



## Market

Through the year – but most markedly in winter – hundreds of thousands of people reach out for a tube of Boroline. This age-old, multi-purpose remedy is seen as a panacea for minor nicks, chapped lips, cracked feet and a tonic for dry skin. With so many reasons to buy, competition multiplies four-fold, coming up from even those offering relief on any one of these counts.

This octogenarian brand from Kolkata-based G D Pharmaceutical Limited has invigorated and inspired the entire over-the-counter (OTC) antiseptic cream market in India commanding an annual sale of 2.8 million litres valued at more than Rs. 180 crore (US\$ 37.50 million). In this evolving segment Boroline, with its traditional quality and an unswerving commitment to consumers is the eminent front-runner with a market share of 21% (Source: ORG-Marg).

The brand has made deep furrows across the country's distribution landscape, throwing up impressive data in its journey. Boroline enjoys a dealer penetration of 34.20% and directly services more than 300,000 retail outlets (source: internal data).

## Achievements

This continuous insistence on growth in strength rather than merely volumes has stood the brand in good stead. Boroline's most prodigious achievement has been its fairy-tale resurgence – a Phoenix-like rise from the ashes. The brand faced extinction when, in the early 1990s, production was stalled for two years due to stagnant pricing following a statutory order from the authorities.

This meant, at that time, that every tube of Boroline sold was pushing the company towards greater loss. Production had to be brought down to a minimum. Boroline disappeared unceremoniously from retail shelves. This insecurity persisted for two years. Boroline, however, proved its brand goodwill, when on returning to the counters after this two-year hiatus, it was greeted by consumers with an emotion reserved for welcoming a long lost friend. In no time, sales had doubled.

The story of Boroline is one of Indian industry's most remarkable tales of survival against all odds. After all, in a market littered with choices, brands have disappeared for a sin much less than non-availability.

Since its inception, Boroline has been in a league of its own. Most Indians would have used it at some point in their lives or almost certainly

would have known someone who did. The high recall value of this heritage product and its cult-like status stem from a single identifiable attribute: quality. Long-term users continue to find this trusted and versatile antiseptic unchanged in terms of safety and efficacy.

Hand-me-down testimonials about Boroline from older generations of users have steadily brought into contention a new breed of youngsters to replace the aging population. It is this churn that has allowed Boroline an unimpeded and continuous command of the market for 80 years.

The company spends 5% of its annual earnings on research and development. As a consequence, newer production technologies have been developed resulting in enhanced operational efficiencies.

Efficient distribution and high productivity have led to a cheerful state of affairs: Boroline-loyalists have no complaints about either accessibility or affordability of their favourite



product – a boon in the extremely price sensitive Indian mass market.

Among Boroline's proudest achievements is its maturing into a responsible corporate citizen of the country. Highly conscious of its social responsibilities, it has ensured that its packaging is entirely recyclable.

In its factory near Kolkata, special plantation projects contribute to ensure environmental protection as a part of the Save Trees campaign. In addition, Boroline maintains a large water reservoir of 6000 square metres to provide a balanced ecosystem, biodegrading all pre-treated effluents.

In a very private, very special compassionate and humanitarian gesture Boroline helps economically under-privileged, terminally ill patients and children requiring heart surgery, financial assistance for treatment.

## History

Boroline's history is inextricably intertwined with the dawning of India's nationalistic pride and struggle for independence. Founder, Gourmohan Dutta belonged to Calcutta's merchant class. He was already an established trader of imported goods, when the patriotic Swadeshi movement sweeping India, gnawed at him. He was convinced that the best way to help his country was to contribute to her economic self-sufficiency.

To realise this goal, he decided to manufacture products of a quality equivalent to their foreign counterparts. It was a daunting task. Many



dissuaded him from this venture. But Dutta marched to the sound of his own distant drummer. He stopped importing goods altogether and started manufacturing medicines.

One of these would be the legendary green tube – Boroline. The celebrated forward march of this product had a humble beginning in his house in 1929.

To establish the brand identity, the logo was watchfully developed. The elephant signifies steadiness and strength. Moreover to the merchants, the elephant deity – Ganesha – has an auspicious significance.



Keeping these values in mind, Dutta chose the elephant as Boroline's logo, hoping that it would bestow luck and spell success, for what was still considered a reckless venture. The logo caught on instantaneously. In the rural heart land and for the millions who cannot read, Boroline is still known as the '*hathiwala cream*' (cream with the elephant logo).

### Product

The name Boroline is derived from its ingredients, 'Boro' from boric powder, which has antiseptic properties, and 'oline' as a variant of the Latin word oleum, meaning oil. The cream is a combination of essential oils, waxes and its remarkable antiseptic properties are a result of boric powder and zinc oxide.

This potent combination of ingredients protects the affected skin against germs and facilitates rapid growth of epidermal cells. It is for this reason that Boroline works wonders on cuts and bruises, promotes fast healing of scars following surgery and defends the skin against chapping and cracking. Its protective properties, following application, do not wear off in extremely dry and chilly conditions. It is a powerful lubricator for rough or abraded skin and provides superior healing of sun burns.

### Recent Developments

In keeping with the environmental concerns of the day, Boroline has switched to recyclable packaging, thus contributing its bit to the conservation of natural resources.

However, it is in the area of extending its brand franchise, by entering the hair care market with a brand called Boroline's Eleen that Boroline has of late, excelled. This premium, herbal light hair oil, has, within five years, become one of the leading brands in its segment.

The established medicinal value of Boroline has also been extended to a modern pain relieving formula called Boroline's Penorub, while Boroline's Suthol – an epidermal antiseptic – has been developed to soothe skin irritation, rashes, itches and infections.

Boroline's vision is focused on its ultimate goal of integrative medicine – combining modern chemistry with the science of ancient

Indian Ayurveda. The company believes that the amalgam of the old and the new has the potential to create safe, user-friendly, value-



added products.

The first steps in this development have already been taken with the setting up of the Boroline Herbal Garden – a state-of-the-art research facility in Kolkata.

### Promotion

Boroline's brand image is the brain child of the founder's son, Murari Mohan Dutta. A marketing genius, he pioneered concepts that were years ahead of their times. In the late 1950s, Boroline had surged with concepts like brand image, rural marketing and event sponsorships.

The brand took to the streets during festivals, cheered players in the grounds during cricket and football matches and launched a blitz of newspaper, magazine, radio and outdoor promotions. Boroline was everywhere, with everyone. It simply became a part of people's lives. Since 1982, every four years, Boroline has sponsored the Jawaharlal Nehru Invitation International Football Gold Cup.

In terms of image building, Boroline has kept pace with the times. The changing straplines

reflect the course of promotional platforms of Boroline through the decades. In the 1950s, Boroline was a 'tender face cream'. In the 1960s, it changed to 'Boroline for the skin. The skin needs Boroline'. In the 1970s, the brand became more aggressive through 'Boroline has no substitute'. In 1976, 'Boroline turned 50 – Not Out!' In the early 1980s, Boroline was 'the hard working cream that protects your skin'. In the late 1980s, it became trendy with 'in a world full of surprises, thank goodness you can count on Boroline'. In the early 1990s, to highlight its first-in-



the-category status, Boroline was portrayed as 'The Original'. In the later half of the 1990s, it stood for 'Boroline skin, healthy skin'. In early 2000, the brand values were summed up with 'Boroline – works wonders'.

The basic philosophy for the promotion of Boroline has been to emphasise its intrinsic worth. To preserve its jealously-guarded national image, Boroline has doggedly refused to sell the product by luring consumers with free gifts.

### Brand Values

Boroline's brand management transcends the realms of marketing and enters the territory of Total Quality Management (TQM) requiring significant inputs towards continuous upgradation of production technologies and strict adherence to quality standards in all spheres.

As part of its stringent quality control measures, the company has refrained from off-loading production to contract manufacturers. Boroline is the original antiseptic cream of India. Its intrinsic value has inured it to waves of me-too challengers. Boroline – works wonders, the current sign-off, reflects the trust of generations of consumers.

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



### Things you didn't know about Boroline

- Every second someone, somewhere in the world purchases a tube of Boroline
- In 2002, a user while shifting homes discovered a tube of Boroline manufactured in 1976. He found that it had retained the same texture, efficacy and perfume as the new one
- Boroline has travelled all the way to the Antarctica with a woman scientist who was part of the Expedition in 1983. It has also accompanied a soldier posted at a high altitude in the Himalayas who thanked Boroline for aiding his survival in the hostile climate
- On 15th August 1947, Calcutta newspapers carried an advertisement informing audiences that from two specified city outlets, Boroline would be distributed free to anyone who asks for it during the day
- Boroline receives many mails from people telling stories of unique usage. Its website, [www.boroline.com/users-voice.php](http://www.boroline.com/users-voice.php) has a continuously updated users' voice section where customers' experience with Boroline can be found