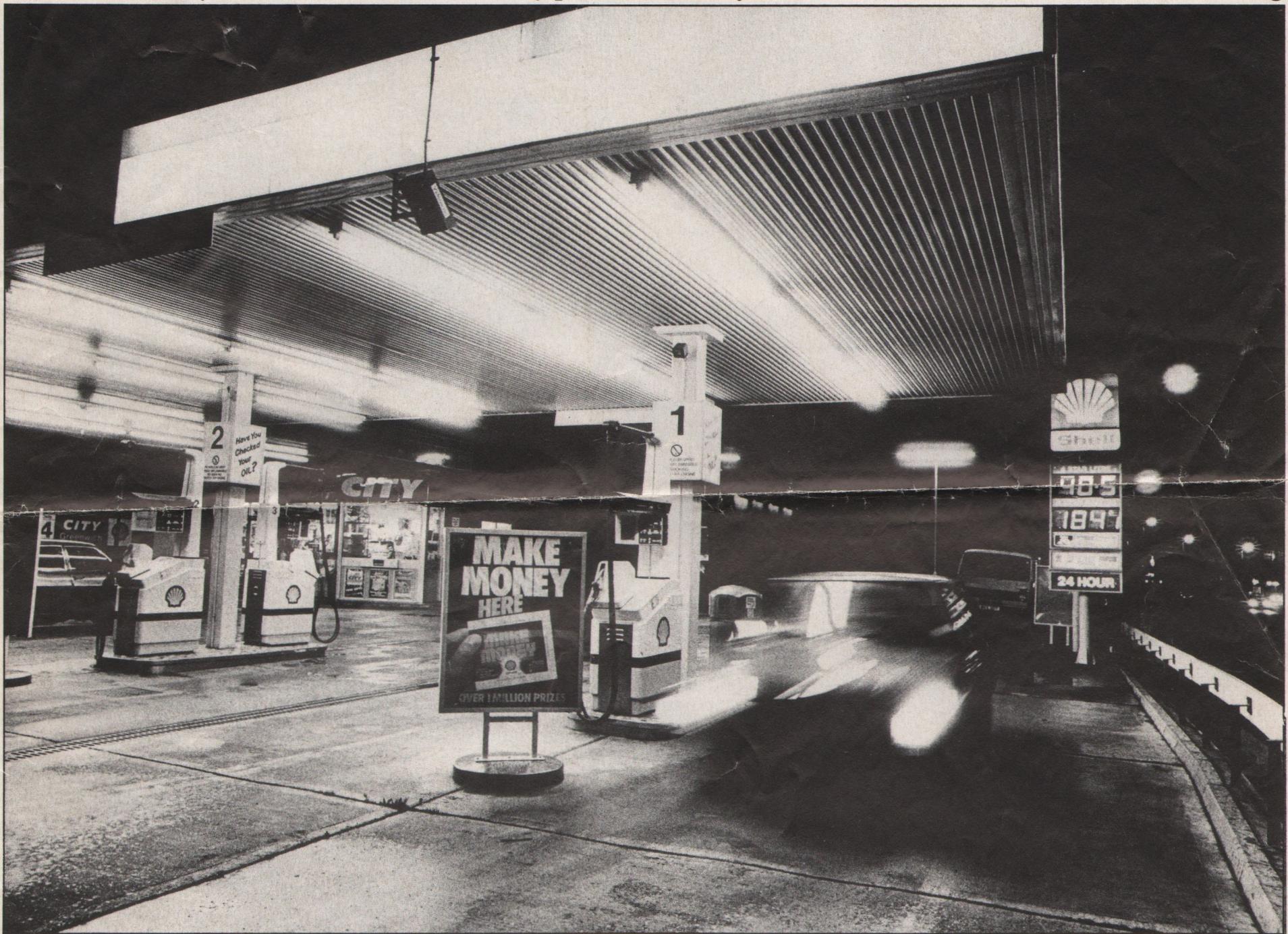


Anatomy of a Shell winner

The inside story of the Shell Make Money promotion. By John Chambers, MD of Don Marketing



Make Money . . . the game was so successful that Shell had to work hard to maintain supplies to some stations

The Make Money game, which has started a new promotional war among the oil companies, increased Shell's petrol sales by more than 20 per cent — surpassing all the expectations of the team from Shell, Don Marketing and Ogilvy and Mather which put the promotion together.

Indeed, the game was so successful that Shell had to work hard to maintain supplies to some of its stations. And it was not only the petrol that was in big demand. Such was the clamour for the half-note game pieces, which formed the basis of the promotion, that 150 tons of them were used up.

The original 1966 Make Money promotion was probably the most successful of all time. It became a legend in marketing circles. According to Shell sales development manager Ken Danson: "The increase in sales, after six weeks of

the promotion, was 85 per cent and we ran out of fuel, even though in those days we were still linked with BP and had far more extensive sources of supply than we have now. It almost doubled our market share."

The current campaign, though wildly successful, could never match the 1966 figures. As Danson points out, the previous incarnation was the first of its kind and there were no other petrol promotions running at the time. The 1966 Make Money was immediately followed by Esso's brilliant tiger tail campaign, and the ensuing promotional battle went on for years.

Shell followed up with man in flight and historic cars coin collections. Then came more block buster promotions, including Esso's World Cup and FA Centenary cup collections, Texaco's reg-

imental badge replicas and Cleveland's campaign medals. This spate of promotions ended eventually, not only because the petrol companies ran out of ideas, but also because the campaigns tended to cancel each other out. Stamp trading took over, because it was both easier to handle and more continuous in its effect.

Trading stamps fell out of favour when high rates of inflation meant that, by the time the consumer had collected the required number of stamps to obtain a given product, the number of stamps needed had often doubled. The oil companies, following Tesco's example, threw them out.

After that, came the oil crises of the 70s, with steep increases in the price of oil and the market thrown into disorder. Danson explains that the industry has been into glut and into famine twice over and, in a

situation where supplies were often doubtful, there was little point in trying to promote. In any case, with the severe price competition of recent years, there was no money to spare for either above or below-the-line campaigns.

Happily for the petrol companies, the blood baths of the 1980 to 1982 period have been followed by a period of relative price stability. This was helped by a two per cent volume growth last year, the brighter prospects that stem from the increasing number of cars on the road and an increase in the money people have available for spending.

The more optimistic market outlook coincided with Shell's completion of a multi-million pound refurbishment programme for its filling stations, including rationalisation and conversion to self-service. But, even though the

company had maintained its joint leadership of the market with Esso (both have around 20 per cent, followed by BP National at just under 15 per cent and Texaco at eight per cent) without any activity either above or below the line for a decade, Shell decided a year ago that it ought to re-establish the value of its brand.

After such a long lay off, it was felt that any promotion should be really big. It was decided that collectables would not have the necessary impact and Shell was persuaded by us that the right answer was to produce a 1980s version of Make Money. As Danson explains: "We went back to our most successful promotion. We knew that there was still a residual affection for it among motorists. However, although the magic ingredient — the idea of matching two halves of a note — was the same, ►

Nice one Don!



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