“Mister Duyvis”
The public representation of a family firm, Duyvis 1850-1969

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Summary

This paper describes the different stages in the marketing of Duyvis, a Dutch family firm. It is argued that although the family used the family name from the start in their public representation (of which marketing was the most prominent and the subject of this paper) – the conscious choice to take a more personal approach was only taken in a very late phase of the business history. Only when the production of edible oils became the core business, the Duyvis family chose for a branding strategy in which the family and family name played an explicit role.

1. Introduction

A short while ago, Sara Lee/DE, the present owner of the brand “Duyvis” started the countdown for the celebration of two centuries “Duyvis” in 2006. A bit remarkable, perhaps, is that the official foundation year of the firm Duyvis was 1850. In 1806 the first man in the Duyvis family started seed crushing, after inheriting an oil mill. However, it was years later that his grandson Teewis founded the family firm that eventually was acquired by Sara Lee/DE in 1987.

More remarkable is that the Dutch branch of the Sara Lee Corporation falls back on the personal history of the brand name. In the long history of the Duyvis family firm this was not a tradition. Indeed, for the family directors using the family name for branded products was as self-evident as basing the corporate identity and culture on the family character of the firm. However, an explicit use of the family character for the public representation (of which marketing was the most prominent and the subject of this paper) was only taken up in the transitional phase from closed family firm to listed family firm.

If one compares this with the British firms such as Cadburys, Rowntrees and Sainsburys which formulated a personal marketing strategy in the nineteenth century, Duyvis was quite late in doing so. These family firms, according to Rose, distinguished themselves with “personal” marketing
strategies in which “the image of the family became synonymous with the quality of the product or the service in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and became embedded in their corporate cultures.”¹ Rose argues that these early decades were important in building long-term competitive capabilities, which continued to give competitive advantages well into the twentieth century, even after the family image had stopped being marketed in the advertisement campaigns.

The Duyvis family took another course. This paper attempts to explain the development of the use of the family name in the marketing. Why was Duyvis so late in adopting a brand strategy based on the family name? The paper begins with an overview of the business history of Duyvis. Next, Section 3 analyses the traditional phase in Duyvis’ marketing history. In section 4, the transition to the conscious brand strategy of Duyvis is described.

The concluding section 5 raises the question whether a personal marketing strategy enhances the survival of a family firm. Chandler has argued that a brand strategy in food is helpful for family firms since it can compensate for a strategy of economies of scale. This is why, according to Chandler, the food industry was the bastion of the family firm in Britain in the interwar period.² In contrast, Wilkins argues that branding in the food and beverage industries could support the achievement of economies of scale. Branding was especially important for the processor and seller of modern food products such as canned and refrigerated goods. In order to be able to achieve economies of scale and scope related to these new technologies, the producer had to make sure that the buyers would purchase the enlarged volume of their product. An advertised trade mark could help in attracting consumers.³

¹ Rose, ‘Cultural influences on family firm strategy’, 14.
² Chandler, Scale and scope, 367.
³ Although her argument is based on the American experience, she contends that it is generally applicable; Mira Wilkins, ‘The neglected intangible asset: the influence of the trade mark on the rise of the modern corporation’, Business History 34 (1992) 82-87; Mira Wilkins, ‘When and why brand names in food and drink’, in: Geoffrey Jones and Nicholas J. Morgan eds., Adding value, brands and marketing in food and drink (London 1994).
2. A concise business history of the Duyvis family firm

Duyvis was a successful family firm in the vegetable oil industry in the Netherlands. It was a characteristic family firm of the Zaanstreek, the economic-geographic area in the proximity of Amsterdam that is formed by a collection of small towns scattered on the banks of the river Zaan. The Zaanstreek is famous for its long windmill history. Since the Golden Age windmills were used for a variety of industries; saw milling, oil crushing and the husking of grains, for example.

The family firm “T. Duyvis Jz.” was founded in 1850 by Teewis Duyvis. Most late nineteenth-century Zaan family firms had their entrepreneurial roots in the heyday of the Zaan economy centuries earlier, and so did Duyvis. Teewis belonged to the third generation of the Duyvis family of Koog aan de Zaan who worked as a seed crusher.

The Duyvis family distinguished itself for making a relative early transition from wind power to steam power, a transition which was far from sudden in the Zaanstreek. The second generation expanded the family firm by building a steam-powered oil factory in 1880. In contrast to the earlier steam plants in the region, this factory contained no crushing equipment similar to that used in the windmills, but used a new technique instead. This steam oil factory (with the original name “De Zaan”) was equipped with the first Anglo-American hydraulic layers press in the Netherlands. Even though at the time this was the most modern steam-powered oil-producing installation in the Netherlands, the family did not immediately dispose itself from its windmills; it was only in 1919 that Duyvis stopped exploiting the last windmill.

The first generations of the family firm concentrated on oil-seed crushing which seemed the natural thing to do for a firm located in the very heart of the Dutch oil-crushing industry. The seeds milled were originally linseed, rape and cole seed. Later also other seeds, groundnuts and the waste from cocoa beans were processed. Duyvis produced intermediate products such as crude technical oils, for the production of paint for example, and crude edible oils which needed to be refined before suitable as salad oil or in the margarine production. The residue, squeezed solid elements of the crushed seed, was called “cake”. After a first pressing, the cake was broken and ground again. The

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4 This section is based on Arnoldus, Family, Family firm, and Strategy.
cake that was formed the second time was called “cattle cake”. Cattle cakes were not a mere by-product. The cattle cakes were sold as branded products at the domestic market.

Duyvis differed from the other Zaan oil producers in that it was able to process two different kinds of raw materials at the same time, for example linseed and groundnuts. In the Netherlands only the Anglo Dutch multinational Unilever also had a production capacity large enough for this. Duyvis’ large production capacity enhanced the step to further expansion. In 1920 when the second and third generation jointly led the company, Duyvis began refining oils. This was the first step to the production of finished food products for the consumer market. In the course of the twentieth century the Duyvis family developed their firm into one of the main edible-oil producers in the Netherlands. The production of branded and packaged foodstuffs such as salad oils, salad dressing and mayonnaise played an increasingly important role for the family firm.

In the late 1940s the family members felt that they had to make a choice between the fodder and foodstuffs division, because the further development of both divisions required large investments. At that time, the closed Duyvis family firm employed about 275 employees and belonged to the hundred largest industrial firms in the Netherlands. The Duyvis family was not yet prepared to search for external capital and open up the closed family NV. In 1949 they decided to disinvest the fodder interests, quit the fodder market, and concentrate on foodstuffs. Their cattle-cake warehouse “Wolga” was rebuilt into the food plant “1950” (Duyvis’ plants always bore the year of building as a name, whereas the warehouses bore the names of various rivers in the world). The decision to leave the fodder market was a rupture with the family’s history, since it also meant that Duyvis no longer produced or traded in linseed oil or plain linseed cakes. From now on, the cattle cakes (which remained to be produced as the side-products of the other, edible, oils) were sold to former competitors as unbranded, intermediate products.

A decade later, however, the growing capital intensity of oil production still drove the Duyvis family to the external capital market. In 1959 the Royal Factories T. Duyvis Jz. as it was called by then, was listed at the Amsterdam Stock Exchanges. Soon afterwards Duyvis started with the production of
peanuts and other cocktail snacks, still the most important products bearing the brand name Duyvis. In 1969 Duyvis was taken over by ACP, the Akzo Consumer Products division. In 1987, when ACP (including the Duyvis business unit) was taken over by the Dutch coffee-roasting and tobacco firm Douwe Egberts (established in 1753) - nowadays SaraLee/DE - the last Duyvis family director E.G. Duyvis Tz. retired. Although the independent status of the family firm was ended, the brand name Duyvis has survived until the present day.

3. Traditional marketing in the cattle cake era: family name as a guarantee

When Duyvis was still a traditional seed crusher combining vegetable oil production with the production of cattle cakes, their marketing also had traditional features. First we will discuss the sale of the cattle cakes, followed by the marketing of vegetable oils, which became increasingly important.

Cattle cakes

At the end of the nineteenth century the domestic cattle cake market was the most important market for most oil seed crushers in the Netherlands, because of the intensive livestock-breeding. Until the Depression the sale of cattle cakes was relatively uncomplicated. Duyvis sold its cattle cakes as branded products, under the name TD, indirectly referring to the firm and family name (TD were the initials of the founder). Most Zaan crushers used initials, although sometimes more original signs were used. With these trade marks, which guaranteed a steady quality to the regular customers, producers like Duyvis attempted to protect their trade relations. Some producers registered these marks.

More sophisticated brand names were not necessary because of the small domestic market, in which wholesalers and consumers (farmers) were acquainted with the producers. In the neighbouring regions of the Zaanstreek the cattle cakes were sold to forage wholesalers in the weekly local markets.

5 A ♠ mark for the producer that had possessed a windmill "The Heart", or the Greek letter ß; Archive Duyvis Family (ADF), notes of speech of Teewis Duyvis Egzn., delivered for the Rotary Club Zaandam Society 1965; Honig, Van molen tot grootbedrijf I, 170.
6 GAZ, Koninklijke Wessanen NV, inv.no. 404; In the preliminary inventory that has been made of the Duyvis business archive there is mention of "trademarks 1880-1882"; the file concerned was not available, however.
Provinces further away were served through agents. The wholesalers, and at a later stage the farmers, could identify the producers of the cakes by stamps marked on the cakes.

In their merchandising Duyvis stressed the “traditionally high quality” (in Dutch a word play on the abbreviation TD “traditioneel deugdzaam”) of all their varieties of cattle cakes. It was due to their modern equipment and the high quality of seeds that they used, that the letters TD pressed in the cakes were a genuine guarantee of quality. It was this aiming at quality with which Duyvis attempted to differentiate from the mainstream seed crushers. In brochures of 1917 and 1927 wholesalers were invited to inspect the plant and the warehouses. Consumers (farmers) were also entitled to do so as long as they could show a written testimony from their wholesaler. Additionally, consumers could send the TD cakes to be analysed free of charge at the Rijkslandbouwproefstation (State agricultural research station). Later, after 1930, when Duyvis had started producing compound fodder as well, the name Duyvis remained a brand with such a good image that it could be sold at a premium price.

Duyvis’ fame is illustrated by an event early 1937. An agent of fellow Zaan fodder producer Zwaardemaker had approached clients of Duyvis with the story that Duyvis supplied the albuminous ingredients for the cheaper Zwaardemaker compound feeds (whether this was true could not be confirmed in the sources). The agent added the fact that E.G. Duyvis Tz. (the family director of the second generation) was a non-executive director of Zwaardemaker. Duyvis complained about this selling method in which the agent suggested that Zwaardemaker actually sold the better quality Duyvis products against lower, Zwaardemaker prices.

In the 1930s the Dutch cattle-cake market suffered from foreign seed crushers – especially from the USA and Germany – who began to dump cakes on the Dutch market. Their own domestic markets for cattle cakes were relatively small, while their domestic markets for linseed oil were large. Being protected against foreign competition on their domestic markets, they were

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7 Encyclopedie van de Zaanstreek, 525.
8 GAZ library, nos. 03.346 and 03.964, brochures of 1917 and 1927 respectively.
9 CAS, HAD, correspondence 1935-1940.
able to sell cattle cakes on the Dutch market at considerably lower prices. In 1933, after an extensive lobby of the Dutch seed crushers, the import of cattle cake was restricted. From 1935 to 1939 the cattle-cake market was regulated by a quota system initiated by the Cartel of Dutch Seed crushers.\textsuperscript{10} The cattle-cake market would never return to what it once had been. Linseed-producing countries started seed crushing themselves, and new insights into veterinary dietetics changed the cattle-fodder market. Compound animal feeds became increasingly important, much to the detriment of the pure linseed crushers, whose product was slowly reduced to a raw material for the compound fodder.

The Cartel offered the possibility to linseed crushers to make a switchover to edible oil production in a protected market environment. Duyvis, however, had already entered the edible oil market years before.

\textit{Vegetable edible oils}

Cattle cake production and vegetable oil production were two sides of the same coin. The market for vegetable oils was quite complex. Of old, the seed crushers could handle the international trade in bulk commodities (raw material such as oleaginous seeds as well as produced oil) at the Amsterdam Corn Exchange. Crude technical oils were mostly exported directly by the producer or via the Exchange; refined technical oils were mainly sold to domestic producers of paint, soap or linoleum (often in the Zaanstreek itself). Crude edible oils were generally not exported; they were sold to domestic refiners or margarine producers, although it should be noted that as a flexible trading firm Duyvis occasionally exploited opportunities in foreign markets and sold edible oils in bulk.\textsuperscript{11} Refined edible oils were mainly sold as consumer products at the domestic market. Part was sold via wholesale trade channels; packaged and branded consumer products were directly sold to the consumer via retail channels. In the course of its history Duyvis participated in all these market outlets. We will concentrate here on the sale of edible oils.

\textsuperscript{10}Arnoldus, ‘Nederlandse kartelvorming in de oliën- en vettenindustrie in de jaren dertig’, 226-257.

\textsuperscript{11} One of the first large transactions of Teewis Duyvis, who entered the firm in 1909, was exporting “butter oil”, cold-pressed, unrefined but edible rape-seed oil. In the years 1910 and 1911 Duyvis made a virtue of necessity; because of bad linseed harvests, they switched to the production of rape-seed oil. Because of the simultaneously bad olive harvests in the Mediterranean countries, the “butter oil” was in great demand as it could be diluted with the scarce olive oil. The young Teewis Duyvis travelled personally to the Mediterranean oil centre of Triest to arrange this export of rape-seed oil in bulk. ADF, notes of speech of Teewis Duyvis EGzn., delivered for the Rotary Club Zaandam Society 1965.
The first edible oil that Duyvis sold as a branded product was “butter oil”, the extra quality of cold-pressed, unrefined rape-seed oil. Like many Zaan seed crushers, Duyvis occasionally crushed domestic rape-seed, when linseed was scarce. At the turn of the century, the family firm positioned bottles of Duyvis’ butter oil in the Dutch market. As an extra guarantee not only a label with the family name but also an extra trade mark was put under the stopper. However, it was not a great success, and eventually (after the first refinery plant came into operation in 1920) it was not the rape-seed oil but groundnut oil (peanut or arachis oil) that Duyvis took up in order to become less dependent on the volatile linseed supply. Within fifteen years Duyvis reached the position of third largest edible-oil producer with a market share of a fifth of the domestic market.

Like most other edible-oil producers, Duyvis initially distributed the edible oils (primarily groundnut oil) in the domestic market through wholesalers’ channels. These wholesalers bottled the oil and distributed it to the retailers, or they ensured of the filling of the oil barrels from which the retailer could tap the oil in the quantities desired. Later, Duyvis also supplied retailers directly with small Duyvis oil tanks (with built-in heating to keep the salad oil liquid for easy tapping); this meant that the retailer could tap a branded article. In the late 1920s Duyvis began branding edible oils by bottling and labelling the salad oils themselves. The branded distribution quickly gained ground; although the distribution of unbranded salad oil through wholesalers remained important. In 1934, the share of branded distribution of edible oils was already 50 per cent of total sales. In comparison; market leader Calvé-Delft (Unilever), the Dutch pioneer in selling bottled salad oils, the “own trade” was 90 per cent.

To protect the branded salad oils, wholesalers were not allowed to use the producers’ trade marks. In 1939 Duyvis and other large edible oil producers

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13 In the production cartel of the seven largest edible-oil producers in the Dutch market, the Edible Oil Producers Syndicate (one of the cartels that existed in the edible-oils sector from 1934 to 1954) Duyvis received a quota of 20 per cent. See Arnoldus, ‘Nederlandse kartelvorming in de oliën- en vettenindustrie in de jaren dertig’.
14 CAS, HAD, brochure for Duyvis agents, appr. 1946-1950.
15 The Edible Oil Producers Syndicate also established a marketing cartel with a group of wholesalers. This Edible Oil Convention arranged the conditions of sale and the selling prices of edible oils. The Convention allowed the Big Seven to continue the pre-1934 direct distribution to retailers of their branded product, either in bottles or in oilbarrels; part of the quota was reserved for “own trade”. See Arnoldus, ‘Nederlandse kartelvorming in de oliën- en vettenindustrie in de jaren dertig’.
obliged wholesalers to replace the signs on the barrels with their own trade marks. The edible-oil producers feared the consumers’ intelligence, who would switch to unbranded salad oil if they knew it was made by the same producer as the more expensive branded oil. These special measures were necessary because the generic product salad oil - which was simply refined oil - was not easy to differentiate on the basis of intrinsic characteristics, and plain salad oil was therefore rather difficult to sell as a branded product.

Nevertheless the distribution of these generic products gave Duyvis the opportunity to make the transition to a more brands-orientated marketing, in which the brand was not just a mark of guarantee but could be used as a marketing tool for products with higher profit margins. Duyvis took an important step in 1932.

4. More conscious marketing; using the family name as a brand
In 1932 Duyvis established a special division and plant for foodstuffs. The first new product to be introduced was Salata, a salad dressing based on 25 per cent salad oil, with eggs, vinegar and spices. The decision to produce Salata had been taken without prior market research as to whether the dressing would be appreciated by Dutch consumers. Duyvis only began market research - with consumer testing panels - after the Second World War. The originator of Salata was the (first and only) non-family director H. Peeters. He had considered that Duyvis could make more money out of salad oil to be used in a dressing than with plain salad oil. This was certainly true during the Depression. For the consumer (or “the housewife” as she was called within the company and often also in the advertisements) the salad dressing could turn out to be cheaper than her own dressing of salad oil and vinegar, whereas Duyvis received a higher margin (this was not added in the advertisements, of course).

The introduction of Salata was prepared with the help of the publicity agency Van Alfen, which took care of the label for the Salata bottle. The label

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16 This was stipulated in the Edible Oil Convention; Jongbloed, De Nederlandse spijsolie-industrie, 76, 115.
17 J.C. Duyvis, interview 25-6-1999.
18 CAS, HAD, files 30.02.
was carefully designed; the stylised lettuce and salad fork had to suggest modernity, while at the same time informing the consumer how the new product could be used (ready-made salad dressing was a new phenomenon in the Netherlands, this is why Salata almost became a class name for the product). In contrast with the plain salad oils, the name Duyvis was consciously placed further into the background to make way for the brand name Salata.\(^{19}\)

After Salata a number of branded products were introduced; \textit{Extra-Jus} (frying-fat), \textit{Juco} (gravy-cubes; flavoured fat), \textit{Cremolda} (chocolate spread), \textit{Mayovite} (a B-brand for mayonnaise), Arachis oil Duyvis-Extra, Arachis oil of a B-quality with a “pigeon label” (a pun on the family name), Duyvis mayonnaise and several Duyvis salad oils.\(^{20}\)

After the Second World War, when times were improving, Duyvis introduced more luxurious salad dressings; \textit{Livorno}, which was creamier and less sour, and which contained 50 per cent salad oil, and \textit{Citrolata}. These dressings were more expensive than home-made dressings of oil and vinegar – this of course was not added in the advertisements.

The family name Duyvis was used in what is called an endorsement strategy; a product was branded by connecting it with the Duyvis family name.\(^{21}\) This was especially the case with less differentiated products like “Duyvis’ salad oils” and the “Duyvis’ mayonnaise”. Duyvis in these brands was meant to be equal to “high quality” – the traditional use of the family name. More differentiated products with intrinsically special characteristics (for example based on a recipe) were given a special brand name, and in the marketing the brand names were less emphatically endorsed by the Duyvis name.

Hence, the Duyvis family firm really got interested in brands after the introduction of Salata – although decades before they had “branded” their products with the family name or initials. This new interest was strengthened by participating in specific interest groups. In 1937, for example, Duyvis joined the FIVA, a Dutch association of producers and importers of branded articles that coordinated a collective resale price-maintenance system. FIVA had been

\(^{19}\) \textit{Onze Pers,} July 1960.
\(^{20}\) \textit{CAS,} HAD, price lists 1938-1939.
\(^{21}\) \textit{See Riezebos, Merkenmanagement,} 137-141.
established in 1928. Duyvis’ main competitor Calvé had joined immediately, but Duyvis at the time was not yet brands-oriented, although they produced their first branded edible oils. The FIVA had been established on the initiative of retailers and grocers. With a system of fixed selling prices, the large group of shopkeepers could not be swept away by the larger chains of multiple retailing shops. Producers of brands were prepared to protect small retailers, because collectively they were the most important channel for selling branded products. Over time, however, the downfall of the small grocers accelerated in the 1960s and could no longer be prevented. For the brands producers like Duyvis, the benefit of protecting many small outlets by relative high fixed resale prices, no longer compensated for the loss of market share due to distributor-owned brands of the retailing chains. In 1972 Duyvis resigned, together with five other producers; the FIVA was liquidated officially in 1975.\(^2\)

In 1944, Duyvis played an active role in the founding of the Foundation of Branded Products (*Stichting Merkartikel* - abbreviation SMA), an interest group for branded-products manufacturers.\(^3\) The timing was no coincidence. With all the difficulties inherent in wartime, it was precisely the branded-food division which kept the company going. Duyvis began to produce substitutes for the brands. To preserve the brand images of products such as Salata, the substitutes had their own names, for example *V.S.* and *Sala-Toma*. The first name *V.S.* - ‘Vervangt Salata’ simply meant Substitute for Salata, but was also a wink to the Dutch public suffering from the German occupation; *V.S.* is the Dutch abbreviation for U.S.A.

Thus, when Duyvis in 1949 decided to concentrate on the production of foodstuffs, and leave the production of fodder, the family firm had quite some experience with branded products. It still took approximately a decade before the Duyvis family realised that their concentration on branded and packaged food products would eventually lead to opening up the family firm. They understood soon enough that a rapid market introduction of margarine was necessary, before the post-war margarine market became too competitive. Of course, as it was stated in an internal memorandum of March 1950, Duyvis

\(^2\) FIVA was the abbreviation for ‘Vereniging van Fabrikanten en Importeurs van Verbruiksartikelen’ (Association of Manufacturers and Importers of Articles of Consumption) Schrover, ‘De Fiva als bijzondere variant’, 292-329.

\(^3\) SMA, 50 Jaar *Stichting Het Merkartikel*.
would produce a *branded* margarine. The author of the memorandum also understood the implications of this choice. Duyvis would need a hardening plant to be able to become a margarine producer of any significance. Since Duyvis at that time still wanted to remain a closed family NV, the family sought cooperation with another Zaan family firms in the sector. A joint investment was never realised, however, because not all family firms with a similar history in linseed trade and crushing were able to leave their bulk orientation and switch to a brands orientation like Duyvis had shown.\textsuperscript{24} An extraction plant – indispensable for a firm specialising in edible oils and related foodstuffs – could only be financed by searching external capital.

In preparation of the flotation (in June 1959), a campaign was planned in 1958 to enlarge the public familiarity with Duyvis. It was decided to do this in the spring of 1959, because of the seasonal character of the most important brands and because of the fact that Teewis Duyvis would then celebrate his fiftieth anniversary with the family firm, which would undoubtedly lead to some stories in the press.

“If the public learns that there is a ‘Mister Duyvis’, they will be more interested in the Duyvis firm. The campaign for the Duyvis name - although completely unrelated to the jubilee - would be better received.”\textsuperscript{25}

The family firm commissioned a public-relations consulting agency to draw up a PR-plan to both enhance the future flotation and the marketing of the Duyvis brands. The consultancy “Mr. A. Seret” suggested that every advertisement should carry the addition that the product was part of the *Duyvis Family*, which could be interpreted threefold: the actual Duyvis family; the Duyvis community (direction and employees of the firm); or the “family” of related Duyvis products.\textsuperscript{26} This was indeed the course the Duyvis family chose for the marketing. From early 1960 on brands like *Livorno* and *Salata* were restyled and given the same Duyvis features. In the staff magazine it was explained that a testing panel of many “housewives” had shown that the consumer wanted to see “family likeness” in goods from the same producer.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{24} CAS, HAD, file Zaan Community and preceding negotiations (1948-1952).
\textsuperscript{25} (translation DA) CAS, HAD, file 32.02. Memorandum “Campagne voor 1959” d.d. 1 July 1958.
\textsuperscript{26} CAS, HAD, file 38.14. “Concept-plan PR; 1959/1961”.
\textsuperscript{27} *Onze pers*, (15), no 60, March 1960, p.5
In the 1960s the professionalized marketing did Duyvis no harm. The introduction in 1961 of peanuts as a snack profited from the strong position of the brand Duyvis. Anno 2005 Duyvis is still the market leader in this sector, which is no peanuts in the nuts-minded Netherlands, where most nuts per capita in Europe are consumed (1.7 kilogram per year). The strong brand position made Duyvis an attractive candidate for a take-over by ACP, the consumer products division of the AKZO/multinational in 1969.

5. Concluding remarks
As has been described in the introduction, the Duyvis family firm was not a typical family firm in the food industry, because the family turned rather late to a “personal” marketing strategy, like Cadbury and other British branded food producers. The first decades of its existence Duyvis behaved like other seed crushers in the region the Zaanstreek; the cattle cakes were sold under the name TD, indirectly referring to the family name. However, because of Duyvis early technological lead in the region, the family was relatively early in diversifying into the production of edible oils.

Shortly after the Second World War, when the world’s largest linseed producer Argentina started to process its own linseed, reorientation became inevitable for all Zaan family firms that crushed seed. Duyvis had already begun adapting their activities to the gradually changing circumstances – the family made the change from trade in bulk to production of more differentiated products before the Second World War, when the supply side was still fairly uncomplicated. This gave them better chances of survival. It was when the family had decided to concentrate on foodstuffs, that the family name Duyvis was given a clearer position in the marketing.

The family accepted the consequences of the reorientation. A choice for producing edible oils required large investments in the extraction technique. When joint investments with other Zaan family firms were not possible, the Duyvis family therefore deliberately gave up the closed family character of the firm, and opted for a flotation on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange in 1959. After external advice the family adopted a more “personal” marketing strategy just

before the flotation. This more articulate use of the family name and the use of brands was a strategy to increase the chances of survival of the family firm; however, not so much as a family firm, but as a firm in general.\(^2^9\)

There was definitely some irony in the new use of the family name. To choose for edible oil production meant choosing for extraction. Extraction, however, was a more capital-intensive and larger scale type of production than seed crushing had been. Duyvis’ case seems to underline Wilkins argument that a brand strategy could be used to ensure a market for the enlarged volume. Duyvis followed the advice to exploit the family character of the firm in the branding. The financial side of the choice for extraction, however, lead to dilution of that same family character.

\(^{2^9}\) J.Duyvis and J.C. Duyvis, interview 14 Oktober 1996.
Archives

- Archive Duyvis Family, Egmond-Binnen. (ADF)
- Corporate Archive Sara Lee/DE, Historical Archive Duyvis, Utrecht. (CAS, HAD)
- Gemeentearchief Zaanstad, library (GAZ, no.).

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