



## Keio Business School

### Marketing Competition in Men's Hair Styling Market

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In the mid-1990s the streets were packed with women sporting loose, flowing hair. Around this time, the trend in women's hair styles was changing from "one length" and "sauvage" styles to those known as "layer cuts." The layer cut is a hair style which, through varying the overall length of the hair, creates movement in the unevenness of the trim.

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Shortly after this era, in 1998, the trend in men's hair styles also began to change, from the previously fashionable long hair look to styles created with the hair spiked up, or bunched up together to allow the ends to move. It was what was referred to as the "unproduced look" (**Figure 1**). The unproduced look was popular with a lot of men. At the time, the leading manufacturer of men's cosmetics, Mandom Co. Ltd. (hereafter, "Mandom") launched a hair wax brand, GATSBY (**Figure 2**). In addition to GATSBY, Shiseido Co. Ltd. (hereafter, "Shiseido") introduced GERAID into the market, with the catchphrase "I'll go with the unproduced look." Through promoting the usefulness of the product in the unproduced look at the forefront of its advertising copy, and with Kinki Kids idol 'Tsuyoshi DOMOTO' on board, GERAID quickly became well known among male consumers. With hair wax, a hair style may be rearranged many times without making the hair stiff, and it allows subtle nuances to be displayed in the hair tips, which is why it has become a mainstay in men's hair styling products.

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In 2002 the World Cup was held for the first time in Asia, jointly hosted by Japan and South Korea. During this time, the "Fauxhawk" worn by English team member David Beckham was hugely popular amongst young men, and hair wax reached the height of its popularity in the men's hair styling market (**Figure 3**). In that year hair foam – hitherto the number one hair styling product – was finally knocked off its perch and hair wax took its place, with market growth to ¥8.4 billion.

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This case has been compiled by Associate Professor Akihiro Nishimoto of the Otaru University of Commerce, and Professor Akihiro Inoue of Graduate School of Business Administration, Keio University, based on published materials and interviews. It was created as a basic material for class discussions, and is not intended to illustrate appropriate or inappropriate conduct within management. We would like to express our thanks to Mandom Co. Ltd.'s Senior Managing Executive Officer for R&D, Masayoshi Momota, its Executive Officer and Director of 1st & 2nd Product Development, Yasuaki Kameda, and its 1st Product Development Department Head, Hiroshi Ito, who greatly helped in the production of this case study.

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