

Packaging needs bold, agile, visionary thinking

According to packaging design agency Stratcom Branding, the packaging for the future requires bold, agile, visionary thinking beyond the aisle. It requires innovative designing for the experience and not just shelf impact and it requires smart enabling, to give proof of purchase, drive ROI and not loyalty awareness statistics.



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When a brand offers a full family of products, it is the duty of packaging to promote the individuality and consumer insight of each product within succinct brand architecture.

Packaging mishaps

An example of packaging mishaps is Lion Lager, where drastic measures had to be embarked upon to save a 110-year-old brand. The steps included a repackaging and labelling of the brand. Lion Lager was once a top selling beer in South Africa but hard times have fallen upon the brand with the current market share estimated at around 5% while rival Castle Lager enjoys 65% of the South African market.

As consumer packaged goods and retail companies shift greater focus towards rethinking packaging design, they need answers to meet these growing demands for deeper consumer connections, world appeal and local pride. Brand owners must now focus on packaging designs not only with increased functionality and greater efficiency but also with stronger shelf performance, at niche consumer segments.

In order to do this and avoid any future mishaps brand owners will need to explore innovative avenues for devising new packaging design strategies. However, before they can even think about incorporating new design features, brand owners must have their design processes down to a science, or they will quickly find themselves within the statistical majority of brand decline because of packaging failures.

Early mover collaboration

Brand owners are frequently realising that when it comes to the package design world, creating the box starts with thinking beyond its walls. However, collaboration is a team effort. In addition, the added complexities of consumer demands and industry standards, brand owners wanting to thrive in a competitive marketplace need to be able to see the big picture. They need a partner that not only understands the cycle for inventive packaging but also can lead them through the

process.

For brand owners, gaining early-mover advantage will mean finding ways to leverage the various forms of augmented reality (AR) to achieve goals such as:

- Enable the packaging to become a smart medium
- Provide more useful, more 'hands-on' experiences
- Enable real-time access to rich data.

Brands making the most of AR will find new ways to visualise problems and their solutions through utilising the package real estate, through digital mediums with the benefit of reduced media spend of the traditional channel. They will find smart ways to connect AR applications with colliding technology domains.

AR off packaging opens the doors to so many exciting possibilities and, over time, may have an influence on the way branded products position themselves.

M-commerce and AR

In Africa, the leap to m-commerce as a business enabler opens the door for AR to aid in the model brand attributes of one pack at a time in high volumes for a brand. This empowers local and relevant content of common pack design and image recognition.

Local brands looking to introduce AR should remember that it is less to do with the technology and everything to do with the delivery. In our experience, you either have people approaching AR campaigns from a platform perspective, where they are only interested in the coolness of the technology and lose sight of the strategy. Alternatively, are those who approach from consumer insight and are successful with the engagement and upturn on sales.

It is clear that while AR may still be considered a new addition to the customer journey, the well-defined user cases, as well as the built-in support from packaging specialists and HR agencies, means there is no reason why local companies should not be embracing it.

The key to successful AR initiatives is to ensure they are appropriate, effective, amplify traditional delivery channels and build deeper connections with the consumer.