

Micro-Marketing Store Brands Right on the Package

Does a single package design for a branded product fit the current needs of a CPG brand manufacturer or a private brand retailer? Not necessarily.

In today's consumer-centric world of retailing, the one-fits-all packaging look for a branded product, while consistent, no longer applies. Variable printing options, which have become SOP in the commercial publishing world-in magazines, for example, unique address labels, blow-in or tip-in promotional inserts, renewal cards, etc.-are now moving into the CPG packaging process. This flexibility allows both manufacturers and retailers to step beyond a customized packaging treatment for their brand into the use of a more personalized approach, such as drawing on geographic, demographic, psychographic or store-centric

marketing content, which can be targeted right down to the local marketing level and right on the package itself. This is more than a package designer's dream, it now meets a brand marketing manager's expectations, by bringing marketing tactics right onto the store shelf without any special displays or signage support.

All this is possible with a new technology, called a micro-marketing system. One of the first companies to introduce this print-on-demand technology for food, beverage, and other product packaging is FASTechnology Group, Glen Carbon, IL. In 2011, this company introduced its Retail-Ready

Personalized Packaging (RRPP) systems. Joe Hatstrup, founder and president, explains: "RRPP is a print-on-demand technology, which opens up advanced labeling capabilities and intelligent pallet control systems for CPG manufacturers and retailers, allowing them to zero in on specific customer segments by customizing or personalizing products in ways that will spur purchase. Up until now," Hatstrup continues, "that's been almost impossible, because this process requires expensive production line changeovers; and companies just didn't have customer database information integrated into their packaging lines. We've engineered a print-on-demand system that fits as an overlay onto existing packaging lines.

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--Joe Hatstrup, president, FASTechnology Group

Additionally, we've incorporated as well a route-sequencing pallet control that greatly simplifies delivery of these RRPP products to the right stores, in the right order, and at a lower cost."

Specifically, the system includes a computerized labeling machine, on wheels for mobility, which allows for changes in individual packages or cartons, during the production run. It tracks every sku throughout the process, palletizing products by distributor, sales route, and at the store-level. The RRPP system enables just-in-time, digital secondary label printing on multiple products and for vari-

ous promotional campaigns, using common packaging stock. He notes: "This reduces print overages and labeling material waste. The user no longer needs to source or hold large inventories of pre-printed packages. The retailer especially benefits by promoting a chain store's community activities, thus strengthening customer loyalty and driving repeat purchases with local shoppers at a minimal cost.

"Just imagine," Hatstrup continues, "a soft drink company promoting a charity-focused campaign tied into a number of local or regional high school sports teams, while at the same time conducting a related campaign for an NCAA basketball tournament. RRPP

handles both full runs of all label versions at the same time and on the same packaging

line. Similarly, a small dairy operator, looking to attract chain store business, could use our system to deliver tailored 'green' messages to specific shopper segments, which are important to retailers in specific markets. Or a convenience store chain, building its store brand business, can micro-target its best customers, integrating a demographically-aimed database into its packaging operations."

RRPP can be adapted to personalized shopping, linked to 3g/4g mobile apps. Quick Response codes can be incorporated, too. It also can be multilingual and cross-cultural as well.

