

# The Total Package

**P**ackaging is the single most productive place—for the strategic marketer to capture the shopper’s heart, mind and pocketbook. Indeed, it is the only brand investment that is guaranteed to get 100 percent execution at retail.

Your product’s package is always right there at the last two feet of the shopper’s journey. It is the visual that communicates the product concept and consumer benefits. And, maybe most important, it is the one brand driver over which you have complete control. Unfortunately, packaging is too often overlooked and underestimated as a defining retail experience.

Way back when I started working at Heinz in the 1970s, packaging wasn’t given much attention unless the product was new. For instance, with ketchup, you couldn’t change the six-sided bottle or the keystone label. No wonder we didn’t spend much time on it.

This changed when I became a new products brand manager, working on introducing Heinz spaghetti sauce. At the time, most spaghetti sauce came in cans. But we decided that spaghetti sauce in a jar would best communicate our product concept.

The concept was that this new spaghetti sauce would taste as good as homemade. Our mission was to transition homemade-style sauce into a commercial

product and make it convenient. Using the Heinz Brand Management manual, we set about designing the package based on three considerations: Form, function and fashion.

The form was a glass jar, because that made it different. The function was to maintain the quality flavor with glass and eliminate the tinny taste common to canned spaghetti sauces at the time. The fashion was to show grandma making “homemade” sauce on the label.

#### START WITH THE SHOPPER

What Heinz did was fine back then, but today, with Shopper Marketing, the key is to turn that process around—throw it in reverse. You start with the shopper insights to nail down the idea that will communicate the brand essence to the shopper in the retail environment. Then you work your way forward, from the shopper insight to the idea, and finally to the brand.

In other words, it is no longer about the brand first and foremost. It is about putting the shopper first. Too many brands are still thinking the way we did more than 30 years ago at Heinz. That’s a mistake.

Triaminic is one outstanding exception because the brand really does take the shopper’s point of

Shopper Packaging			
	Engage	Delight	Convert
<b>Objective</b>	Stop the shopper	Interact with the shopper	Give the shopper a reason to buy now
<b>Question</b>	What is the brand?	What does the brand communicate?	Why should I buy it?
<b>Dimensions</b>	The brand’s “show” factor	The “how” and “what” that the brand communicates	The delivery of the end benefit
<b>Result</b>	“Wow”	“I want it”	“I’m going to buy it”

# Engage, delight and convert shoppers through insightful product packages.

view. With Shopper Marketing astuteness, Triaminic simplified its packaging so that it clearly delivers the relevant benefit to the shopper.

You can take a quick look at a broad array of their products and quickly know which one is right for you. That's certainly a big plus, especially when you're not feeling well.

In the September 2007 issue of *The Hub*, I wrote about a "Shoppability" study sponsored by TracyLocke and conducted by Professors Ray Burke and Neil Morgan of Indiana University ("Shopping Simplified," page 18). This study outlined the key factors that influence shopper satisfaction and loyalty at retail.

At TracyLocke, we overlay these "shoppability" factors with retail knowledge and determine how they might best apply to a shopper-based design for packaging:

*Relevance.* Develop the right package for the right store with a shopper-based, identifiable visual and verbal communication.

*Transparency.* Give shoppers a simple, clear "solution-for-me" look at what the product offers.

*Convenience.* Demonstrate an easy-to-buy-and-use brand experience by offering an approachable, engaging form.

*Affordance.* Clearly communicate the benefits that demonstrate an understanding of the shopper's needs.

*Enjoyment.* Create a visual brand experience by delivering information or an incentive for the shopper to buy.

## THE DECISION FUNNEL

These five "shoppability" factors can be applied to any packaging strategy within the context of what I like to call the shopper's "decision funnel." But, it's critically important to understand how the shopper's decision funnel differs from the consumer's.

When you research consumers, they typically tell you that the brand identity, its attributes and the price are most important, in that order. But when you talk to shoppers, their priorities change. Shoppers generally tell you that the brand's attributes are most important, followed by the price and then the brand's identity.

To illustrate, let's look at the consumer decision funnel for fresh beef. The consumer's need is to provide the family with a nutritious dinner they will

love. What the consumer needs to know is how this category can help the family have an enjoyable meal. The solution from the consumer's perspective is the brand that demonstrates an understanding of that need by providing a sense of family connectedness and good times.

At retail, the translation of that need might be "fresh, all-natural beef." With the shopper looking for a product that's free of hormones, the package, above all else, needs to make that clear.

## FROM THE SHOPPER'S EYES

Arriving at the relevant insights can be accomplished through a combination of shopper research, in-store shop-a-longs, ethnographic research and intercept interviews. Each of these techniques can reveal a packaging story that will drive purchases, if—and it's a big if—you also apply a few general principles.

First, be ruthless with the number and hierarchy of messages. Use no more than two or three messages. If you can get the benefits and brand promise down to fewer than six words, so much the better.

Second, understand the package's impediments to purchase. For example, Domino's sugar did a great job with its plastic tub packaging, which made the product easier to handle and store.

Third, make sure that your packaging is customized to match the retailer's objectives. For example, if a retailer's shoppers are big-hair people who like to wash their locks twice a day, maybe double-packs of shampoo with a handle on the package is the right customization.

The big idea is not so much to think outside the box at retail, but to push the walls inside the box—that is, your brand's packaging—and see what the shopper sees. ■



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