

## Brands on The Slab

The cereal market has grown and shifted ground in the past few years. The health benefits of premium nutritional intake at the beginning of the day have never been more prominent in the nation's psyche. Something the founder's of most of today's major brands would endorse, as we discuss below. This edition we have analyzed the major cereal brands by their name types.

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## Major Cereal Brands by Name Type

Brand/Analysis type (1957) = date of first manufacture	Name Type Descriptor: Cereal/Ingredient Type + Configuration/Consistency	Name Type Descriptor: Appearance/Consistency	Name Type Other: mainly Eulogistic and Functional Benefit	Where Marketed	Pan-European name? (De, Es, Fr, NI, It, S) YES = understandable in all markets NO = not understandable in all markets
<i>Kellogg's</i>	Corn Flakes (1894)			It, NI, De, S, Fr	NO
	All Bran (1916)			It, Es, NI, S, Fr	NO
	Rice Krispies (1928)			It, Es, NI, S	NO
	Raisin Bran (1942)				YES ≈
		Frosties (1952)		It, Es, NI, De, S, Fr	NO
	Ricicles (1954)				NO
			Special K (1957)	It, Fr, Es, De, NI, S	YES
	Coco Pops (1958)			It, NI, S, Fr	YES ≈
			Start (1959)	N	NO
	Crunchy Nut Cornflakes (1980)			It, De	NO
			Nutri-Grain (1980)	-	YES
	Fruit'n Fibre (1982)			-	YES ≈
	Honey Loops (1990)			-	NO
			Just Right (1998)	-	NO
			Optivita (2006)	-	YES

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 Nestlé <small>Good Food. Good Life</small>	Shredded <b>Wheat</b> (1893)			-	NO
		Shreddies (1939)		-	NO
			Cheerios (1942)	S	NO
	Clusters (1993)			S, De	NO
			Fitness(e) (2003)	-	NO ≈ (De)
 Weetabix	Weetabix (1932)			It, Fr, Es, De, Nl, S	NO
			Ready Brek (1956)	Es	NO
			Alpen (1972)	It, Es, Fr, De, Nl, S	YES
	Oatibix (2006)			N	NO
 JORDANS		Country Crisp (1990)		Fr, Es, It	NO
			Special Muesli (1990)	Fr, Nl	NO
		Crunchy (1970)		Fr, Es, It	NO
			3 in One (2006)	-	NO

## The cereal name heritage

Perhaps not-surprisingly, pre-1930, all the cereal names were of the type **cereal ingredient** + grain state descriptor, or vice versa; wheat + a + bix (bis><k) **Weetabix**, Shredded **Wheat** etc. Post-1990, they were of mixed name type; cereal ingredient-based description and non-descriptive.

This interesting cereal naming heritage was in part a reflection of the plain talking, puritan ideals held by the founders of some of these organizations, partly a wish to convey the obvious health benefits of natural oats, bran, corn and wheat to as wide a demographic as possible but perhaps also, in part, to simplify the message so that children could understand and relate to the product.

John Preston Kellogg was a medical doctor, advocate of vegetarianism and Seventh Day Adventist. He believed nuts could save mankind from the perils of scarce harvests. In 1906, he founded the *Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flake Company* at Battle Creek Sanatorium with his brother, W.K Kellogg, who, driven by the same puritan spirit, went on to become the founder of the Kellogg company we know today.

Quaker Oats and Quaker Oat Krunchies were produced as a result of a merger between the Ohio based Quaker Mill Company and two other Midwest milling companies. Again, the emphasis was on a religion-inspired wholesomeness of produce: the original 1877 Quaker logo was a full-length picture of a kindly Quaker man holding a scroll with the word "Pure" on it.

Bill Jordan, of Jordans Cereals was simply passionate about the benefits of healthy eating and driven to produce healthy whole foods following a trip to California in 1969. His descriptor-defined range, beginning with (*Jordans*) *Crunchy* in 1970, are, arguably, the most plain talking and descriptive of all those represented above.

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**Appella**  
names that build brands

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## Descriptive cereal names

The descriptive master brand is a strategy that is coated with a variety of identity issues. It is a given that, the cereal ingredient element, *Corn*, *Wheat* and *Oat*, in these master brands are clearly descriptive words that can be re-used as, for example in **Corn** Pops, **Oat** Flakes. This is not a major problem as there is little threat to the brands' identity.

However, soaked long enough in the milk of human ingenuity, the good, simple straight-talking messages conveyed by the *-bix*, *-pops*, *-bran* and *-flakes* could also be found to be a descriptive form that could be separated from the word stem and replicated ad nauseam by competitors. So, not only were the obviously descriptive, generic ingredient words not ownable as Trade Marks in their own right, but neither were the second element descriptors that might have seemed to have offered some degree of differentiation and identity for the master brands.

*Pops* was first registered in the UK, as a food, as a variant of the thing you 'pop' in your mouth, POPSICLES (Unilever 1923) and DOLLIPOPS, (Trebor Basset 1955), rather than the onomatopoeic 'burst of air' beloved of cereal manufacturers.

Although Kelloggs first registered COCOPOPS as a cereal in 1958, it was not very long before other companies followed suit. For example, Sainsbury's produced the consistency-wise very similar RICE POPS in 1981 and the, semantically, amazingly similar CHOCO POPS was registered by Sweet Point Édesipari KFT in 2006. *Pops* is an interesting example because it is not an obviously descriptive word. Yet, it has become regarded as the word for small things that 'sort-of' pop in your mouth.

Replicable and re-sellable, *-pops* has gone the same way as *-flakes* (e.g. *Mornflakes*, *Oatflakes*), *-bran* and *-bix* (*Nutri-Bix*, *Oatibix*) in becoming a major cereal identifier once synonymous with a masterbrand and now readily reconstituted as generic cereal name x. Interestingly, of these suffixing descriptors, the more unique *-bix* has the highest number of Trade Mark registrations. The simple answer is that plain speaking names lack the individuality demanded by the trade mark tsars.

## Parlez-vous Frostiepops?

The downsides to the benefits of plain speaking cereal names also, sometimes, extended to their lack of recognisability in non-English speaking countries. Columns five and six in the Table above indicate the market reach and pan-European scope respectively for each product. We can see here that the mainly post-1980 names NUTRI-GRAIN, ALPEN, SPECIAL K and OPTIVITA (except in Swedish) are fully recognisable in a range of European markets, whereas, the pre-war brands WEETABIX etc. are not.

On one level, we could simply say that, historically, we did not look to our European neighbours before launching a product on the domestic market as a prelude to a European roll-out. However, this drawback is not as widespread as one might expect. This is because the English language consonantal patterns of initial W, final consonant and consonant clusters CC(C) in KRISPIES, WEETABIX, FROSTIES, and CRUNCHY would be less likely to sound like French, Italian or Spanish words thereby neither sounding potentially offensive nor confusable with everyday words.

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The Cr- consonant cluster even forms a small cross-linguistic sound symbolic grouping which means it conveys the subliminal meaning, 'break, crush, bend, damage' in certain relevant languages.

There would also have been less competition, historically, when establishing the pre-war, English language descriptive brand names. So, in consequence, it would have been less of a challenge to build them amongst languages where there was little or no comprehension of their meaning.

## What We've Been Doing

The nice men at Brandhouse WTS came to us with a brief from Mars to create a name for possibly the fruitiest cereal bar in the world with a touch of the Mediterranean about it. Ideally, it had to convey its full meaning in the UK, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Spain and Italy.

From the bowls of the earth and the core of our souls, we identified *fru*-(*frut-/fruit/frucht* in the core languages) as a post-first sound shift, Greek or Latin filtered, Indoeuropean root with extensive representation in all the European language families apart from Basque, Slavic and Finno-Ugric. That'll do nicely, we purred.



Most of us know of *Fantasia* through the Walt Disney produced classical music and animation extravaganza first released on November 14, 1940, most recently re-released on video/DVD in 2000. Some will know it as an Italian, Spanish and Portuguese word meaning 'imagination, fantasy, fancy'. A few will also know it as *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*, a solo piano piece composed by Ferruccio Busoni in 1910 as an homage to JS Bach's *Kunst der Fuge*. The combination of romance language 'fantasy' with avant-garde extravagance and experimentation suited the brief entirely. We mixed the two up. We got *Frutasia*. WTS got a name, and our combination of Electric Eel software and finely-tuned linguistic evaluation seem to have done the trick.

Fruit-ful cereal bar **Frutasia** is "crammed full of real pieces of succulent strawberries or apricots and combined those with light crispy cereal, wrapped in a smooth creamy yoghurt base, to make FRUTASIA the fruitiest and tastiest cereal bar by far." [www.frutasia.co.uk](http://www.frutasia.co.uk)

*Frutasia* is also the main sponsor and Volunteer Partner of charity running events called **Race For Life**, being held during June and July 2007 by Cancer Research UK.

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