn into a gel, and be released on the face throughout the life of the cartridge. Our new system delivers large amounts of lubricant over a sustained period of time. This is important because the shaving cream which provides the initial lubrication is "shaved off" with the first stroke. By providing additional lubrication with each stroke from the hydrating lubrication reservoir, we can reduce the irritation caused by blades running over non-lubricated skin. Finally, since our Advanced Lubrication System moisturizes throughout each shave, it refreshes the skin and reduces post-shave irritation.

The third innovation is the "Flip Trimmer". As we increased the number of blades, we know the cartridge size can become too big and affect the ability to trim under the nose, around sideburns and around other facial hair. Cartridges such as Quattro address this issue with a rear trim blade; however, it requires the consumer to flip the razor over in order to trim. This invention allows the consumer to simply flip back the hydrating gel reservoir with their finger and allow trimming to be done with all the blades in the cartridge while holding the system in the natural, ergonomically designed, shave position.

Results (data as of Feb 2011):

Schick Wilkinson Sword's Hydro3 and Hydro5 were launched in North America, Japan, and key Western Europe markets beginning in April 2010. The launch of Hydro has been successful in growing SWS market share, despite significant competitive activity.

- Since the Hydro launch in the US, SWS value (i.e. dollar) share of the total men's category has increased by +6.5 pts versus year ago to 14.5%..
- In Japan, SWS value share of the total men's category has increased by 1.8 pts versus year ago to 54.6%, reinforcing its leadership position of the category.
- Similar share gains are being exhibited in Europe. In Germany, SWS value share has increased by 1.6 pt to 16.8% in less than 4 months after Hydro introduction. In France, SWS value share is up +2.1 pts to 19.6%, and UK has showed the largest gain in Europe at +2.8 share points to 14%.