

# brandchannel

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## Squeak Wars: Liquid Wrench vs. WD-40



After 52 years of lubricant brand dominance, WD-40 is being challenged by Liquid Wrench. There is only one WD-40 product. There are six for Liquid Wrench, including Chain Lube, Dry Lubricant, and Penetrating Oil.

“We pride ourselves on being very application-specific, and on not being generalists,” Aaron Martin, director of marketing for Liquid Wrench, [told](#) the *New York Times*.

The Liquid Wrench campaign never specifically refers to WD-40, but the intention is apparent. “We never name them, but most people will know what we’re talking about,” commented David Moore, executive creative director and president for Liggett Stashowner, who created the current campaign.

“We want to position Liquid Wrench as the expert brand, what that guy who everyone else in the neighborhood knows as a serious do-it-yourselfer uses.”

And to reach those younger do-it-yourselfers with more digital, a special mobile text number is printed on new cans of Liquid Wrench. Texting the number printed on a can gets a product-specific response. For example, a query on Silicone Spray returns the following seasonal tip: “nonstick coating for snow shovels,” or in Spring, “nonstick coating for garden shovels, wheelbarrows, buckets.”

The logic: men in the 35 to 45 year-old bracket are less inclined to ask advice but more prone to text a question.

“We believe there’s a pretty big segment of the market that knows there’s a difference between the products, but they might not know which one to use,” continued Martin. “But there’s an emotional piece where he doesn’t want to ask the clerk, so he can just text and he doesn’t have to rely on anybody else.”

Traditionally, the 70 year old Liquid Wrench brand has advertised only modestly, with ads in DIY publications. This campaign marks a multi-million dollar departure.

“What we want to do is make this guy embarrassed if he reaches for a can of WD-40, because that’s not what a guy who knows what he is doing would do,” said Moore. “It’s like using a butter knife to turn a screw — you could do it but you really shouldn’t.”

WD-40’s consumer message of versatility, “cleans magazine for an AK-47” and “cleans peanut butter from shoestrings,” is being challenged head-on by Liquid Wrench: “For guys who know one-size-fits-all doesn’t.”

May the squeakiest brand win.

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