



Imperial Leather has come a long way since it was founded in the 1930s. Today, whilst we're still all familiar with the original Imperial Leather bar of soap and its little metallicised label, the brand has grown to the extent that, at any given minute, thousands of people all over the world use a product from Imperial Leather's expansive range of washing and bathing products.



### Market

Imperial Leather is a key player in the UK's personal washing and bathing market. In 2006, this market was worth an estimated £623 million. It is forecast that the total soap, shower and bathing category will have grown a further six per cent in real terms



over the next five years (Source: Mintel November 2006).

With over one in five UK homes now having two or more bathrooms (Source: GB TGI, BMRB Summer 2002 & 2004 & Quarter 3 2006/Mintel) and with UK consumers living busier lives (for example, making more visits to the gym) there has been an increase in shower usage occasions. Coupled with the fact that consumers are demanding more from their shower and bathing experiences – expecting to be pampered and now even using the shower as a chance to unwind – Imperial Leather is well positioned to continue to grow with its prolific portfolio of affordably luxurious, feel good, rich lathering products.

### Achievements

Over the last year, one in three people have purchased at least one Imperial Leather product (Source: TNS) – the equivalent of 16.4 million people.

In 1998, Imperial Leather launched the innovative 'Foamburst' shower product range. It was the first shower gel in a can that dispenses as a gel and transforms into a mass of luxuriously rich, creamy lather. This market-leading development has proved to be hugely popular with men, women and children alike.

Imperial Leather has grown to become the leading washing and bathing brand in many key markets across the globe and can be found in countries as diverse as China, Australia, Nigeria, Greece and Indonesia.

### Product

Imperial Leather's product range includes shower gels, bathing products, Foamburst shower gels, bath foams, hand washes, deodorants and talcum powder, as well as its famous bars of soap.

Imperial Leather's range is aimed at the whole family to give a trusted feel good, luxurious washing and bathing experience at an affordable price.

### 1768

Russian nobleman, Count Orlof, challenges perfumers, Bayleys of Bond Street, to create a perfume which embodies the distinctive aroma of the Russian court.

### 1938

Imperial Leather is brought to the UK by Cussons, introducing the British public to the brand's 'Eau de Cologne Imperiale Russe' fragrance.

### 1940s

Manufacturing operations expand rapidly. Marjorie Cussons, the pioneering daughter of the company's founder, is responsible for energizing public interest in the brand.

Marjorie introduces gift sets at key purchasing periods and later creates several brand extensions such as talcum powder and bath foam.

### 1942

Imperial Leather advertising suggests that it is the best soap to use during rationing due to its long lasting properties.

### 1950s/60s

Expansion of production continues, with the addition of manufacturing sites in Manchester and Nottingham.



### Recent Developments

In 2005 Imperial Leather was successfully relaunched, making its range more contemporary, feminine and appealing with simplified on-pack communication, premium design enhancements and the introduction of ergonomic curves and improved dispensing mechanisms making it easier to hold and to use.

In 2006, Imperial Leather launched limited edition variants of its shower gel and bath foam; the popular fragrances of Japanese Spa and Indian Spice encouraged new users to the brand. Following this success, Imperial Leather launched further limited editions in 2007 with Thai Fusion and Tahitian Retreat bringing a tropical flavour to the range.

### Promotion

Imperial Leather was one of the first brands to recognise the potential and power of advertising.

By 1946, Cussons was spending £100,000 supporting the brand – an enormous sum in those days. Predominantly choosing to advertise in the popular women's magazines of the day, Imperial Leather's advertising campaigns used a series of specially commissioned paintings featuring orchids, tropical fish, miniature gardens and roses.

During the 1950s, cinema's popularity led Cussons to place commercials on the big screen, in advance of the featured presentation, to convey the brand's 'everyday luxury' credentials.

The brand was also one of the first committed to TV advertising. Imperial Leather's first TV commercial aired in 1959 and featured a mother and daughter using Imperial Leather, to create the



link between high quality soap and soft clean skin. It is this investment by Imperial Leather and other similar brands that led to the coining of the phrase 'Soaps' in relation to advertiser-funded TV drama.

The famous Imperial Leather 'Family' campaign was launched in the 1970s, and even today triggers fond memories of the brand amongst the British public. Whether travelling across the Russian Steppes in the Imperial Train, or flying high in their Imperial Leather Spaceship, the family always found time to enjoy a luxurious soak in their decadent mobile bathroom.

More recently, the 'Dancing Duck' commercial for Foamburst shower gel and a series of female fantasy based commercials for bath foams (featuring footballer Paolo Di Canio and, separately, a crew of



stripping firefighters) have resulted in the brand, once again, becoming renowned for humorous advertising.

Imperial Leather's most recent TV campaign shows a mum's temporary escape from the rigours of family life – through a hidden door in the shower wall – into a beautiful secret shower room to enjoy 'One of life's little luxuries' under the stars.

### Brand Values

Imperial Leather is a leading quality washing and bathing brand aimed at families. The brand understands that luxurious washing experiences are not just for women and aims to give the whole family a luxurious washing experience – every day and at an affordable price.

[www.imperialleather.co.uk](http://www.imperialleather.co.uk)



### Things you didn't know about Imperial Leather

Contrary to many people's belief, the metallicised label featuring the Cussons Imperial Leather logo on each soap bar should face downwards not upwards, to prevent the bar from becoming sodden and waterlogged in the soap dish.

The shape of the Imperial Leather bar has not changed since its inception. Its unique shape was developed to mirror that of saddle soap used by the Russian Imperial household to clean its riding tack.

### 1970s

Shower Gel is introduced to the product range.

### 1998

The innovative Foamburst shower gel range is launched, packaged in a rust-free can rather than a bottle.

### 2002

Imperial Leather is a main sponsor of the Manchester Commonwealth Games.

### 2000s

Imperial Leather collaborates with The Tussauds Group, with sponsorship of 'The Flume' at Alton Towers and 'Bubbleworks' at Chessington World of Adventures.