



Packaging Design 101

It can be difficult to fully articulate strategy and expectations for a brand. However, defining the requirements early on can save resources and achieve greater solutions. In this article, the author describes some challenges when building a packaging design brief and some suggested ways to overcome them.

» *"I'll know what I want when I see it."*

The words of my general manager from two decades ago stay with me because, coming from a senior business leader, it was so honest... and so scary.

Generally, I thought of this manager as a capable business strategist, but the task of starting the development of a consumer package for a new product was beyond his readiness level. At least, he was transparent about it.

The task of putting before him options that would best meet the consumers' wants and needs was virtually impossible at that point because we could not get his approval to our statement of requirements, and because his point of reference was himself, not our consumers. He inadvertently taught me a lot in that one candid statement.

Decades later, shades of my former general manager endure in the background of many of our branding and design projects. Our clients are our well-educated, intelligent partners; in our role as designers we naturally expect that they can describe their requirements in a succinct manner.

The reality is that, crunched for time and working on multiple projects simultaneously, our clients have a difficult time articulating strategy and expectations.

Anyone who has studied quality

Great Design Starts with
the Client, A Great
Client Starts with a
Great Design Brief

or been involved in a quality program, appreciates that defining requirements is the foundation to achieve expectations and deliver quality solutions. Accordingly, design agencies must be adept first and foremost at helping to define the client's requirements; then to set about delivering against them.

BUILDING THE DESIGN BRIEF

Most marketers are not frequently faced with developing packaging, so they should be able to turn to their branding and design agency for a template (AKA design brief) to prompt for the requisite information. There is nothing very sexy about a design brief and no agency has a "killer" format – the strength of the brief is in the breadth and depth of content and the quality of input that the brand owner puts into the brief.

Even after the design is approved and frozen, late-stage changes can drive up production art costs: dieline changes, printing processes changes

and unseen decision-influencers second guessing the approved design and imposing copy, color and layout changes.

With some clients we have estimated a 30 percent opportunity cost at the conclusion of a job, due to an inaccurate or incomplete brief at the outset, or changes in production specifications after the design was approved and frozen.

Taking time at the beginning to create a thorough brief, and ensuring production specifications are clearly defined, is a client's greatest opportunity to save time and costs on jobs, and more importantly, to achieve project objectives.

So what typically needs to be covered in a through brief? Major topic areas are listed here:

1. **Challenge:** What are the project objectives and, more specifically, what is expected of the branding and design agency?
2. **Brand Strategy:** Target market; unique selling proposition (USP); USP support; communications hierarchy; brand personality; category background.
3. **Consumer Research:** What exists or is planned to be conducted?
4. **Executorial Details:** Dielines; structural package samples; existing high resolution image resources; copy decks for all SKUs; colors; printing methods; SKU list.
5. **Digital Asset Management:** What file formats, of which components

will be required and where will they be stored?

6. **Timing/Budget:** Approved costs; key benchmark time points; due date; responsibility.

7. **Approvals:** The design brief should be approved by the most senior person(s) that will be approving the final package design and production artwork to ensure all levels approve project goals and requirements.

Feel free to download a working copy of our design brief from our website: <http://www.davisdesign.ca/capabilities/design>.

As a long established agency, we have the good fortune to have many great clients who plan their work, and empower us to “work their plan.” It truly enables us to deliver outstanding designs for their packages and help build their brands. <<

Aubrey Ferguson is in his third decade of consumer marketing. As president of Davis, a branding and design agency specializing in consumer package design, he oversees support for a broad range of market-leading, North American clients, including Kraft, Unilever, Cadbury, Church & Dwight, Wyeth, Post and Avery. He can be reached by e-mail at aferguson@davisdesign.ca.

CONTRIBUTORS

A closer look at the authors behind the feature articles of *OTC Perspectives*



Tom Hayes is managing partner and principal at the New England Consulting Group, where he works with numerous OTC, pharmaceutical and consumer-package-goods clients in marketing and business strategy. With more than 30 years experience, Hayes’ successful assignments span an immense array of categories (condoms to cooking companies) (Burt’s Bees to Bayer), and brands (Vaseline Intensive Care to Zyrtec).

He is the recent author of, “*Maverick Marketing ... Trailride into the World of New Marketing*.” He can be reached via e-mail at th@necg.net or by telephone at (203) 226-9200.



Dorothy Wetzel is a co-founding partner of Extrovertic [www.Extrovertic.com], a new type of agency that helps clients build brand advocates by strategically infusing social media and other non-traditional communication solutions into the marketing mix. She also is a former consumer marketing leader at Pfizer and led the start-up agency GlowWorm, a unit of Publicis’ Saatchi & Saatchi division. She can be reached by e-mail at Dorothy@Extrovertic.com.



Steven Pashkoff is the executive vice president and chief creative offer at EvoLogue, a unit of CommonHealth. He has created award-winning work for brands from AstraZeneca, Novartis, Organon, and others. He can be reached via e-mail at spashkoff@commonhealth.com or by telephone at (973) 352-4199.

Michael Kiser is a project manager at the New England Consulting Group and a member of the OTC and pharmaceutical practice teams. Prior to joining the New England Consulting Group, Kiser worked at Merck & Co. He is a graduate of the Wharton School at The University of Pennsylvania. He can be contacted by e-mail at mwk@necg.net.

ADVERTISING INDEX & RESOURCE CENTER

Company	Page	Website	Phone	Contact	Email
Drug Store News	51	drugstorenews.com	212-756-5157	Wayne Bennett	wbennett@lf.com
Euro Adrenaline	33	eurorscg.com	212-299-5000	Agnes Fischer	agnes.fischer@eurorscg.com
Euro RSCG Life LMP	29	eurorscg.com	212-251-7909	Meredith Levy Bernstein	meredith.levy@eurorscg.com
Euro RSCG Tonic	29	eurorscg.com	212-886-4207	Marty Susz	marty.susz@eurorscg.com
Everyday Health	25	everydayhealth.com	718-249-2880	Scott Wolf	swolf@waterfrontmeda.com
Grey	39	grey.com	212-546-1273	Lauren D’Arminio	ldarminio@grey.com
JWT	31	jwt.com			
Karlen, Williams, and Graybill	35	kwgadv.com	212-414-9000	Valerie Cipriate	valeriec@kwgadv.com
Persuadable Research	5	persuadables.com	913-385-1700	Charles Miller	cmiller@persuadables.com
SDI	2	sdihealth.com	610-834-0800	John Ross	jross@sdihealth.com
Target Cast	37	targetcast.com	212-500-6901	Steve Farella	sfarella@targetcast.com