BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING MANAGEMENT

Business Development Strategy for the Launch of Etheros Perfume: From Concept to Counter

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Published November 2026

Abstract

Etheros is an up-and-coming luxury perfume brand. Within this case study I have analysed the processes undertaken to ready this brand for market. Elements such as market research, competitive analysis, perfume choice, sourcing and packaging along with brand strategy and digital marketing were all addressed.

Whilst researching, there was an aim to devise Etheros as a budget luxury brand. It was decided that the intended price for a bottle would be ₹1,200. Customers appeared to value aspects such as perfume longevity and quality, alongside presentation and brand narrative and both ease of information access and availability. There looked to be scope in offering floral and woody perfumes, and also potentially fresh and oriental options for those who wish to explore new fragrance styles.

As Etheros is yet to enter the market, these are not definitive or customer based data. However, this case study demonstrates how research can inform and improve brand strategy so that suitable choices can then be made for a brand as it prepares to enter a market.

1 Introduction

Consumers are seeking more unique, expressive and emotive products. Alongside being a product, perfume can also represent a person's identity, and is often linked to past experiences, one's way of life and personal style. Consequently, aspects such as brand, design and customer experience are key parts of perfume sales.

Whilst Etheros Perfume was still in its development stage, business development research was undertaken to analyse the market, determine the target market and investigate competition. Further research was then conducted on perfumers and packaging. Appropriate pricing and marketing strategies were also formulated. As there was no existing customer base for the brand, it had to establish itself and gain trust.

Clearly then, this project demonstrates how an idea can be converted into a launch strategy. It required the successful integration of high-end perfume with more affordable options. In addition, consideration needed to be given to ensure that both product related and non-product related choices were in-line with consumer desires and the resources available.

2 Problem statement

Developing and promoting a new fragrance product is difficult due to high competition. When launching 'Etheros', there was no previous consumer data and brand awareness so it was vital to

assess the key features that consumers look for in order to then define the product and formulate marketing plans.

The key issue for this research is how 'Etheros Perfume' can effectively differentiate itself within the market, gain the interest of the target market and devise appropriate product, price, packaging, supply chain and marketing strategies, despite the restricted financial means which are often associated with new businesses.

3 Objectives of the study

1. Analyse consumer expectations on scents, pack size, standard and emotive response.
2. Investigate the influence of digital marketing, social media, influencers and narratives in raising pre-launch profile.
3. Conduct competitor and trend research in order to recognise market opportunities and further differentiate products.
4. To inform a range of business areas including; product, price, supply chain and place.
5. Utilise theoretical knowledge to practically assist within business development and in preparing for the launch of Etheros Perfume.

4 Research methodology

Research Design: The project followed an exploratory and descriptive approach focused on pre-launch brand development. It examined consumer preferences, competitor activity, fragrance-market trends, and practical requirements for launching a new perfume.

Data and Inputs: The report drew on market and competitor research, customer-response exercises described as simulated insights, supplier quotations and product catalogues, fragrance-family exploration, packaging options, and digital-marketing observations. Activities included evaluating fragrance-oil suppliers, manufacturing partners, bottle and packaging sources, and potential online sales channels.

Scope: The study focused on the pre-launch phase of Etheros Perfume, including brand positioning, target audience, product concepts, pricing, supplier coordination, packaging, and marketing readiness.

Limitations: Etheros was not yet launched, so actual sales, repeat-purchase behaviour, and post-purchase customer feedback were unavailable. The research had limited time and resources, and the customer insights described in the report should be treated as indicative rather than as a large, statistically representative consumer study.

5 Analysis and discussion

5.1 Market opportunity and consumer expectations

Apart from the olfactory properties people consider when purchasing fragrances, factors such as fragrance type, longevity, design, and brand image can all be contributing elements. Thus, Etheros had to develop an offering which exuded thought and luxury but was still affordable to those aspiring to do so.

5.2 Fragrance preferences and product direction

Floral and woody notes are suggested as key scent types. Consumers looking to try something different may prefer more modern and/or oriental scents. Consumers may appreciate a good mix of both mainstream and unique products. There is also an emphasis on quality and the lasting power of a product.

5.3 Brand positioning and price

The brand aimed to position Etheros as a 'premium value' product at a price of ₹1,200. It therefore sought to deliver premium quality in an economically-priced way. Overall value is determined by a range of factors including the quality of the product, the presentation (such as the bottle), and the associated marketing.

5.4 Packaging and product presentation

Packaging is also a key first interaction and adds to a brand's perceived trustworthiness. Analysis included consideration of aspirational packaging and its strength, as well as how to optimally ship it. Sustainability also featured in this. As well as being functional, packaging was seen as an integral and visual element of branding.

5.5 Supplier and operational readiness

Further to business development, research was carried out into fragrance oil and manufacturers. Bottle and packaging were also sourced. Product specification was analysed and decisions made regarding test and production batches. Soundly chosen suppliers are key to a start-up business in order to ensure good quality and to prevent production issues.

5.6 Digital marketing and brand awareness

Digital and social media is key in the new approach. Instagram, YouTube, short films and both influencers and brand endorsements have been recognised as good ways of engaging with younger people and adding to a brand's authority. Pre-launch, it was felt that conventional marketing should play a more supportive role to digital marketing.

5.7 Customer experience and E-commerce

Brand service provision is also important. Online transaction security, ease of website navigation and effective distribution and customer services were identified as key aspects. Sampling/kitting can help avoid customers purchasing untried fragrances and also facilitate 'buzz'. Customers can then be incentivised to re-purchase through the provision of loyalty schemes.

6 Key findings

- **Product range:** Floral and woodsy options have mass appeal, whereas a fresh and/or oriental option may provide an innovative alternative.
- **Packaging:** Sleek and robust (and ideally eco-friendly) packaging can increase a brand's perceived quality and thus its memorability.
- **Value for money:** With a price of just ₹1,200, Etheros can be seen as value for money for those seeking premium fragrances, if the product is of suitable quality.

- **Online exposure:** Social media together with influencer and video content, alongside online reviews, can all play a key part in increasing brand exposure.
- **Narrative:** A strong brand story can enable consumers to associate a fragrance with their personality, feelings and way of life.
- **Effective service provision:** High quality supplies, smooth manufacture, secure packaging, good distribution and customer service all help to establish consumer trust in a brand.

Whilst pre-market research is useful it needs to be backed up by real-world post-market evidence in order to confirm how well a brand is received.

7 Significance of the study

This case shows that there should be development planning for a new brand. Undertaking market and competitive analysis will minimise assumptions. Appraising suppliers and calculating costs then allows new products to be developed in a way that is viable to manufacture. Branding, design and price should all support each other to form an integrated offering.

Furthermore it emphasises how vital it is to understand customers. Knowing which elements of a brand people are aware of, appreciate and believe in can inform marketing strategy and delivery, as well as the way in which products are shown. Within the launch phase, analysis was used to both define and then determine the actions necessary for Etheros' development prior to its introduction to the market.

8 Challenges and risks

- Competition from both long-running and new specialist brands.
- Poor levels of brand recognition and an untested market.
- Financial restraints which can impact on research, procurement, manufacturing and marketing.
- Concerns around suppliers and manufacturers together with sample approval and lead times.
- Ensuring that product performs to a high standard and has suitable longevity to support the value-led luxury proposition.
- Packaging – cost, robustness and environmental impact.
- Depending on online exposure; there is not always an instant relationship between great content and/or partnerships and subsequent sales generation.
- No post launch information to validate initial launch research findings.

9 Recommendations

- **Product range:** Develop a product range containing floral and woody notes, along with fresh and oriental. Ensure high quality and long wearing properties. Testing can be used to assess what consumers prefer.
- **Packaging:** Provide an attractive and robust solution that aligns with the brand. Where appropriate, investigate environmentally friendly alternatives but ensuring that these do not affect product protection or increase costs.

- **Pricing:** Continue to position at a price of ₹1,200 if our product, packaging and experience provide sufficient perceived value for money. Additional special or high-end ranges can be developed having first secured a strong base range.
- **Digital:** Develop content for both Instagram and YouTube to promote and inform about the new perfume range. This may include narratives, the development process, imagery, influencer and user reviews and content showcasing how the perfume can be incorporated into a lifestyle.
- **Testing and interaction:** Provide sample or exploration packs to allow individuals to test the perfume. Obtain consumer responses and stimulate organic promotion. Furthermore, devise an uncomplicated system to gather product and consumer data.
- **Operations:** Identify stable supply chains, verify samples and define product specifications. Determine production schedules. Test packaging and distribution.
- **Brand narrative:** Establish a clear and unified brand story for Etheros so that it successfully conveys the brand's personality, product quality and highly approachable high end status at every point of consumer interaction.

10 Conclusion

As shown by the Etheros Perfume example, setting up a perfume brand entails much more than fragrance development. Market and consumer knowledge must be analysed. A brand personality created and appropriate supply chains identified. Alongside this, pricing, packaging and promotional and selling routes must be decided upon.

Our market research suggested that there may be scope to target consumers seeking good value high end provision at a price of ₹1,200. This could be underpinned by a varied range, high quality packaging, digital exposure and genuine brand narrative. Although these points provide a useful foundation, they by no means automatically ensure business success. Going forward, Etheros should test its concepts using samples, consumer trials, and analysis of the product launch. Following this, the brand should adapt both its product and promotional strategies.

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