

Beiersdorf

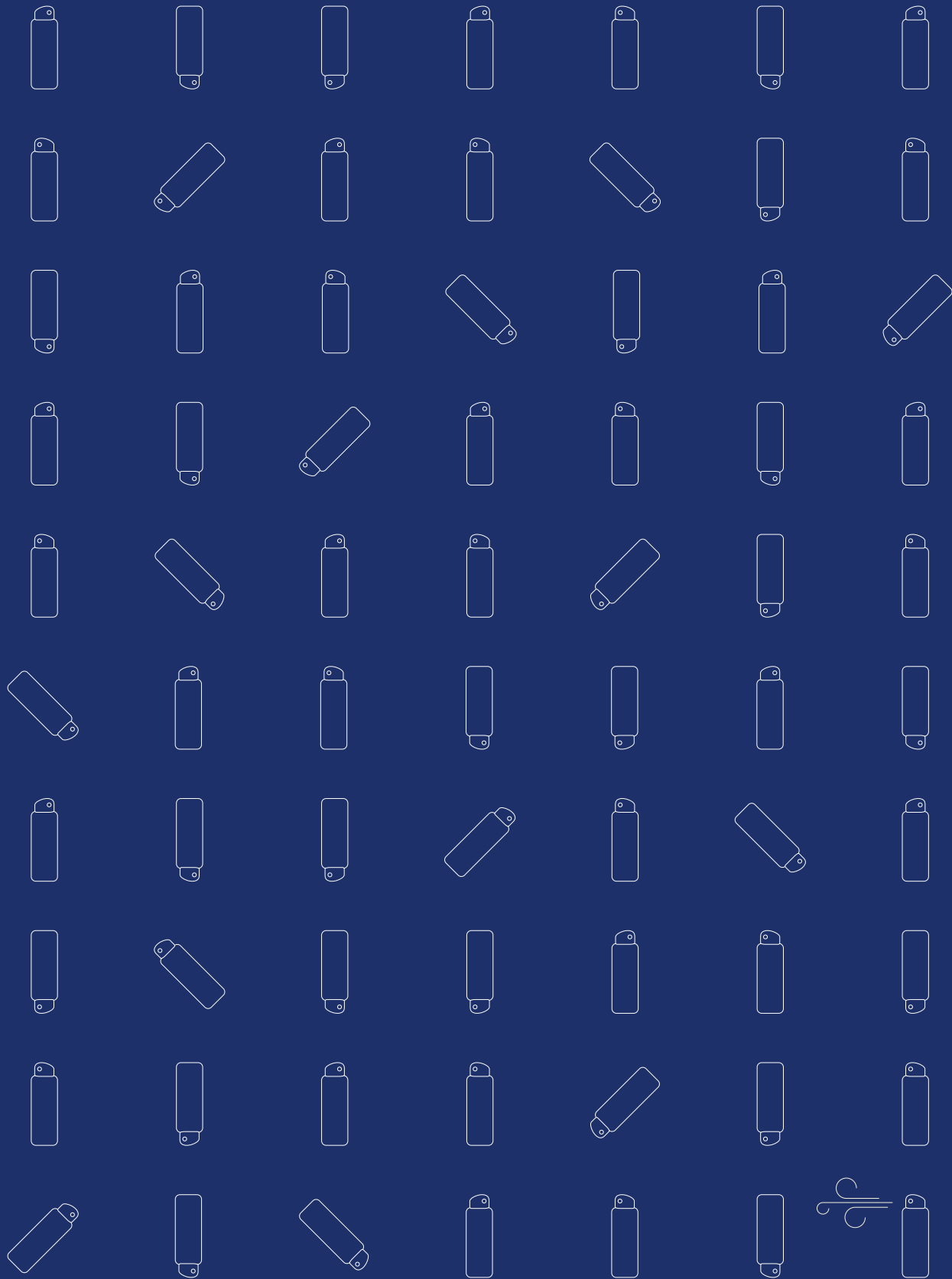
CHRONICLE

09



8x4

The feel-fresh revolution



The scent of a new era – 70 years of 8x4

Personal hygiene not only benefits our personal health – it also greatly benefits our social lives. Today, deodorants are a perfectly normal part of personal hygiene routines. But, as is so often the case, the “new normal” didn’t just appear overnight.

In 1951, Beiersdorf was the first company in Germany to launch a new deodorant range specifically designed to block the growth of the bacteria that break down sweat and are thus linked to odor production. It’s fair to say that back then the world was a very different place. Germany was in the process of rebuilding itself and its industry after the destruction of the Second World War. And the world smelled different too – the streets, the stores, the buses and trains, and even people’s homes.

To explain the success of 8x4, we need to understand exactly what life was like for people back in the 1950s, and how their desire for new products with different fragrances changed over the years. The history of the brand also documents the journey towards a more sustainable use of resources. And it shows us how advertising worked by opening people’s eyes to specific problems – while simultaneously offering a solution. Because if people had not come to perceive body odor as a stigma to be prevented at all costs, deodorants would never have established themselves as indispensable in our daily hygiene routines.

Essentially, the story of 8x4 takes us on a journey spanning 70 years of hygiene history. Freshen up ... and away we go!

8 x 4 revolutionizes the daily toilet!

Hence,
8 x 4 represents a revolution
in the daily toilet

It makes washing many
times more effective.
What cost you up till
now more care and
time, and also more
money, namely, clean-
ing and deodorizing,



you now accomplish
in **one** process. Other
deodorants become
superfluous. You there-
fore save money too
when you use **8 x 4**.



8 x 4 a revolutionary soap product
of the Nivea Works.

Printed in Germany 84/5204 en

A treble effect at once:

Cleansing, refreshing, deodorizing.

Especially under the arms, the odour of
perspiration makes itself unpleasantly felt.
Therefore, let the lather lie here for two
minutes and only then rinse it off. The lasting
deodorant effect, which increases gradually
and reaches its peak after 3-4 washes, is
thereby intensified.

If used daily, **8 x 4** ensures complete im-
munity from unpleasant body odour. Do not
use any other soap with **8 x 4**, as other-
wise the deodorant action of B 32 will be
cancelled.

When you want a tablet of **8 x 4** you need
only ask for „**8 x 4**“. You will be handed
the distinctive pink and white packet with
the brown print.

8 x 4 = B 32

The answer signifies simple but **multiple** toilet efficiency!



“Unpleasant body odor is undesirable”

... said one of the first Beiersdorf mailshots in 1951 when introducing its new, deodorizing 8x4 soap. The 8x4 brand represented Beiersdorf's first masterstroke in creating a new category of products. These were designed to solve a problem that had rankled for many years: unpleasant body odor. The innovation also sounded the starting gun for the national and international success of Germany's first deodorant brand.

Bathroom scenes were popular 8x4 advertising motifs in the 1950s. When the first deodorant spray was developed towards the end of the same decade, the marketing focus shifted to the specific benefits of feeling fresh and enjoying long-lasting protection at events such as weddings and dance evenings.



Text: Thorsten Finke / Daniel Wallburg

>> Everyone sweats. We sweat in summer when it gets hot, we sweat when we exercise, and we sweat when we feel stressed. Sweating is an ingenious mechanism the human body uses to cool our skin and regulate our body temperature. In actual fact, sweat is odorless, so isn't a problem at first glance. But as soon as sweat comes into contact with bacteria on our skin, the bacteria begin to break it down. And it's the ensuing waste products that smell unpleasant.

Understanding the problem, however, enabled people to find the solution. Lab tests conducted in the year 1900 showed that odor development could be prevented by immediately mixing armpit sweat with antibacterial substances. This led to the launch of one of the first deodorant brands, "Mum," in North America. The soap contained zinc oxide and promised to end all body odor.

Not until the 1950s did this innovative idea arrive, via Switzerland, in Germany. A fragrance manufacturer

named Givaudan had developed a substance called hexachlorophene, which U.S. American companies were already using in their soaps. Beiersdorf, which at this point in time was best known for NIVEA and Hansaplast, was quick to negotiate a partnership with Givaudan, and succeeded in winning them as preferred supplier for the new substance. Hexachlorophene was antibacterial, skin friendly, and virtually odorless. It could also be processed in soap without losing its disinfecting properties.

Beiersdorf joined in the research, the initial aim being to produce a deodorizing soap. In 1951, the Beiersdorf scientists succeeded in developing a soap containing antibacterial substances that nonetheless lathered well, meaning it could still be marketed as a toilet soap. Mass production could now begin – but what should they call their innovation?

The working title for the new active ingredient was "B 32" – B for Beiersdorf and 32 for the number of letters in the word "Hexachlordihydroxydiphenylmethan" (German for the compound dihydroxy hexa-

In 1951, the first ever deodorizing soap was launched in Germany.



○
1951

chloro diphenyl methane). Juan Gregorio Clausen, Beiersdorf's head of marketing at the time, then came up with the idea of using 8x4 (which makes 32 after all!) as the new brand name. The name was designed to symbolize the lasting deodorizing effect.

Having negotiated a contract with Givaudan to supply Beiersdorf with larger quantities of the new compound than their competitors, the new deodorizing soap – launched on the market under the name of 8x4 – was virtually the only daily hygiene product to offer protection against odor production. Supported by a large-scale advertising campaign explaining how unpleasant body odor arises and how it can be combated, nothing could hinder the triumphant advance of the first Beiersdorf deodorant in Germany, initially in the form of 8x4 soap, and later as a wider 8x4 product range.

Over the years, the B 32 compound was replaced by new, more effective substances. However, the catchy name 8x4 remained – and to this day, it pays tribute to the origins of the brand.

BACKGROUND

Juan Gregorio Clausen – the man behind the brand name

Formerly a lieutenant commander in the Imperial German Navy, Clausen began working for Beiersdorf in 1920, when he was 30 years old. Although he had no former experience in brand marketing, he was soon promoted to head of the advertising department and was thus responsible for all advertising activities throughout Germany – including the NIVEA make-over in blue and white.

In the mid-1930s, Clausen hired Elly Heuss-Knapp (later to become a First Lady of the Federal Republic of Germany) to help create television and radio spots. The former lieutenant commander was also at the helm when the 8x4 brand was launched – he was personally responsible not only for choosing the unusual brand name, but also for developing the first advertising campaigns for Beiersdorf's new deodorant. The name for the new brand was derived from the B32 compound that delivered the deodorizing effect for the first 8x4 products. Because 8x4 = (B) 32!

Following his abrupt career change, Clausen channeled his creative energy into Beiersdorf's advertising department for 40 years before taking retirement. He died in 1977 at the age of 87.



8x4 – the first deodorant range in Germany

In the early 1950s, Beiersdorf's cosmetics division was highly profitable for the company – and not just on account of NIVEA. In the spring of 1951, product developers and marketing strategists entered a new market with 8x4 soap and 8x4 powder.

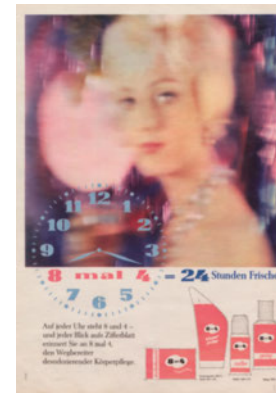
These new products enabled consumers to eliminate body odor in their daily ablutions. Numerous brochures were developed for consumers, consisting in equal amounts of product advertising and information on how body odor develops. In 1951, for example, Beiersdorf published a brochure entitled “8x4 = B 32 – revolutionizing the daily toilet” that stated: “Washing and deodorizing, i.e., cleaning your body and eliminating body odor, were once two different processes. 8x4, the new toilet and bath soap, developed by the NIVEA works, takes care of both processes at once.” Not only could consumers save time as a result, argued the experts – they would also save money because they only needed to purchase one product.

In the brochure, the astute marketing professionals also emphasized just how unpleasant body odor can be – not only for the perpetrator, but also for their

social contacts. Their plan was to highlight the problem and also deliver the solution. And it worked. As soon as it was launched in 1951, 8x4 proved a best-seller. However, the initial success was soon dampened by the emergence of competitor products such as BAC and Rexona. The answer? New products. In 1958, Beiersdorf made a major breakthrough with its 8x4 deodorant spray, having launched a roll-on deodorant just one year previously. Instead of hexachlorophene, the spray contained an aluminum compound which impeded the production of sweat. The company also launched an 8x4 stick and 8x4 bubble bath.

However, these products were costly. Relative to today's prices, consumers in the 1950s were paying roughly €55 for a 150 ml bottle of 8x4 deodorant. Even the soap was expensive, costing the equivalent

Product development highlights up to 1991



“8x4 = 24 hours freshness!” Mathematically, the calculations are awry, but the message is clear. Long disco nights are safe with 8x4! Germany, 1961



For long nights at the opera: 8x4 promises “full body freshness.” Germany, 1967

of €12 per bar. Still, the new 8x4 products – and the original products, too – sold like hot cakes thanks to the new innovations and a concerted marketing drive. By 1967, 8x4 accounted for nearly one third of Beiersdorf's turnover in the cosmetics division. The brand also benefitted from the inclusion of a new target group: men. After sales started to drop, the new “8x4 TABAC deodorant spray” turned the tide once again in 1968 and 1969. This upward trend continued, and the outlook was promising. In 1974, 8x4's market share of deodorant sales in Germany was nearly 15%.

This figure remained relatively stable until the end of the 1970s, with BAC slowly advancing to become market leader. To make things even more difficult, Beiersdorf itself launched a new competitor product in 1976/1977. Limara was designed to appeal to a younger target audience that remained unimpressed by 8x4. Long-term, however, this perfumed deodorant was unable to establish itself on the market.

8x4, on the other hand, celebrated a highly successful brand relaunch in the mid 1980s, causing its internal competition to break into a cold sweat – and by 1990, the year of the German reunification, the turnover of 8x4 was ten times that of Limara. When the iron curtain fell, new markets suddenly opened, and with them came new opportunities. Over the years, the company had already gained considerable experience with international sales and was active in nearly 40 countries.

BACKGROUND

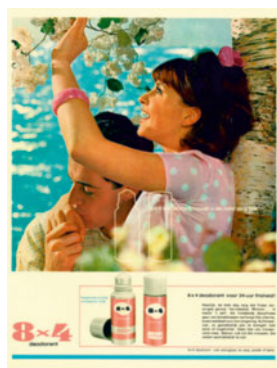
Increased environmental awareness: CFC-free and the 8x4 organic spray

New products always reflect the latest scientific insights and social trends. In the 1970s and 1980s, scientists discovered that CFC in the atmosphere was destroying the ozone in the stratosphere. Suddenly, the whole world was talking about the hole in the ozone layer. For the first time in history, people realized they could potentially destroy the natural regenerative ability of the ecosystem – and thus their own habitat. At the end of the 1970s, Beiersdorf began reducing the amount of CFCs in 8x4 sprays, completely eliminating them by 1987. Around the same time, the first calls were heard, faint at first, for environmentally friendly products. In response, Beiersdorf launched its first organic spray in 1991. The bottle was made of 80% recycled cardboard and could thus be disposed of easily in an environmentally friendly manner. The removable screw top could be reused. However, due either to the nature of the design or to the fact that the market for such products was still in its infancy, the innovation was unable to gain a foothold on the market. Just two years later, the organic spray was discontinued.





No bathroom should be without it. Billboard ad from the French-speaking region of Switzerland, 1955



The 24-hour feel-fresh promise made by the 8x4 roll-on and stick. Netherlands, 1967



In parts of Africa, 8x4 was marketed with the scent of French perfume. Sudan, 1972



Flying flags and four varieties for a new feeling of freshness. Mexico, 1979

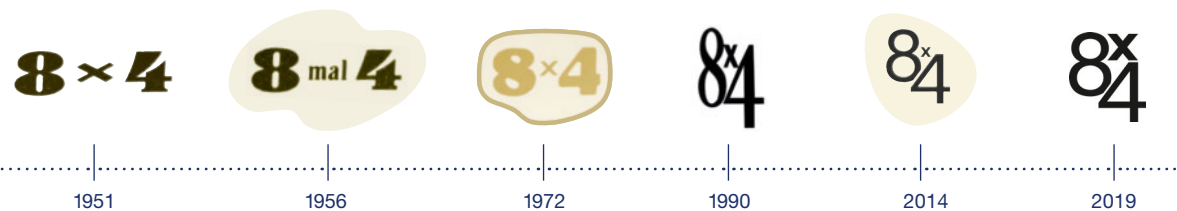
8x4 becomes a global brand

Through the 1950s, 8x4 remained a small but affordable luxury in Germany, and appealed to an ever wider audience. The same applied in a number of other countries whose economies were still recovering from the global upheaval of war and were finally beginning to grow again. In many countries, there had been no brands for deodorizing soaps, powders, or sprays previous to this time. Beiersdorf was also aware that international expansion of new brands such as 8x4 could help to compensate for the international loss of the NIVEA trademark rights after the Second World War. These factors laid the foundation for the global success of 8x4. This began in the 1950s

and 60s and peaked towards the end of the 1980s – by which time 8x4 had established itself in more than 40 countries.

When the brand began to expand in the 1950s, the initial focus was on European markets such as Spain, Switzerland, Portugal, the UK, and Belgium. Further European markets, including France, followed in the 1960s, with the focus also expanding towards faraway shores such as Central and South America and Australia. In the 1970s, the brand reached Asia and was launched in Japan and Taiwan. Selected African markets (Egypt and Morocco) and the Middle East (including Iraq and Iran) also seemed promising. The brand's conquest continued until, by the 1980s, 8x4 was available on all continents.

How the 8x4 logo has evolved over the last 70 years



BACKGROUND

8x4 in Japan

In 1968, Beiersdorf entered into a contract with Kao Soap Co., Ltd. to market NIVEA in Japan. At the time, the turnover of both companies was roughly equivalent. In 1971, the initial sales cooperation between Beiersdorf and Kao was transferred to a joint venture: the Nivea-Kao Co., Ltd. From the start, this joint venture included various 8x4 products in its range – with great success.

After its launch, 8x4 quickly advanced to become the leading deodorant on the Japanese market. However, the products in the Japanese range are not always identical to the products in Europe. For example, 8x4 Fresh Powder was launched in 1988 – with excellent reason. Anyone who has walked around Tokyo in the heat of summer – where the temperatures frequently exceed 30°C, and humidity often rises above 85% – will appreciate the necessity and pleasant effect of a good body powder. The 8x4 Body Shampoo, launched in 1992, and the 8x4 Sarasara Body Shower (sarasara = silky soft) introduced in May 2000 are also special Japanese developments. In Japan, the packaging has also been adapted to meet local customer preferences and is more avant-garde in design than its European counterparts. Meeting local expectations and wishes is probably one of the chief reasons for 8x4's success and its position among the market leaders in Japan.



Left: Different design, different colors, variable positioning – even the fragrances were different. Japan, 1993

Below: When the 8x4 brand was first launched in Japan, the advertising campaigns and product designs were similar to those used in Europe. Japan, 1975



But then expansion stagnated, and the markets began to shrink again – a process that gathered speed in the 1990s. At the time, Beiersdorf was headed by CEO Dr. Rolf Kunisch, who decided to pursue a strategy focusing on the company's most popular and well-known international brand: NIVEA. By this time, the company had reacquired virtually all trademark rights for NIVEA, the product range for which was expanded in 1991 to include deodorants. Smaller brands, which would have needed major marketing campaigns to remain profitable, were resolutely discontinued. Due to its long history and

loyal clientele, the 8x4 brand was not discontinued. However, markets that were no longer profitable were now abandoned. Over the years, foreign markets for 8x4 slowly dried up. Today, the brand's products are only available in Germany, the Netherlands, Turkey, Bolivia, South Korea, and Japan.

Over the course of its history, the brand has latched onto local preferences on the various markets and thus developed an identity of its own in some countries. This is most evident in Japan, where 8x4 has now been market leader for many decades.



From 1999 onwards, 8x4's Special Editions succeeded in winning the hearts of a younger target audience (aged between 14 and 20).

Rejuvenation

The 8x4 success story began in the 1950s and peaked in the 1980s before declining slowly in the 1990s. The bountiful market share to which the company had grown accustomed in the first decades dwindled – and talks began on how to give the brand a new focus. With new competitor products fighting for a foothold on the market – including one of the company's own making, the NIVEA deodorant (launched in 1991) – pressure on Germany's market leader began to increase.

In 1990, 8x4's market share in Germany was 13%, and the market was growing in double figures every year. The end of the GDR, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the opening of East European markets led to a whole new world of expansion opportunities. Early on, the production of 8x4 products was subcontracted to Florena in Döbeln, East Germany. Despite these favorable conditions, however, 8x4's market share continued to decline.

Market research suggested that 8x4 had ceased to appeal to younger consumers, with sales dropping

correspondingly in this target group. Attempts to counter this downward trend – such as launching the new 8x4 organic spray in 1991, designed specifically with a younger, more environmentally aware target audience in mind – were not successful. This product was discontinued just two years later. The market share continued to drop, reaching a low of just 8.5% in 1993.

A complete relaunch of the range, including a new, patented substance, was organized. The aim was to clearly set 8x4 apart from its competitors and establish market leadership in Germany. Unisex fragrances and alcohol-free deodorants were added to the range to increase its appeal amongst a younger target audience. After some time, the campaign began to show first signs of success. In 1997, the market share rose for the first time since 1991.

This triggered research which identified 14–25-year-olds as key to the brand's success. Thus in 1999 a fresh concept was developed to appeal specifically to the younger target group: special editions. This new strategy built on the tendency of the young target group to favor products that are only available

for a limited amount of time. From this point of time onwards, a new "Special Edition" for girls and young women up to the age of 20 was launched every spring to replace the previous year's scent. The series kicked off with "Fresh Mango." It was followed by fragrances such as "La Vida Loca," "Endless Summer," and "Party Fever" – all designed to appeal to 14–18-year-olds. In 2007, a first Special Edition with masculine scent was launched ("Fearless").

Through the 2000s, the company cooperated with DJs, musicians, and television celebrities to promote the youthful image of the 8x4 brand. The Special Editions grew in popularity and led to a significant increase in turnover in the young target group. Through the 2010s, the company pursued and even expanded this strategy. Social media and influencer marketing complemented the classic forms of adver-

tising. Limited Editions sporting magical creatures such as mermaids and unicorns proved particularly successful.

However, the realignment of the brand did not end here. Its look and concept have continued to change in recent years. Building on the trend towards individualization, the 8x4 team began in 2019 to develop different deodorants for different lifestyles. Using an online tool, consumers can find the scent that best matches their personal style.

In this manner, 8x4 – the first deodorant in Germany – has succeeded in staying young throughout the course of its 70-year history, by consistently adapting to the zeitgeist and to new target groups. No compromises have been made, however, to the reliable protection and quality that has characterized 8x4 since 1951.



Above: Special scents such as "Dating" appealed to young people with their promise of a new feeling of freshness. Germany, 2001

Right: The 8x4 spray range in 2021



8x4 photo album

The 8x4 photo album shows snapshots and ads from the brand's 70-year history. All images were taken from the Beiersdorf AG archive.



1 First practice tests in the Beiersdorf lab, 1951.

2 The first deodorizing soaps roll off the production line in 1951.

3 Before long, the products could be found in the windows of pharmacies and perfume stores, 1953.

4 In the early 1960s, trams in Berlin sported 8x4 banners (even though the "8x4 = 24 hours freshness!" calculation isn't, of course, mathematically correct).

5 Public transport in Peru also looks fresher with the 8x4 posters! Lima, 1959.

6 8x4 products in a large department store in Mexico City, 1970 ...

7 ... and in a small store in Morocco at the end of the 1970s.

8 8x4 production in Hamburg in the 1960s.

9 The 8x4 product range in Denmark, 1981.

10 Advert in Italy, 1967.

11 Chile 1978: An airport bus with an 8x4 banner.

The nose knows ...

Beiersdorf's success in the field of deodorants began with 8x4 and continued with NIVEA. But store shelves were once full of unusual Beiersdorf deodorant brands that have long since been forgotten. Few ever enjoyed as much success as 8x4 and NIVEA, and most disappeared noiselessly from the market within a very short space of time. Here is an overview:



PILOT In 1969, to mark the launch of the men's body care range PILOT, the soccer magazine kicker reported: "Beginning in April/May, war on body odor in Germany will be declared. A dynamic, athletic crew will lead the way for the men and women of Germany, promoting the new ideal on television, in newspapers and in magazines." But the brand belly-flopped in 1973 and vanished from the market.

Lasso "Lasso is a powerful missile [...] Lasso can vary in price, depending on competitor attempts to undercut us [...] Lasso shoots body odor away – BANG!" The advertising slogan says it all – but unfortunately, Lasso was not quite so unerring in its aim. The success of the campaign was short-lived, lasting only from 1971 to 1973.



Limara Scents of the big wide world, full of adventure for a younger target group – with names such as "Wild Flower," "Spring Dream," "Blue River," and "Yellow Moon." The perfume deodorant Limara was launched on the market at the end of the 1970s and united the best of two worlds – deodorizing like a spray, and exuding a lasting fragrance like a perfume. Various versions of Limara were available virtually the whole world over. But sales began to dwindle after a number of years. The brand ultimately fell victim to Beiersdorf's strategic decision to focus on NIVEA in the 1990s.

Würziger Sommerwind In the early 1970s, consumers could "catch the fragrance of summer flowers." The range of perfumes and soaps was complemented by a deodorant with the fragrance of a lush summer bouquet of flowers and blossoms. The product was designed to appeal to young women. A decade later, the brand ran into strong headwinds and was discontinued.



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Alongside the design, the notation of the 8x4 brand has changed over the years. However, for better legibility, we've consistently used the longstanding 8x4 notation throughout this issue.

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