On coupons and reinventing your product

Clipping coupons is a sometimes denigrated activity which nonetheless helps thousands of Americans keep to their grocery budgets. In this sense, coupons play a significant role in marketing communications. Many people buy the product for which they can get the best price, and coupons (especially in stores that double their face value) can help lower prices. So, for example, if you are shopping for detergent, and you have a 50-cent coupon for Tide and a 75-cent coupon for Purex, you may decide to buy Purex, either as a trial or because it will be cheaper.

Manufacturers also use coupons to introduce products and to stimulate sales. And, often, I think, they use coupons to experiment with campaigns. After all, coupons are traceable. You can gauge if something is working just by the number of coupons that are redeemed.

Today I saw an interesting juxtaposition of coupons for Palmolive Dishwashing Liquid. One was for traditional Palmolive (you know, the green stuff that claims to save your hands from the harshness of doing dishes) and for "New Palmolive Pure + Clear." This new product claims to have no unnecessary chemicals, no heavy fragrances, non-irritating dyes and no harmful residue on dishes." This is from the same people who manufacture the other Palmolive. Are they saying that regular Palmolive has unnecessary chemicals, irritating dyes and leaves harmful residue???? Do you see how this is dangerous for the Palmolive brand? Although I applaud them for their new product I think that this where branding can be defeated. If you introduce a new product that in a sense contradicts your existing product, you should use a different brand, right? Or, is the thought process that the brand is strong and now they can provide an alternative for people

looking for a less chemically harsh dish liquid? Will this lead eventually to a complete change in the Palmolive brand? I really wonder. Also, do people think about the ads or do they just take it at face value?

What do you think?