

Package Testing – A Case Study



It's difficult to ignore all the press that is being given to the Tropicana packaging redesign. A huge campaign with the best intentions to evolve brand look and feel, ended up -- a complete miss. As professional marketers, we always applaud a company's effort to be innovative. Not all new approaches succeed; but utilizing the right approach to testing can certainly improve your chances.

On CNN this week, there was news of brand loyalists who emailed in complaints to Tropicana demanding the old packaging back. And Tropicana, listening to the loyal feedback, reissuing the older packaging version, and giving the loved version its rightful place on the shelf. What we haven't heard about are all the consumers Tropicana lost; the consumers that missed the new packaging in the shelf set, walked right by it, and moved on to buy a different brand, the consumers who weren't so loyal. . . the movers, the shakers, the OJ daters.

All these shoppers experienced what we call, the "findability and stopability hole". Whether brand loyal or impulse buying, they flew right by the new Tropicana packaging and landed in the lap of another brand. Tropicana's facelift, although well intentioned, created confusion. It became unrecognizable and generic in the shelf set. The new design did not visually communicate "premium" well enough to "hook" a shopper amongst all those category beauties.

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A well-designed package is a well-performing package - caused by the intersection of visual branding and visual functionality.

Rather than testing each design option as a stand-alone piece or out of context in a focus group, the best indication of how a package performs is in-store, on the shelf, with real shoppers. In the grocery aisle, stopability and clear product and benefit communication is imperative to capture a shopper's interest. Understanding brand and package communication elements as they play out against other products in the category can help differentiate your brand and set it apart in the set. This usually means a compromise between design needs and shopper needs, internal expectations and shopper expectations.

When we test packaging in-store, we test multiple designs. Usually there's a clear winner with shoppers. As well, there are often elements from other designs that add value to the preferred design. For instance, let's say shoppers like the look of one package, but like the clarity of how flavor variety communication on a different

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package option, making it easier to find. The optimal package would somehow incorporate both elements. Or let's say, a packaging element such as the Tropicana orange with the straw is the stopability and findability element, and synonymous with the brand. How can a new iteration of the same

visual element be incorporated in design so it is recognizable and resonates with consumers?

Offering designers a chance to see the performance of package options in context of the shelf set often helps them to understand the nuances of a well-performing design. Observing shoppers as they peruse the aisle and hearing the words of shoppers as they talk about their experiences and expectations can offer invaluable guidance for a redesign project. An in-store packaging study offers clear direction on how to achieve the best package and the in-store environment is a rich place for your entire team to understand strengths and weaknesses of each package option to optimize the final design.

Like Tropicana, new marketing initiatives can miss the mark with consumers. But utilizing the right approaches to testing, including in-store packaging studies, can improve your chance of great success. Contact Luke today to learn more about our process and how you can incorporate it into your package design process.

Need Quick Insights?

If there is a quick business question you need rapid feedback on, we are able to get immediate store approval in the Twin Cities area and accommodate even the most aggressive of deadlines for fielding and reporting.

Don't let time constraints get in the way of getting consumer feedback within a real store environment. Call us!

Explorations

The part of the newsletter where we share some questions we have that could be relevant to your business.

How is economic pressure affecting value shopping and how does this translate into impulse buying?

How can companies utilize the in-store environment to help restore consumer confidence?

What is the most effective in-store marketing strategy for capturing value hunters?

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