

# Thinking small for big results

In Sydney's inner-city suburb of Newtown, Boxer & Co is looking at packaging design from two different perspectives. **Gwen Blake** explains how her company balances working at both ends of the business scale.



**IN AN EVER-CHANGING** consumer world, where 'specialist', 'innovation' and 'artisan' have become the buzz-words on every marketing manager's lips, big companies are seeing real threat from the nimble-minded, headstrong, fast-acting independents who are suddenly able to get their innovative ideas to market quickly and effectively and take-on the big guys with gusto.

At the other end of the scale, these small and nimble companies also have a lot to learn from the big players as well.

Like most packaging design agencies, we at Boxer & Co use the work we do on big brands to give the offerings from smaller companies credibility – the rationale being if they've worked for these huge companies, the strategies will surely work for the small companies too.

But what we feel we do differently is we make it a two-way street – we also present the projects, methodology and actions of determined, fast-moving entrepreneurial clients to big companies in a way that those big companies can also glean some learnings of their own.

Quite simply, we believe the companies sitting at both ends of the business size spectrum are able to learn from each other's approaches.

As Daniel Priestley, author of *The Entrepreneur Revolution*, puts it: "Small business can look big thanks to the technology of the last 10 years. Tiny home-based businesses often have well developed brands and can service customers all over the world. Entrepreneurs are in a revolutionary time where they have all the benefits of being small and nimble while being able to deliver real punch with their business."

We've definitely seen this to be true within the packaging design industry.

More and more big companies are seeing their younger counterparts as a real threat and are realising they have to work quicker, smarter, more innovatively and more instinctively if they're going to hold their market share.

One way we can make this work is to use a trends-based approach, as part of a proprietary strategic design methodology.

It's important to stay in touch with global and local trends from a wider perspective than just packaging – to

understand what else is going on in the target consumer's world and consider the impact that could have on their reception of our concepts right from the outset.

Artisan branding, for example, is obviously a huge trend at the moment and is being executed left, right and centre across lots of categories.

Artisan is a keen approach and desire for the aesthetic in all areas of life. It is about food that has amazing detail and craftsmanship, amazing tastes and flavours, but also looks beautiful and tastes amazing. It's about all these different aesthetics coming together to present something really beautiful.

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There are also some new trends emerging, like "clean slate" brands, where bigger companies can learn from smaller, more nimble brands.

Clean slate brands are identified as a whole new breed of faster, eco-friendlier, more transparent and responsive brands.

The advantage of such an approach is that such unknown and unproven brands are able to appeal to consumers without the baggage of heritage and history.

This approach is enabling us to make big businesses look specialist and artisan and small businesses look big and trustworthy.

