



By Anthony Raissen

Your Label Is Prime Real Estate: Maximize Every Square Inch

The beauty of direct response advertising is that you have a medium that enables you to convey a number of key attributes for your product in order to educate the consumer on what you are selling. The more time or space you have, the more information you can share.

One of the hardest transitions to make with a product when going from DR to retail is condensing an entire commercial into a brand name, logo, product identity and a unique selling proposition (USP).

While Mark Twain is well known as a literary genius — and we all use many of his quotes today without even realizing that he authored them — the one that comes to mind has nothing to do with retail products, yet at the same time has *everything* to do with retail products: “Buy land; they’re not making it anymore.”

Never before has this been truer than in comparing “land” with the current “retail market” and the competition for retail shelf space. With massive store consolidations and SKU reduction, there is less and less available space for new products on the shelf, and the size of a product is a huge factor for retailers to consider when reviewing new products. Furthermore, if you think of a product label as real estate, the concept of space utilization and maximization is something that marketers and their creative teams understand very well.

Consider how much product information has to fit onto labels and

packaging, which must also do the job of conveying the brand identity. In addition to all of the creative messaging and imaging that need to be on the label, it is necessary to have a phone number, address, Web site URL, barcode, directions for use, country of origin, etc.

In order to accommodate all this information on a package, many manufacturers are choosing to add additional bulk and expense to their packaging to gain added exposure to consumers as they walk down the aisles while shopping. For instance, bottles are often placed inside display boxes to add additional space.

As any competent merchandiser will tell you, a product’s label is a great deal more than just a name and logo. Certainly, your target market will help define the creative aspects of your label — an acne-cover-up product aimed at teenagers will need a very different look than a wrinkle-remover aimed at aging baby-boomers.

An effective label represents to the end user exactly what the product is all about, and the target market should be able to say immediately, “This is my kind of

product,” when they see it on the shelf. Companies spend a great deal of time, money and effort developing consumer confidence and brand loyalty, and these need to be maximized at every touchpoint with consumers.

If you review the labels of products that have been successful, you will see that they have many elements in common. Most of these successful products have labels that were created by professional graphic designers, so if you can afford one, it is money well spent. But if you don’t have the budget, or prefer to do it yourself, then consider these elements when creating your product label. ■

There are no hard and fast rules that you can follow in order to create a well-designed product label. However, there are certain elements that will make a label design attractive and compelling.

- 1. Color:** To grab the attention of someone who is casually walking the aisles of the store, you need to use color well.
- 2. Graphics:** An eye-catching graphic will also help draw attention to your product.
- 3. Readability:** Color and graphics will draw attention, but unless your label is easily readable at a glance then you will lose customers (experts say you have only 2-3 seconds to attract the attention of a shopper browsing the aisles of a store).
- 4. Material:** Before you even begin the design process, you need to consider the label’s material — your product and design needs to “fit” the material depending on your target audience: smooth for a clean look, textured for a more classic look, recycled for an earthy look, etc.
- 5. Label finish:** Whether you choose a glossy or matte finish for your label is a judgment call depending on the kind of image you want to convey.
- 6. Shapes:** You can really draw attention to your label by using an unusual shape, which will require the initial investment of a new die, which can cost several hundred dollars depending on the size and complexity of your design.

Anthony Raissen is president of Ideology 360. He is also the founder of BreathAsure® and can be reached via email at Anthony@ideaology360.com or phone at (818) 633-3634