

May 5, 2014

5 Creative Packaging Ideas to Make an Impact

Small companies may lack the marketing dollars and visibility of larger brands; but they can still stand out on the shelf by thinking outside the box – literally.

While developing brands often see packaging as a cost they need to minimize, they may be overlooking its potential to help sell their product. Look at packaging not just as a way you contain the product you are producing but as a silent salesperson. Your packaging is on the shelf, communicating to people. What exactly is it saying? Here are five packaging tips to help you get the attention of consumers; and possibly, delight them.

Go for a handmade look. Customers are drawn to packaging that feels personalized – it’s almost as if they’re holding a handmade object. For example, Tea Forté wanted to personalize the packaging to stand out from the flat paper packets most tea bags use. The founder, Peter Hewitt, developed a pyramid-shaped package instead. “The tea bag was this wet soggy thing on the side of your saucer. I wanted to give it personality,” he says. A thin wire running through the string poking out from the pyramid has a small tealeaf at the end, and the brand name is understated, printed only on the bottom of the package. “It looks a lot closer to an art object than a commercial product.” Today, Tea Forté is sold in hotels, restaurants, and food and department stores in 35 countries.

Take a sustainable approach. Consumers want to feel good about their purchases. Using sustainable material, such as organic, fair-trade or recyclable, will send an environmentally positive message about your brand. We hear often about new, sustainable packaging substrates and resins being created and formulated.

Use a surprising shape or concept. We worked on a project for a men’s personal care line using containers in the shape of beer bottles. They were then placed in an open top tray looking like a six-pack creating immediate shelf impact. Shape has a strong influence on the consumer’s perception of the product. A distinctively shaped package or one made of non-traditional materials can signal to consumers that your product is different from the competition.

Add some functionality. Consumers like packaging that is functional because of its added value. We have a new paper line used for hamburgers in fast food restaurants. The wrap is not only the primary packaging but also doesn’t drip and holds the burger intact for eating. The French fry bag conveniently opens out into a boat for serving.

Let the packaging tell your product’s story. Some companies think of creative, playful ways to give consumers a clue to what’s inside the package. For example, when a fine chocolate company developed packaging for a wine-infused chocolate collection, it chose a wine bottle shaped box and placed it inside a wine tote bag. Although the chocolate pieces look the same as the other chocolates, they have distinctive packaging, with shelf impact.

Packaging is really everything to you and your brand.