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 Regimental 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 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, ..."
If you’re contemplating running a promotional game, why not rely on Shell’s choice of a games company.
As they say, you can be sure of Shell!
Call John Chambers or John Donovan on 04024 71836 or 01-590 5555 and find out how Don can help you win at Promotional Games.

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