



Brand Manufacturers: Grow With Your Customers!

By Jackie DeLise

Consumers have changed. According to Rob Walker, author of *Buying In*, we are fundamentally different from prior generations. Evidence of this can be seen as “consumptive consumerism” starts to evolve into a more “considered consumerism.”

We are not a nation of lemmings going off the cliff together as we follow traditional advertising ploys to consume more. We are still a consumer society of citizens, of course, but advertising has given way to a new media landscape for connecting with consumers. This has also trickled down directly into the ways in which brands impact consumer lives and lifecycles.

One size fits all?

The customer pie is only so big, as the same slice of this base is shopping a myriad of retail venues to meet their brand needs. Purchase and selection decisions revolve around convenience, value, and selection, driven by subliminal emotional bonding through design and communications.

From DIY big box stores to mass merchandisers, luxury outposts and specialty shops to brand-name national chains and even membership club stores, customers are not as loyal

as they used to be—nor do they have to be.

While demographics still are an important indicator of consumer lifestyles, habits, population movements, spending, age, social grades, and so on, there has been a cultural shift. It is now common to find whole segments of the population shopping at Costco and Whole Foods, both buying in bulk and opting for natural, organic specialty food items.

Just as there has been a cultural shift in the acceptance of private-label brands as quality-driven, marketed against the national brands and even packaged to mimic them, the preconceived notion of “inexpensive” is now a badge of honor.

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Grow through life stages

Brand manufacturers extend themselves into new product offerings to capture share of customer vs. share of market will lead. Products that resonate with consumer demographics as they mature, to meet changing needs, expectations, and taste preferences, will engender brand loyalty throughout various consumer life stages. Successful examples already exist.

In the food category, Dannon Yogurt achieves category leadership with a variety of consumer options, including:

Danimals, spoonable and drinkable yogurt aimed at kids



and their moms

- Dan-o-nino, packed with essential nutrients for kids
- XL, drinkable yogurt for the “tween” market
- All Natural, base brand with appeal to a myriad of tastes
- Fruit Blends, low-fat yogurt
- Fruition, drinkable fruit yogurt
- Activia, geared toward nutraceutical consumers
- DanActive, cultured drink for healthy body defenses,
- Danup, dairy beverage
- Light & Fit, for those counting calories, carbs, or fat
- la Crème premium, a rich, dessert-like yogurt

The idea of evolving with the customer can be applied to other categories as well. Cosmetics can be personalized for the younger demographic with containers that are natural, sheer, and recyclable for refill. This approach teaches younger consumers the merits of sustainable packaging, while cultivating relationships with them as they pursue

multi-faceted personal care regimes.

In pet foods, we see different products for different ages from puppy through to mature dog. Ingredients and formulations change along with dietary needs within a lifecycle/lifestage platform. Through pet imagery, the packaging communicates a variety of activities and poses to imply life stage.

Successful brands in the next 20 years will be the ones that can anticipate the needs and tastes of their consumers with product line options. Artful package design will be essential to convey the essential product messages to the targeted user effectively and efficiently. ■

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Multipack Redesign Could Create an 'Out-of-Box-Experience'

When brand owners launch new beverages, generating visual buzz is crucial for attracting consumers and encouraging them to switch loyalty. Even the most innovative and compelling advertising campaigns rely on consumers' recognition of the brand on shelf.

Packaging has always been the last iteration of the persuasive powers of the campaign, forming a tangible bridge between media efforts and the moment of purchasing decision. Packaging is frequently the only occasion where the consumer can actually "touch the brand."

Considering the magnitude of this role, it is often surprising how little effort is placed on structural packaging. But while visual impact and novelty are very important factors, the package should compete on more than just a graphic level if you expect a consumer to commit to a brand.

The traditional six-pack of beverage bottles has become a standard. Side panel graphics have to duke it out like cereal boxes, with multinational brands claiming little over their small-batch competitors aside from blocking power and recognition.

The breakthrough design shown here takes the functionality of the package further and considers the package's life after retail. When a six-pack is stored in the refrigerator, it must be removed every time a bottle is removed.



The new design allows the consumer to place the pack on the shelf such that the bottles can be accessed easily by folding down the flap. The package creates a greater brand impression at retail by using the full height, and allows for the inclusion of features such as a brew seal to elevate authenticity and communicate freshness.

Shelf impact is now markedly improved in the store as well as in the home, extending the relationship beyond the first impression and allowing greater opportunity for brand managers to say "Cheers!"

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Article header for News Item

With approximately half of U.S. consumers considering at least one sustainability factor in selecting packaged goods items or stores to shop (Source: Information Resources, Inc.), sustainability has gone from just being a buzzword in the packaging industry to an essential part of today's corporate strategy. Professionals needing guidance on how to apply sustainable packaging initiatives to their businesses need look no further than Pack Expo International 2008, November 9 to 13 at Chicago's McCormick Place.

Show attendees will find an array of sustainability-oriented innovations among the show's more than 2,000 exhibitors. Featured technologies range from bioplastics, polylactic acid (PLA) films, and other sustainable packaging materials to energy-efficient machinery and lean production soluy exhibitors highlighting sustainable solutions, PMMI is introducing the Pack Expo Green feature. Special icons will be used to flag listings on www.packexpo.com, in the compact Pocket Guide Directory available on site at Pack Expo and in participating exhibitors' booths. For attendees using My Pack Expo™ to plan their trip, a new search function will reveal exhibiting companies that offer sustainable and/or environmentally friendly technologies. Special booth signage will make it simple to find the exhibitors on site.

The sustainability theme will also carry over to the Conference at Pack Expo, running from November 10 to 12, 2008. A sustainability track will be featured as part of each day's program schedule, exposing attendees to various dimensions of sustainability including conservation, lightweighting, plant operations and insight from the brand owner perspective.

Each of the conference's keynote sessions will also address sustainability, beginning with a special address by Amy Zettlemoyer-Lazar, packaging director of Sam's Club and Co-manager of the Wal-Mart Sustainability Value Network. Zettlemoyer-Lazar will speak on Sunday, November 9, at 1:00 p.m. on "Keeping Score: How Wal-Mart and its Suppliers Continue to Advance Packaging Change, Innovation, and Sustainability." Zettlemoyer-Lazar will provide an update on the progress of the Wal-Mart sustainability scorecard and the next steps in its evolution. Additionally, Wal-Mart will staff a Wal-Mart Sustainability Scorecard Information Center during the run of the show.

Monday's keynote is "More Safety vs. Less Material? Where does Packaging Go?" by Betsy Cohen, v.p. of Sustainability at Nestlé. Tuesday's keynote is entitled "Packaging Sustainability; From Boardroom to Break Room" by Trevor