Story Development Worksheet

1 Story Gem: Cheerios Cholesterol Reduction Claim

Deeper Meaning

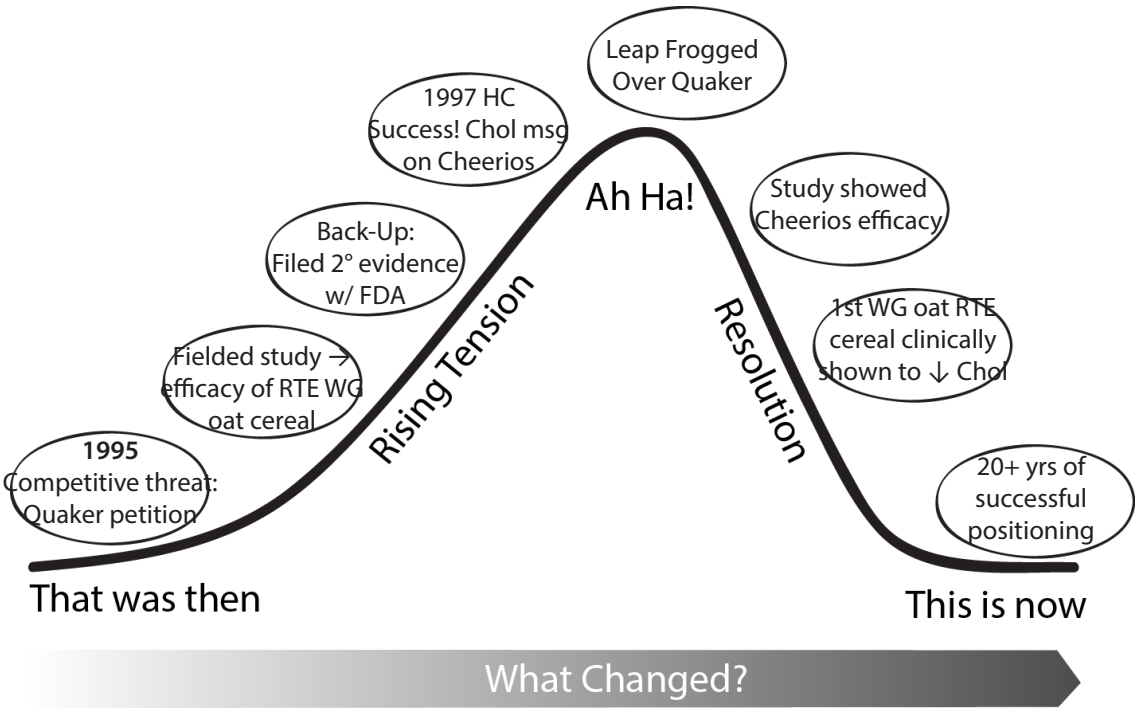
Research curveballs can produce innovation

Possible Applications

1) Training new staff--Scientific rigor + Resiliency
2) Framework for scientifc/regulatory influence
3) Persuasion for future research funding
4) Influencing business partners

2 Develop Plot and Meaning

Use the diagram below to outline the plot. Distill down to key plot points that set the stage, build tension, reveal the Ah Ha! (pivot point, moment of truth, and bring resolution/closure.



3 Polish with Salient Details

Use sensory details to describe the setting and characters. Go beyond a visual description to include sound, smell, taste, and touch for more vivid portrayals.

- Chief Counsel's office: I was drowning in an oversized leather chair, swiveling back and forth, trying to explain the science.
- Culling through volumes of evidence ... Stacks of scientific papers ... Smell of highlight marker. Multi-color post-it tags flagged pages.

My Cereal Story

Title	Cheerios Do or Die?
Author	Kathy Wiemer

Story

My boss hung up the phone after a call from the VP of Cheerios Marketing, who had read her the riot act for not providing a heads up that Quaker had filed a petition for a health claim linking beta-glucan in oatmeal and oat bran to cholesterol reduction. The turmoil sparked by that day was the beginning of a 20-year journey for me—and Cheerios!

It was1995 and there were no electronic filings or e-notifications. After compiling a large body of primary and secondary evidence ~25 years, Quaker had petitioned the first FDA Health Claim under the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) to link whole grain oats and oatbran to cholesterol reduction. No one on the Legal, Nutrition, or R&D teams at General Mills had seen this coming. We were all stunned. From there on out, it was all hands on deck ...

I remember culling through volumes of evidence. Stacks of scientific papers formed towers on every flat surface in my office. The smell of highlight marker stung my nostrils as I poured over the papers trying to sniff out meaningful evidence. Post-it tabs flagged key pages. Each stack of paper became a silo of evidence. My job was to find the goldmines and minefields in the data.

I vividly recall sitting in the Chief Counsel's office, drowing in an oversized leather chair. The chair swiveled under me as I tried to explain the science—to help him understand both the findings and limitations. With every twist of my leather chair, I tried another way to distill down a complicated topic.

We fielded a study to demonstrate that ready-to-eat (RTE) whole grain oat cereal (Cheerios) was also efficacious in reducing cholesterol. We anticipated the possibility that FDA might act on Quaker's petition without including RTE whole grain oats before the study was complete, so we cultivated a large body of secondary evidence and filed comments on the Quaker petition.

In 1997, FDA released the final health-claim regulation, and it included whole grain oats and cholesterol reduction. Our successful regulatory influence allowed Cheerios to start marketing its cholesterol lowering message. But we leap frogged over Quaker when the clinical study came back showing a significant cholesterol redcution and Cheerios became, "The first whole grain oat RTE cereal clinically shown to lower cholesterol."

The Cheerios heart health message has become one of the most successful health claims in the marketplace and has moved many millions of Cheerios boxes over the last 20 +years.