

# PACKAGING A punch



However amazing your new product is, if it isn't branded and packaged professionally, retailers will not want to stock it and consumers will not want to pick it off the shelf and purchase it. GWEN BLAKE has created a simple guide for entrepreneurs on packaging design that stands out and gets purchased.

Packaging needs to be the hero of your brand's design. Everything else should evolve from here. Your brand needs a set of graphics and devices that make it unique. The advantage you have as an entrepreneur with a new product is that you are not constrained by history – you have a chance to genuinely break free.

### Creative Message

You need to pick one thing that your pack is trying to say and say it well, using graphics, fonts, photography and colours. For example, that one message could be 'Health' or 'Authenticity' or 'Quick and Easy'. When you brief your designer, make sure you are clear on what this one message is so everything they suggest conveys it.

### Shelf Shout

Consumers browse supermarkets at break-neck speed. Each pack is viewed in passing for split seconds. Your pack needs to have something about it – it's colour, some powerful text or a stand-out image that stops consumers in their tracks.

### Information Hierarchy

Be clear on the order you want messaging on your pack to be viewed by the consumer, for example, brand name first, product name second, photography third, additional product claims or benefits forth.

It's also important to ensure that only essential information that relates to the sale is included on the front of the packaging. Go crazy with

information overload and no elements will 'win' the attention of the consumer. Your pack will end up looking cheap, messy and poorly designed.

### Colour

Whilst words can portray more rational qualities like 'no artificial colours' or 'high in fibre', they are less powerful than, say, an olive-green coloured pack which says 'I'm natural, well-balanced and trustworthy'.

Make sure your designer thinks carefully about the colour of your pack and be aware of no-no's, such as blue being unappetising and colours that have become to mean something in a category, such as red meaning dark chocolate and blue, milk chocolate. Consumers shop by colour, whether they know it or not.

### Photography

Good quality photography guides perception of your product in that split second decision-making moment. It can make your mouth water or highlight key product features. Bad photography, on the other hand, can really turn people off – and it all happens in the blink of an eye.

This is one area where you cannot cut corners. Experts who do it day in and day out will make your product shine in all its full glory. Even the most passionate amateur cannot achieve the level of beauty that an accomplished professional will.

### Compliance

There are things like barcodes, ingredients and nutrition panels if it's a food product, contact

details, and various other essentials that need to be included correctly on your packaging. These things won't necessarily motivate people to buy your product but you will not be ranged in stores or considered a professional brand if you do not have them. In some cases, the absence of these items is actually illegal. Make sure you are aware of all the compliance issues for your product type and the stores you are targeting.

### Production

Decide who is producing your pack and start talking to them as early as possible in the process, and put them in touch with your designer. You need to ensure that the design being created can actually be replicated on press, as well as knowing that you are using the right materials, colours, finishes and shapes for your product. There can be a lot of toing and froing on this, so get conversations going early to avoid expensive disasters down the line!

Creating great packaging is a team effort; it takes an entrepreneur, a great product and a design, print and manufacturing team you can rely on.

Look for a good design agency that can help you manage the design, print and manufacture part of the equation with a relative degree of success and a lessening of the stress! ■

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"I enjoyed it. The suggestions worked, the directions were easy to follow, and I have grown an interested following that interact"