

INTERVIEW with **TERRI GOLDSTEIN/USA**

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Terri Goldstein

What impact does packaging design generally have on the consumer?

A highly emotive one. Consumers always perceive and identify themselves by the brands they consume.

How do consumers make decisions? Is there an order which their senses respond?

Yes, color is always first, shapes are second, symbols are third and words are last. The overall goal is to create a visual vocabulary that may be seen, felt and understood within 5 seconds or less!

To what extent does color, shape or any other attribute of the packaging affect the consumer's decisions when buying a certain product? Does this differ in product groups?

Yes, colors have the instant ability to telegraph deep subconscious meanings and messages that are decoded by an individual. To do this, it is key to understand their early childhood associations and

life experiences, which is often uncovered in qualitative research. Also, shapes and symbols are decoded in the same way, from life experiences. Understanding the core enthusiasts' background, rituals, lifestyle and matching these up to trends and aspirations are key to developing these core identifiers.

Can you tell us where the trends are going in the packaging industry? What will the future of packaging look like?

As consumers continue to cross-shop in multiple retail environments and grow their online sensibilities, the future of packaging will continue to evolve to become more purposeful, streamlined and truly designed to fit into consumers' cocoons (their homes) in meaningful ways. This engagement in people's lives can manifest as a brand appearing as home décor, or through brands providing "privacy panels" for personal products that consumers wish to keep private, even from other family members. If you are not familiar with privacy panels, think of them as mini-wallpaper for your package to conceal the brand and contents.

What effect has the growing part of e-commerce on packaging design? Does it become more or less important?

It becomes increasingly more important. Brands in this environment are often reduced to one square inch. As a result the only comparison and contrast is the price. The Goldstein Group always recommends attaching a signature to your brand, so when it is online, consumers will select it because of brand loyalty and not just by quantity and price. A good example is Maker's Mark's red wax cover on the bottle, which is an undeniable brand signature.

How would you define your approach to design?

INFORMED. We always inform our design team and gain client consensus before we start a project with a retail SWOT, consumer insights, client insights, historical perspective, primary and secondary research, lifestyles and rituals of the core enthusiast, and trends and purchase behaviors of the category we are assigned to. All this is synthesized into a visual brand brief so we can start to develop key images that our clients agree with prior to starting the assignment. As we

know a picture is worth a 1,000 words and this diligence ensures that we are all on the same page before we begin. This also sets up the visual criteria in which to evaluate the work. This guards against the subjectivity that packaging is often prey to!

Your company The Goldstein Group offers the “shelf sight sequence”. What do you mean by this?

Our Shelf Sight Sequence™ truly understands how the mind scans on-shelf products in 5 seconds or less. We call these brand assets core identifiers that hold the ability to trigger the consumers purchasing impulse at first sight. This process is our guiding light when creating a memorable and ownable identity for a brand. This understanding particularly rings true when consumers describe a brand to others, either in their digital world or when sending someone to the store to “pick me up the blue box with the red triangle in the corner and the big chocolate chip cookie on it,” or “the purple and orange allergy medicine.” This is why we create memorable core identifiers, we understand the sequence in which they are seen, felt and understood. We also trademark these core identifiers as the brand assets they truly are.

What has been the latest packaging that impressed you personally while on shopping spree?

The Panasonic line of personal hand-held tools for young women! I love how the package is speaking to women in a representational, illustrative manner instead of a literal manner. In this way all women may “see themselves” in this brand line of products. The hallmark of a brand is to personalize it to the brand target, yet allow each individual to feel about it in a way that meets their expectations and is highly aspirational.

When should a brand rewind its image or fast-forward it?

A Brand Rewind suggests developing cues such as authenticity, simplicity and reliability to signal a time gone by and targets the happy-go-lucky associations of our perceived past. These brands are familiar, highly memorable and approachable.

A Brand Fast Forward suggests contemporizing the brand to fit into consumer's current sensibilities and targeting their hope for the future with USP's (unique selling propositions) that are meaningful to our lives today. These brands are on-trend, innovative and aspirational.

How do we choose between a Rewind or a Fast Forward?

Often you apply both to a brand restage, you rewind and fast forward. The key is to balance the past and with the future -- the authenticity and simplicity of our perceived past with the hope and aspirations of the future. You must first rewind to gain cues and clues from the past. Then you must fast forward to ensure it is right for today. The true challenge is to determine how much of each visual element – the past, the present and the future – you need to build into your brand re-stage.

Is there anything like the perfect packaging or which example comes close to it?

YES, one that has such a strong visual vocabulary that no words are needed. Think Method, their iconic tear drop bottle is trademarked to them and needs nothing more, not even the brand name!

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