

The Challenger Brand Lab

AI Meets Strategy and Creativity

→ OLIPOP | Healthy Prebiotic Sodas



George Dotsios

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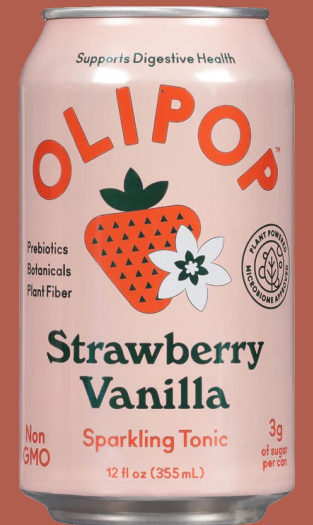
Prof. Allen Bosworth

Step 1 | Why Is OLIPOP a Challenger Brand?

OLIPOP is a challenger brand because it is **redefining soda** and disrupting the traditional soda category.

Instead of competing as just another soft drink, it positions itself as a **better-for-you soda** with lower sugar, more fiber, and healthier ingredients. This helps OLIPOP stand out from traditional soda brands by offering consumers the same familiar, nostalgic experience of soda but in a healthier way.

OLIPOP occupies a niche **between traditional soda and wellness beverages**, which gives it a unique place in the market. It appeals to consumers who still want flavor, fun, and convenience but also care about ingredients and lifestyle fit. Rather than copying legacy brands like Coca-Cola or Pepsi, OLIPOP is **reshaping consumer expectations** and showing that soda can feel both indulgent and wellness-focused at the same time.



Step 2 | Category Leaders & Competition

Coca-Cola and PepsiCo are the category leaders and have built enormous power through distribution, branding, and long-term consumer loyalty.

The Coca-Cola logo is displayed in its signature red script font on a white background.

Coca-Cola became a category leader through **global distribution, powerful branding, and decades of consumer loyalty**. Its products are widely available and strongly tied to habit, which has helped the brand remain one of the most recognizable names in soda. However, Coca-Cola may be vulnerable as more consumers begin to associate traditional soda with **high sugar and less healthy ingredients**.

The PepsiCo logo features a stylized 'P' with a green leaf and a blue drop above the word 'pepsico' in blue lowercase letters, with the tagline 'Food. Drinks. Smiles.' below it.

PepsiCo grew through **large-scale marketing, broad product variety, and strong retail presence**, making it another dominant force in the soda industry. Like Coca-Cola, it benefits from brand recognition and convenience, but it also faces pressure from **shifting consumer preferences**. Its acquisition of Poppi shows PepsiCo recognizes the growing demand for healthier, more functional soda alternatives.

Step 2.2 | Who Is OLIPOP Targeting?

OLIPOP is primarily marketing to **Gen Z and Millennial consumers** who want a healthier soda option without giving up taste, fun, or convenience. This audience is drawn to products that **fit into a wellness-focused lifestyle**, but they also care about branding, aesthetics, and the overall experience of what they buy. They want choices that feel better for them but are still enjoyable and socially relevant.

OLIPOP appeals to this audience in a way category leaders do not by **combining function, nostalgia, and lifestyle identity**. While traditional soda brands mostly sell refreshment and familiarity, OLIPOP sells a version of soda that feels smarter, more modern, and more aligned with current health-conscious values. This helps the brand connect with **consumers who want products that reflect both their taste and the way they want to live**.



Step 3 | Target Persona: Maya



Age: 24

Job: Entry-Level Marketing Coordinator

Channels: TikTok, Instagram, Pinterest

Shops: Target, Whole Foods

About Maya: Social, wellness-focused, and brand-conscious

Maya is the kind of person who color-codes her Google Calendar, romanticizes her morning routine, and aims for 10k steps a day. She loves Pilates, weekend farmers markets, cute packaging, and products that make her feel like she is making smarter choices without sacrificing fun. She is not obsessed with being “perfectly healthy,” but she does want the brands she buys to match the balanced, put-together version of herself she is trying to build. She still craves little indulgences, especially things that feel nostalgic or comforting, but she wants them in a form that feels modern and guilt-free.

Pain Points:

- Regular soda feels too sugary and caloric
- Diet soda feels artificial and unhealthy
- Other wellness drinks are expensive and boring

Why OLIPOP: OLIPOP gives her the soda experience she wants in a way that feels modern, balanced, and lifestyle-driven.

Step 4 | Observations & Insights

Soda is still the habit - but wellness, gut health, and Gen Z are changing the market

- About **63%** of U.S. adults drink sugary beverages daily → soda isn't a choice, it's a ritual
- Americans average just **17g** of fiber a day → **94%** miss the recommended intake
- Gen Z + Millennials are 36% of adults but **41%** of the whole wellness spending → younger consumers are rewriting the category
- In wellness drinks, **35%** seek probiotics → making gut health part of beverage behavior.

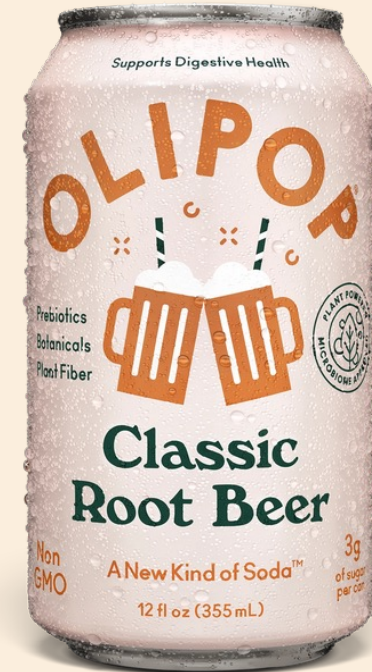
OBSERVATION

People love and crave soda. It's a pleasure and an experience that provides happiness. It also shadows guilt since it's unhealthy. People want the comfort of a treat without putting tons of processed sugar in their bodies.

INSIGHT

OLIPOP sheds a new territory: where the guilt of hurting their body disappears, so indulgence feels responsible and tasty.

The Perfect Case Study



OLIPOP Official Nutrition

9g Fiber | 4g Sugar | 35 Cal

Step 5 | AI-Generated Creative Platform Territories

1: Keep the Ritual, Lose the Regret

The soda moment stays; the guilt does not

2: Nostalgia, Upgraded

Childhood flavor meets grown-up standards

3: Treat Yourself Better

Self-care can still feel like a treat

4: Permission to Pop

Say yes to fun without feeling off-track

5: Flavor First. Benefits Follow

Lead with craveability - let function seal the choice



Our Pick: "Permission to Pop" - leans hard into emotional patterns and promotes a fun environment, which is versatile for campaigns

- Keep the Ritual, Lose the Regret - forgettable and expected
- Nostalgia, Upgraded - focuses too much on the past
- Treat Yourself Better - sounds more like a self-care message than a bold, ownable brand platform
- Flavor First. Benefits Follow - too product-focused and less emotional

Step 6 | The Script

Title: "Permission to Pop"

Core message: People are constantly told to hold back, be disciplined, and make "responsible" choices. OLIPOP reframes this by giving its consumers permission to guiltlessly pop open and enjoy a fizzy, fun drink that meets their wellness goals.

Opening

- Visual: A young woman gets home, opens the fridge, and pauses. Around her, small floating thought bubbles appear with words inside them: "**Be good.**" "**No sugar.**" "**Stick with water.**" Her hand hovers and pauses between a regular soda, a green smoothie bottle, and an OLIPOP. The room is muted, quiet, and colorless.
- Voice-over: "For a generation trying to balance wellness and fun, even a little treat can feel like a choice you need permission for."

Shot #2

- Visual: She grabs the OLIPOP and opens it. The floating thought bubbles around her burst into bright and colorful bubbles from the can. Color rushes back into the room, and her expression changes into a big smile.
- Sound: A loud, crisp **POP** when the can is opened. The background music becomes loud and upbeat.
- Voice-over: "OLIPOP gives you that permission... Permission to **POP.**"

Shot #3

- Visual: Zoom into multiple bubbles with each holding a different fun moment: laughing with friends outside, dancing in the kitchen, sitting in the sun, etc. Final bubble is someone opening a fridge full of colorful OLIPOP cans.
- Voice-over: "Less guilt. Less stress. More *pop.*"

Closing

- Visual: Zoom in on the row of colorful OLIPOP cans. One is grabbed and taken away.
- On-screen text: "**OLIPOP | Permission to Pop**"
- Voice-over: "OLIPOP. Permission to pop."




Step 6.2 | Social Media Posts

PERMISSION TO POP!

Bring the fzzzz to every moment with your new favorite Soda
A refreshing buzz of health & flavor that turns nothing into something

ORDER NOW



The image shows a white can of OLIPOP Cream Soda. The can features the brand name 'OLIPOP' in large blue letters, 'Cream Soda' in green, and 'A New Kind of Soda™' in blue. It also lists 'Prebiotics', 'Botanicals', and 'Plant Fiber' on the left side, and 'Supports Digestive Health' at the top. The can is surrounded by a dynamic splash of golden-brown liquid.

OLIPOPOP IS CALLING 



The image shows a yellow can of OLIPOP Crisp Apple Soda. The can features the brand name 'OLIPOPOP' in red, 'Crisp Apple' in green, and 'Supports Digestive Health' in black. It also lists 'Prebiotics', 'Botanicals', and 'Plant Fiber' on the left side, and 'Non-GMO' and '12 fl oz (355 mL)' at the bottom. The can is placed on a red apple. A red arrow points from the top left towards the can. A red oval with a yellow warning sign and the word 'ALERT' is positioned in the bottom right corner.

DO YOU HAVE PERMISSION TO POP???

Step 7 | Reflection

- Platforms: This assignment helped us see that AI is useful as a starting point, but **NOT** as the final or only solution. It helped to speed up research, organize and narrow down ideas, and quickly generate multiple creative options.
- Insights: For example, AI helped us understand OLIPOP's position as a challenger brand, identify its competitors and the category leaders, and begin building possible ad concepts. It also helped us generate advertising observations, explore possible insights, develop platform ideas, and create early creative directions.
 - AI is especially useful in terms of efficiency → it gave us a lot of useful information in a very short amount of time.
- Creative: Advertising depends heavily on human judgment and creativity. AI can generate many ideas, but they are often not relatable, culturally relevant, or unique. This is where humans must come in to build off the foundation that AI provides.
- Observations: That is often the most important part of the process because it involves deciding which observations are actually meaningful, which insights feel emotionally true, which platforms are the most compelling, and which creative direction will have the greatest impact.
 - This part requires human interpretation, personal taste, and a better emotional understanding of people, which AI struggles with. In the end, this project proved that AI can support the creative process, but human perspective is what gives the work originality and deeper meaning.