

How Axe Became The Top-Selling Deodorant By Targeting Nerdy Losers



[Screengrab from burly1988 on YouTube](#)

Marketers go to incredible lengths to learn everything about the consumer, especially with millions of dollars on the line.

Author Martin Lindstrom spoke with Unilever exec David Cousino about Axe, a multi-million dollar fragrance brand marketed toward men, for his book [Brandwashed: Tricks Companies Use to Manipulate Our Minds and Persuade Us to Buy](#). Cousino shared an incredible, detailed anecdote about what they did to figure out who to target.

Unilever first analyzed the potential Axe user by breaking males down into six profiles:

- **The Predator** -- He takes advantage of drunk girls, and lies about his job and where he lives
- **NaturalTalent** -- Athletic, smart, and confident. He doesn't need to lie to score
- **Marriage Material** -- Humble and respectful, he's the sort of guy you want to bring home to Mom and Dad
- **Always the Friend** -- He always hits that glass ceiling
- **The Insecure Novice** -- He has absolutely no clue what he's doing, and things get awkward fast -- the geeks and nerds
- **The Enthusiastic Novice** -- He has absolutely no clue what he's doing, but he's outgoing and tries valiantly anyway

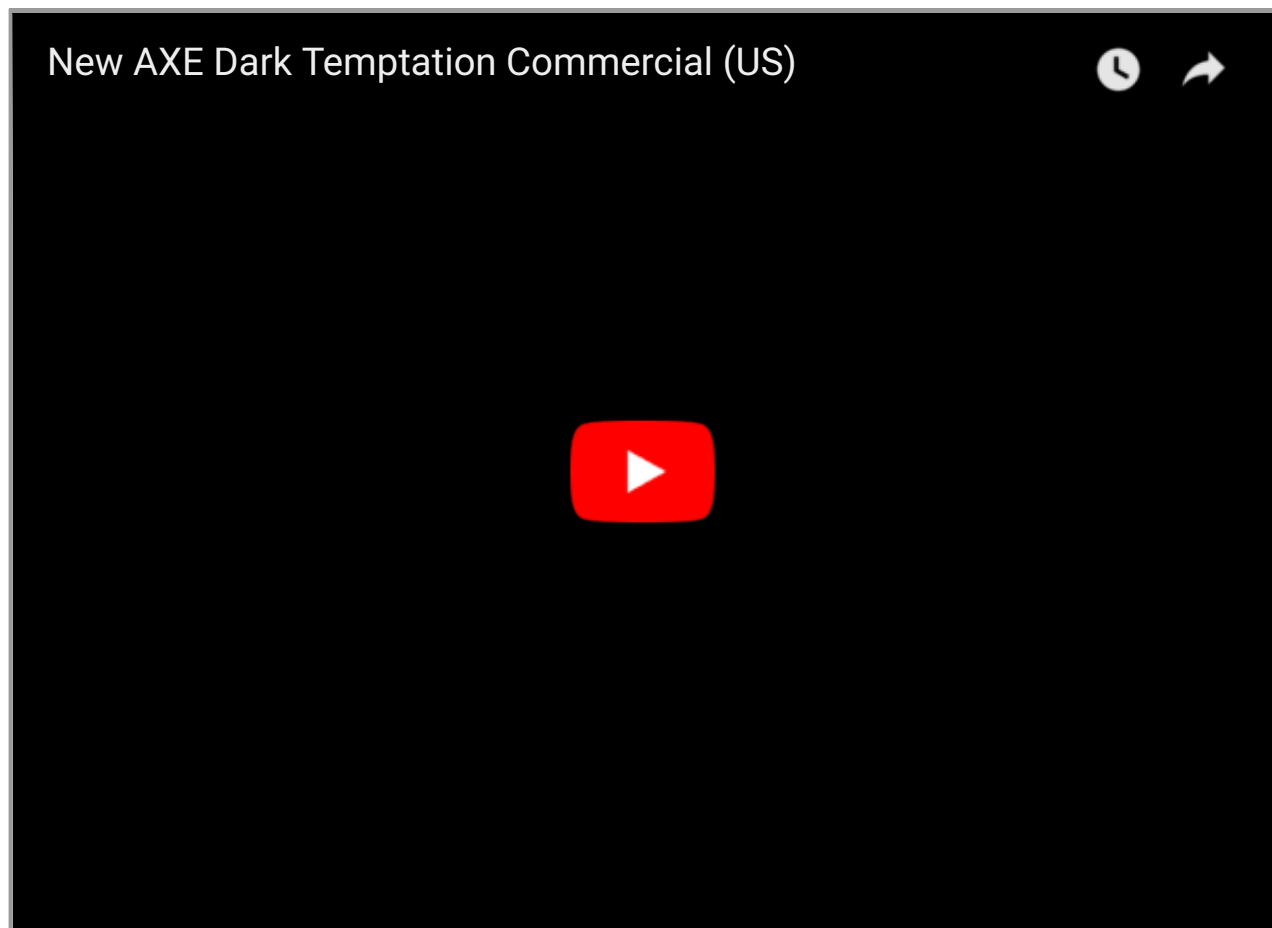
Then, they determined that **The Insecure Novice** would be their natural target, since he needs the most help in getting women, and would be easily persuaded into buying a product that could aid the woes of nerdhood.

Next came the ads themselves. The Axe TV ads proclaim that it will help you get chicks. And not just one at a time -- their research showed that the ultimate male fantasy is to be irresistible to several sexy women.

The result? Axe became the #1 male antiperspirant/deodorant brand. It actually worked *too* well -- they had to backpedal a bit from the image because Axe had gained a reputation as a product that only losers use. Also, high school kids would even totally douse themselves in Axe, getting the brand into trouble with some school districts.

But overall, Axe has been a huge success because of how it targeted its marketing and took advantage of sexual fantasies. It still runs similarly themed ads.

Here's an example of one of Axe's ads. It's for Axe Dark Temptation:



[Check out Lindstrom's book, *Brandwashed* >](#)

And See: [BRANDWASHED: Shocking Tricks Brands Use To Get Your Kids Hooked >](#)