

**JOINT LECTURE TO THE
BRITISH SOCIETY OF PERFUMERS**

PERFUMER AND CHEMIST INTERACTIONS

ACT ONE, Scene 1

HOW NOT TO BRIEF A PERFUME

The scene is set with Tim and Tony sitting apart, each with their own telephone. Tony picks up his phone and dials a number. The phone on Tim's desk rings and Tim picks it up. The day is Monday

SIGN SAYING MONDAY IS ON THE DESK

Tony Welcome to this session on the interaction between a chemist and the perfumer. This little play is in two Acts, the first will cover the wrong way to brief a perfume, the second will concentrate on the right way to handle a perfume brief. Tim Fawcett will play Joe the cleaner in scene 1 and the perfume account manager in the other scenes to Act One. I will play the parts of an idiot marketer throughout this Act.

In both parts you will notice the consequences of the dialogue between the two parties on the performance of the product and the perfume.

Joe puts on a cleaner's hat, Tony puts on a marketing hat!

Tony Hello, this is Tony Dweck, the Marketing Manager of Pedro Negro Cosmetics, I have had this brilliant idea for a perfume and I have chosen you to develop it for me. Good to see someone else also works late in the office.

Joe Uh, Hello! Joe speaking and I'm the cleaner.

Tony Excellent. Now I want this knocked up by the end of the week. I thought we could have a nice flowery perfume, you know like the ones they have in Madeira. I don't want a lot of fancy stuff, so keep it nice and cheap, I quite like the smell of that Victoria thingmebobs range which I saw in America, or was it in France? Never mind, you guys will know what I mean won't you.

Joe Mr. Deweck, I don't actually work in this department, I am the cleaner

Tony Excellent. Now just let me give you my telephone number in case anything goes wrong and the address to send it to. So its Tony Dweck that's D-W-E-C-K and my direct telephone number is 01225 716252, but I won't be there tomorrow, Wednesday or Friday. My secretary has my mobile number. Can we say that you send me the samples by Tuesday of next week, that gives you plenty of time to pull something together doesn't it?

Joe But Mr. Dweck, I am only in here cleaning

Tony Excellent, I knew that I could rely on the dedication of your company.
“cleanliness is next to Godliness”, that’s the spirit. Bye!!!

Tony puts down his phone, Joe looks at the mouthpiece of his in surprise.

Joe Mr. Dweck?, Mr. Dweck?

Joe puts down his phone and makes some notes.

ACT ONE, Scene 2

SIGN ON DESK IS CHANGED AND NOW READS WEDNESDAY

Tim puts on a marketing hat (trilby?), Tony wears his marketing hat (an Australian bush hat). Tim picks up his telephone and dials, Tony’s telephone rings and he picks it up.

Tim Hello, is that Mr. Dweck?

Tony Yes, it is.

Tim This is Tim Fawcett. Sorry, to disturb you, but one of our cleaners left a note on my desk on Monday night, and I tried to reach you yesterday, but you were not answering your mobile.

Tony Had to switch it off old man, bad form to have the phone ringing at Henley don’t you know? Throws them off their stroke, can’t have the wine waiter missing the glass. Its an expensive business when your supping the old Chateau Latour 79!

Tim I’ve tried to phone you on several occasions this morning as well.

Tony Afraid that I had a meeting at Claridges followed by a spot of lunch, and they get a bit scratchy if you leave the old mobile on! The Maitre d’ is still living in the war years you know, only got to mention Vera Lynne and he falls apart, have to buy him a large brandy to quiet his nerves, don’t you know?

Tim Perhaps it would be a good idea if I came down to see you, and we can discuss your requirements in greater detail.

Tony Bit busy for the next few weeks, got a few hospitalities to fit in, spot of holiday to use up, you know how it is.

Tim A meeting would be better, but under the circumstances I will get to the point. You left a brief for us to develop a fragrance for you, and I just wanted to run through a few details. Is this a Perfume or an Eau de Toilette, or a fragrance for a product?

Tony Excellent, you guys really know your stuff. Yes.

Tim Well which?

Tony Well I had an idea that we would have this bright photographic look on the packaging, with lots of exotic flowers, lots of gold borders and things, glitzy ribbons and tons and tons of chique sparkle. Touch of the old Christian Dior don't you know!

Tim That sounds lovely Mr. Dweck, but do you have any idea which products will be in this packaging?

Tony Excellent. Good point! Well I thought the usual sort of stuff, touch of the Harrods, Yves St. Laurent, bit of Calvin Klein, you know?

Tim So would I be right in thinking that you would want a Foam Bath, Shower Gel, Talc, Body Lotion, Soap and Antiperspirant in this range.

Tony Excellent. Good idea! Oh! ... and we ought to pop in a shampoo as well.

Tim So at this stage we will not be doing fine fragrance.

Tony Now Mr. Corset I want the very best

Tim Mr. Fawcett

Tony Yes, Mr Corset. I want the best possible fragrance, because we will probably want to develop this range internationally. Whatever happens we will be going into India and Japan.

Tim but not as an Eau de Toilette or Parfum at this stage.

Tony Good Lord, no. Too expensive to promote, old man.

Tim In this note it says that you wanted a floral fragrance, could you elaborate on that for me?

Tony Yes indeed! I want it to smell of those lovely flowers that I saw in Madeira, you know the flowers that look like a bird's head. Bird of Paradise or something, its sort of orange on a long stalk.

Tim But Mr. Dweck, that particular flower does not have any odour at all.

Tony Does that matter? Does that really matter? I was rather hoping to feature it in my graphic design.

Tim How about another exotic floral fragrance say Bougainvillea or Jasmine, or even a blend of Tropical floral notes with Rose, Rosewood, Hibiscus and so on.

Tony Excellent, I can see you are already on my wavelength Mr. Corset

Tim Fawcett, its Fawcett

Tony We don't want to force it old man, you know what they say, the best ideas come when you are free-wheeling, don't want to sprain the old cerebellum by forcing it. That's a fact of marketing these days. I like the idea of Jasmine, got tons of appeal, nice colour too, we could just use a red flower like that in the graphics

Tim Actually its white or sometimes yellow.

Tony Excellent, we can make it pink.

Tim We will need some bases for our development work

Tony Basis? Well its on the basis that we are all going to make lots and lots of profit Mr. Corsett.

Tim No, Mr. Dweck. We will need some blank bases, unperfumed product for our perfumers to work with, so that they can add the perfume to your products.

Tony Good idea!

Tim When can you send them to us?

Tony Excellent question! when the chaps in the white coats have got them ready I guess. I will ask my secretary to organise something.

Tim How much do you envisage this fragrance costing?

Tony Well it is going to be 100% natural, so I guess it is going to be pretty damned expensive. Let's say six pounds per kilo.

Tim I appreciate a man with a sense of humour Mr. Dweck, for Jasmine absolute in combination with other natural essential oils, I think a conservative figure would be ninety six pounds per kilo.

There is a lengthy pause

Tim Mr. Dweck, Hello! Mr. Dweck

Tony Sorry Mr. Corset, thought my ears had healed over. I thought for one minute you said ninety six pounds per kilo! Look, I chose you guys because you were supposed to be good, I didn't think you would try and rip a chap off.

Tim Natural oils are extremely expensive, it takes many thousands of kilos of flowers to make just one kilo of pure essential oil, workers have to go out into

the fields and plantations just as the sun is rising to carefully hand select every flower.

Tony Look here, I didn't phone you up get a long technical lecture on the complexities of making perfumes. I have already written my development brief and submitted it to my MD. I can tell you that he is going to be pretty pissed off when I tell him that some tribe of Indian pigmies cant get up in the morning to pick a few flowers to make our perfume unless they are paid five pounds a flower. What am I going to do?

Tim Well you have two options, the first is to panic, the second is to look at having a fragrance that contains nature identical components or even some natural components at low levels.

Tony Brilliant! And you can do that for six pounds a kilo.

Tim No! But we could probably come up with a very sophisticated perfume that meets your requirements for thirty pounds a kilo.

Tony Thirty pounds! Phew, Rolls Royce stuff, well your the expert, old man.

Tim Now what can you tell me about your products.

Tony Not a lot old chap, because I am just meeting my next appointment at the Savoy. Look, try speaking to our technical bods. As long as we have those fragrance submission by Tuesday next week we will make the production boys deadline. Never used to have these problems in the old days, its all critical paths and mumbo jumbo now. Can't even sack a bloke these days for being useless. Got to rush.....thanks for your help Mr. Corset. Byeeee!

Tim Fawcett, Fawcett my names Fawcett. Hello, hello, Mr. Dweck? And goodbye to you!

ACT ONE, Scene 3

TIME PASSES

The sign now says WEDNESDAY ONE WEEK LATER. The samples have arrived and Mr. Dweck is perplexed, since in front of him are eighteen perfume submissions. He picks up the phone and dials. The phone rings in Tim's office, and Tim answers it.

Tony Hello!, Hello! Ahh....Mr. Corset, I am glad I caught you. Tony Dweck here from Pedro Negro

Tim Hello Mr. Dweck, Tim **Fawcett** here, and incidentally why don't you call me Tim. What can I do for you, have you received the samples which I sent you?

Tony Yes, I have received your samples, but why have you sent me so many? I mean my technical chaps will throw a wobbly when they see this lot! I have (*counts the samples in front of him*) ten, thirteen, eighteen, yes eighteen samples of perfume oils. I only wanted one you know. Oh, and thanks for all the free samples of the products, my kids will love playing with those - just adore the dinky little bottles.

Tim Mr. Dweck you have one sample for each product and one sample for each country, I believe you mentioned India and Japan in addition to the UK market. Thus six products in the range and three countries, makes eighteen samples in all. The letter we sent with the samples explains our submissions. Those "free" samples represent the perfume in a typical base.

Tony Excellent. I have not had time to read the letter yet, but why has each product got its own fragrance oil?

Tim Unfortunately Mr. Dweck, we did not receive the samples of the unperfumed bases that we requested, so we had to use our own judgement to prepare your samples.

Tony Ah! Sorry about that, bit of a cock up on the organisation front, lost the instructions when I put in my expenses (wrote it on the back of a bar receipt). Never mind, one perfume is much like another. I'll choose one of these and send it down to the boffins in the lab.

Tim That probably won't be a good idea Mr. Dweck, we really do need to see your bases as soon as possible. Hello Mr. Dweck, (*Tim looks at the telephone with exasperation*).. Hello!, Hello?..... He's gone!

ACT ONE, Scene 4

The sign now says WEDNESDAY FIVE WEEKS LATER. Mr. Dweck has a series of six products in front of him and is not looking pleased. He picks up his phone and dials. The phone in Tim's office rings and Tim picks it up.

Tony Hello, Tim (*said in a warm and smarmy tone*). This fragrance job you are doing for me. I have never smelt anything so disgusting in all my life. I asked you for an exotic floral and you have turned me up a fragrance that smells like a cross between a tart's boudoir and a fruit salad. Could you explain this for me?

Tim No, I can't Mr. Dweck, and while you are there, could I just say that the bases have still not arrived.

Tony Tim, Tim, I employ two chemists at considerable cost to look after the all the technical gizzmo. You guys make the perfumes, we make the products, it is not difficult is it? Except your perfume is dreadful and is nothing like it was in the sample you sent me. Incidentally, if the smell wasn't bad enough, one or two of the products are getting a sort of brown tinge to them.

Tim (*Incredulous*) You only used one of the submissions that we sent you?

Tony Of course, do you think my chemists have nothing better to do than make up hundreds of samples of the same fragrance?

Tim Do you think we can see the samples of the products that you have prepared?

Tony Tim, old chum, you've really let me down. It is a bit late in the day to be sending samples of **your** perfume back to you in **our** products, don't you think? I was expecting to have these products in production next week.

Tim (*Even more incredulous*) Next week? Do Pedro Negro not do any stability testing?

Tony Not if I have anything to do with it, I told my technical chaps that those formulae were to be ready by next week or heads would roll. There is too much ruddy bureaucracy, that's the trouble with these new techno-types, all gobbledygook and no gumption. Its all PIPs, paperwork and production problems these days.

Tim I think we need to meet.

Tony Can't be done old man, got a lot on this week and a high power marketing conference in Paris the week after that, but I can send those bases to you now and I can also send you those samples with that ruddy awful fragrance you sent me.

Tim Can you send me the formulae as well, preferably with the trade names of the raw materials included?

Tony Consider it done, now the technical boffins have finished the formulating, there is plenty of time to supply you with bases and formulae. Thanks for your time, hope you can get it right this time and quickly. Byeee

Tim Goodbye Mr. Dweck

ACT ONE, Scene 5

The sign now says WEDNESDAY SIX WEEKS LATER. Tim is looking at a bundle of formulations that he has received from Pedro Negro. He picks up the phone and dials.

Tim Hello Mr. Dweck?

Tony Yes, speaking.

Tim It's Tim Fawcett

Tony Hello Tim, how's it going?

Tim I have just looked at the samples that you sent me, and they all contain essential oils of mandarine, lychee and grapefruit.

Tony Yes.... good idea of mine to put in some exotic fruits wasn't it? I have really been able to spice up the pack copy.

Tim Frankly, Mr. Dweck it was a bad idea from a perfumer's point of view. It has made our fragrance smell like a tart's boudoir with a dash of fruit salad. You did not tell us that you were going to put menthol into the antiperspirant, you did not tell us that you were going to use Spanish talc, nor did you tell us that you were going to formulate with a low cost vegetable soap base nor did you mention that you were going to use a lecithin emulsifier in the body lotion either.

When we spoke to your chemist he was using Questice in the antiperspirant, Italian talc in the dusting powder, Levers Special Millings in the soap base, and non-ionic emulsifiers. About the only thing that has not changed was the use of Aluminium chlorhydrate in the antiperspirant.

Tony Tim, Tim! I do the marketing, don't bog me down with all this techno-speak. It all comes down to cost old man. When we put in the citrus oils the formulation costs went through the ruddy roof, so I told them to cut back with a few changes.

Tim But you have also included a whole raft of strange natural extracts and other odorous components, and there does not appear to be a conventional preservative system.

Tony Well spotted! That is our real marketing plus. “Contains no preservative”

Tim But it stinks!

Tony Steady on old man, I thought it was rather a good idea.

Tim No, I mean it smells awful.

Tony Well you’re the perfumer, can’t you sort it out.

Tim No I don’t think we can, not without going back to the beginning and starting again. We will have to start from the bases that you have sent us and try to formulate around the citrus odours and your natural preservative. In fact why not take out the citrus oils and let us include them as part of the fragrance blend.

Tony You mean we will have to make up the unperfumed bases from scratch and begin all over again?

Tim Excellent. I think you’ve had a brilliant idea Mr. Dweck, when can we expect the bases? Perhaps, before that, a visit and meeting with your development chemist might be a good idea?

Tony Burt what about my launch date? What am I going to tell my MD? It seems to me Tim, that we should have had our meeting right at the beginning of our development not when it is too late.

Tim I agree Mr. Dweck. We have all wasted a considerable amount of valuable time, so why don’t we put a date in the diary, how about next Monday.

Tony I will make sure my chemist is available to see you. Byeee for now.

Tim Goodbye Mr. Dweck, see your chemist on Monday.

Turns to the delegates and continues

Tim This company has failed to communicate, I should have made absolutely certain that his technical and marketing teams were seen by one of our representatives. In view of the technical complexity of this project, it would have made good sense to have had one of our perfumers visit this client. More to the point we should have tracked this project with a follow up call to make sure that we were kept abreast of any changes that might have occurred within the development cycle.

ACT TWO

THE RIGHT WAY TO BRIEF A PERFUME

The scene is set with Tim and Tony sitting together.

SIGN SAYING MONDAY IS ON THE DESK

Tony In the second Act we will concentrate on the right way to handle a perfume brief.

Tim I will play Tim Fawcett the perfume account manager and Tom Tap the American perfumer.

Tony and I will play Tony Dweck the marketeer and Herbert von Vek the Bavarian chemist. You will notice that this lecture is a budget production and in order to see who is speaking we will swap our hats and costume to make things more obvious.

ACT TWO, Scene 1

Tim Hello Tony, nice to meet you, and thank you for your invitation to have this meeting.

Tony Nice to meet you Tim (*shakes hands*). *Tim changes trilby for white hat and puts on white coat.*

Tim This is Tom Tap our perfumer. (*Changes trilby for white hat, puts on white coat*)

Tom Hello! (*takes off white coat and white hat, puts on trilby*)

Tony Nice to meet you Tom (*shakes hands*). This is our chemist Herbert von Vek (*Tony takes off bush hat and puts on white mob cap and white coat*)

Herb Nice to meet you Tom (*Tim takes off white hat and white coat, puts on trilby*). Nice to meet you Tim.

Tim Very nice to meet you Herbert (*Herbert removes white coat and white cap to become Tony again*)

Tony I think it would be a good idea if Tim and I left Herbert and Tom to talk technical. We will slip off to the wine bar for a spot of lunch. (*Tim and Tony replace their white coats and head gear*).

Herb (*Not forgetting the Bavarian accent*). Thanks for coming Tom, we have a very complex product range, which I think is going to challenge you as much as it

is going to challenge us. We want to launch six products in about nine months time, I know this is much longer than Tony Dweck would like, but we have to complete a full three months of stability tests and because we want to launch this range in India and Japan, where temperatures can be higher than in the UK, I want to extend the stability and compatibility tests in to six months to be absolutely confident.

Tom (*Remembering to speak in an American accent*). So what products are you going to have in this range?

Herb Initially, we would propose to have a Foam Bath, a Shower Gel, a Talc, a Body Lotion, a Soap and an Antiperspirant. The marketing team want a citrus, predominantly floral note for their perfume. Ideally they would like to have a “universal” perfume, but that is going to be quite tricky, unless we make some compromises. It would be nice to have a top note that was quite fresh and perhaps the citrus notes would be ideal, marketing quite liked the idea of grapefruit, lemon, lime and mandarin. I suggested to them that the middle notes could be tuberose, with a base note that was predominantly jasmine and musk like.

They found a couple of products that they liked in Japan, and one that they particularly liked from India, which both have quite a strong Jasmine note, but I do not know how these would go down in the UK.

Tom We can ask our agents in India and Japan to look at the trends for you, and we could certainly try out the preferred selection on our home panel.

Herb That would be very helpful, thank you.

Tom What surfactants are you going to use in the foam bath and shower gels?

Herb Nothing extraordinary, they will all be based on sodium lauryl ether sulphates and will contain cocoamidobetaines and some coconut diethanolamide. However, we have a novel preservative system based on grapefruit seed extract and passion flower, which we will be using across all of these products. I have a sample for you to smell. (*Hands over small phial of liquid*)

Tom Ugh! It has quite a strong citrus note and at the same time quite an aldehydic note, which might be quite difficult to mask.

Herb Actually Tom, I think you will be pleasantly surprised at the low level of contribution of the odour to the base. (*Hands over sample of blank base*). This is the foam bath base, (*hands over another sample*) and here it is in the shower gel base.

Tom You’re right, we can work with these notes.

Herb The real problem comes with the Body Lotion, we wanted to formulate with a natural emulsifier and about the only viable proposition was lecithin. Now

initially we could only find egg based lecithin, which had a very strong sulphurous smell (*hands over a sample*).

Tom Oh no! That is dreadful. We would have dreadful problems covering that smell!

Herb But then..... we found this soya based lecithin, which is far less offensive (*hands over another sample*)

Tom I can live with this, we can certainly work around this.

Herb The talc was going to be sourced from Spain, but frankly it has a most unusual smell, so I have gone back to using Italian.

Tom There should be no problem with that (*Herbert passes him a sample*). No that will be fine.

Herb The soap is vegetable based, I am afraid that it is nowhere as clean as Levers Special Millings, but it is the best I can source. (*Hands over sample*)

Tom It is not perfect, but I think we can probably get around the fatty odour.

Herb Finally, here is the antiperspirant roll-on, where I have used Aluminium chlorhydrate as the main active.

Tom We are well aware of the problems that can occur with aluminium chlorhydrate, so we will work exclusively with your base on this.

Herb No problem, I have two kilos of each base made ready for you in the laboratory.

Tom You are too good to be true.

Herb I know, we Bavarians are nothing short of perfect when it comes to briefing perfumes! And look, here I have made a written description of the perfume and the levels we would expect to use in our products. I have also given you a guideline cost to work to of thirty pounds per kilo. (*Hands over sheet of paper*)

Tom This is nothing short of professional, when would you like submissions?

Herb If you look on the other side of the sheet, you will see that we would like to see first submissions in four weeks time. One submission should follow our brief as exactly as possible, a second should be a submission based on our brief, but not restrained by our price guideline. In addition, we would ask you to have a free hand in the third submission, to follow whatever direction you would feel satisfies our products' criteria. All submissions should conform to IFRA and RIFM guidelines.

Tom Would it be possible to see the formulations and trade names of the materials that you have been using?

Herb The piece of paper that you have been using as a mat for your coffee cup has all the formulation details that you requested. Now, as our marketing colleagues have disappeared for an unhealthy steak and mind uiling steak at the wine bar, may I offer you some of the lovely Bavarian garlic and liverwort sausage black rye bread sandwiches prepared by my lovely wife Olga, which we can wash down with some delicious cordial brewed by the monks of Augsburg using the finest herbs from the Bavarian Alps.

Tom That is a very kind offer Herbert, but frankly I would rather suck on my catalytic converter and quaff it down with a spot of Red-X. *(Tom turns and speaks directly to the audience)*

As you can see, our Bavarian friend has thought through all of the problems in advance. He has come to the meeting armed with everything for the perfumer to be able to do a good job. The brief has been clear and concise, whilst allowing the opportunity for free expression. He has supplied the bases and cost guidelines that he would like to see, and he has given reasonable time for us to work on his development. He would like to have one universal perfume oil, but is realistic enough to appreciate that this might not be possible, and more to the point he is willing to look at compromises.

Herbert's lunch box may not be the most thrilling of prospects, but he is certainly an understanding and useful interface, who will undoubtedly be easier to deal with than his marketing colleague.

Herbert, I have changed my mind, the thought of Olga's delicious fare is making my mouth water, I would be delighted to sample her cuisine.