

BRANDPACKAGING®

P A C K A G I N G T H A T S E L L S



WHAT WOMEN WANT IN BRAND PACKAGING? SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT!

BY TERRI GOLDSTEIN

For centuries, men have employed the “silent pleasure principal” of diamonds, flowers and chocolate to evoke a favorable emotional response from their female counterparts. Why is this? Could it be that a woman’s response is strongest when her emotions, visual acumen and senses are fully ignited? Ask Cupid on Valentine’s Day.

Today’s woman has greatly evolved, though. She now leads 50 percent of all entrepreneurial ventures, and this crashing of the glass ceiling has placed her earning power into full roar. It’s not

unlikely that she may own the business and sport a self-purchased De Beers “right-hand diamond.”

She earns. She spends.

How can brand marketers harness this new “silent pleasure principal” of female self-spending as they seek to woo women to purchase their product over the competition? Short of supplying a box of Godiva chocolates with every bottle of shampoo, you must find “a way in” to a woman’s heart as you create your brand’s emotive visual vocabulary and distill it onto a package.

The boardroom vs. the power of the purse

Though women have come a long way as entrepreneurs, it is interesting that in today’s Fortune 500 landscape, less than two percent are CEOs; 13.6 percent hold board seats; and only 15.7 percent of top executives are women. What does this tell us? That, often, it is men acting as the kings of the branding castle, approving or disapproving the final design for a product’s package.

But, remember, the power behind the throne clearly remains in the hands of women, since they make 80 percent of all supermarket, drugstore and mass

retail purchases. In addition, 95 percent of executive women act as "Chief Purchasing Agents" for all of the goods brought into their homes.

As the median income for women has soared 63 percent in the past 20 years and since 30 percent of women currently out-earn their husbands, today's companies are faced with a dilemma on how to represent their target consumers—women—on a brand's package in a way that is not outdated, sexist or both. Mr. Clean, the Quaker Oats man and the Jolly Green Giant smile at us from their front panels and successfully evoke "authenticity" and remind us of "simpler times," but old-fashioned Swiss Miss has been relegated to the back of the package and misunderstood Betty Crocker has been replaced with a spoon! Sadly, less than 25 percent of today's character trademarks are depicted as women.

Is it possible to unlock the power of her purse and not insult her at the same time? Absolutely. Retail environments, from supermarkets to department and specialty stores, are strategically designed to help her part with two of her most valuable assets: her time and money.

Consider the fact that when she runs to the store for a carton of milk, she discovers that the dairy products (the most frequently purchased items) are purposely placed in the *back* of the store. Not coincidentally, her return path to the cashier takes her past a good portion of the store's products. It's no wonder that, although she runs in for just one item, she often comes out with more than \$25 worth of unplanned purchases.

She has an intuitive intellect

How can you ensure that your brand is one of those she places in her cart? Begin with the idea that consumers see colors, shapes, and symbols before they see words. The brand psychologists and anthropologists at Weinman Schnee Morais, a research organization



Olay's black high-luster package and colors say elegant and distinctive in very few words. Let visual language do your brand's talking.

in New York, have applied what they call the *Elaboration Likelihood Model* to explain that concept in a typi-

cal supermarket shopping experience: "As the shopper meanders down the aisle, she sees all brands at a peripheral level. During the first one to two seconds, a brand's colors and shapes are seen. If the color associations are relevant to her expectations, and the structure portrays form and/or function, she will elaborate on the symbols and read the words during the next three to five seconds."

It is crucial to build this "shelf-sight sequence" into your brand packaging and to become diligent about

FIVE TIPS TO UNLOCK THE POWER OF HER PURSE

- 1. Understand that most brands are seen at 1/25th of a second, at a peripheral level.** So you must learn the shelf-sight sequence™ of colors, shapes and symbols she will see and relate to first. Integrate feminine brand shapes (letterforms and brandmarks). Create package structures with intuitive form/function benefits. Research says that if your brand's visual vocabulary resonates with a woman on an emotional level, she will consider your words next, for a full three to five seconds in low-to-mid involvement categories.
- 2. Be aware that women are crossover shoppers.** Understand her total visual world: multiple categories across all chains of distribution—from Whole Foods and Target to A&P and CVS. Marry those crossover sensibilities to the codes of the category in which your brand lives, but reinvent them to exploit her desire for luxury items that look good but cost less. Strive to embed a sense of caché into your brand, no matter the price point.
- 3. Go where she goes.** Fifty percent of Internet users are women seeking information about services and brands. Her brands must extrapolate her sensibilities of online shopping, the Internet and her media habits. Consider integrating your print ads, promotional campaigns and web sites with the motivational pull and visual recall that she may recognize on the shelf.
- 4. Understand that "her" visual territories are vastly different than "his".** She pursues products for her, him and the entire family. Recognize the alternate colors, textures, cues, triggers and words that she emotionally and viscerally responds to. Clue her in with the visual language of: transparent hues, ethereal glows, soft blends, prisms of light and inspirational brand names that quickly signal: this brand is for you.
- 5. Use your words on pack sparingly and carefully.** Remove 50 percent of the words from your marketing deck and transpose the rest with a visual language that she can readily recall to a friend, such as: "Go get the insoles in the purple package with the flower and the adorable shoes on it." (Dr. Scholl's Comfort Insoles.) Women love to talk, so let her do the talking, not your package.

removing at least 50 percent of your packaging copy that cannot be transposed into the visual language of recall—colors, shapes, and symbols. This is the “five-second sweet spot” that brand marketers seek.

To achieve it, you have to make sure your packaging’s colors and shapes target and inform her subconscious and that your on-pack words are short and meaningful. Start by using designers specifically trained in the science of transposing words into a visual vocabulary rich in communicative colors, emotive cues and trigger-symbols—so that she might *feel* your brand messages and attributes in five seconds or less.

She speak, he speak

Also, understand that “her” visual territories are different from “his” visual territories. Notice that packaging geared to women is often embedded with translucent and transparent hues, ethereal glows, soft blends, pure white backgrounds, prisms of light and inspirational names that create a motivational pull.



Packaging for Fresca soda incorporates cool and sophisticated but distinctly feminine tech cues and softened grid textures.

In contrast, men’s packaging usually possesses a dark, solid color palette with hard lines, scientific cues, the “tech” language of grid patterns and strong “formula-oriented” letterforms that are enhanced by powerful brand names.

Recognizing these key visual differences will surely aid you in determining how to properly “speak” to her.

She is a crossover shopper

It is also important to go where she shops. Performing a retail audit will allow you to experience her shopping habits. Currently, women love the “mass-luxury movement” and often prefer to “crossover shop,” visiting two to four retail environments during one shopping excursion.

Today, going to Target is considered “cool”. So is shopping at Costco for the family dinner while lugging a \$500 Gucci bag and wearing a \$12.50 t-shirt from the Gap. Women expect luxury no matter what the channel, and packaging must communicate that.

Women seek to share

There are hundreds of best-sellers written by renowned experts that advise men on how to better communicate with women. Their guiding principal is this: *LISTEN to her.*

The same theory applies when convincing a woman to adopt your brand. It is imperative that you give her a story to share with her friends. As Faith Popcorn tells us in her book *EVEolution*, “Women cross-pollinate. Connecting your female consumers to each other connects them to your brand.” To connect women to your own brand, give them something to talk about.

Executing research that uncovers her emotions, experiences, associations and learned responses is a crucial step in developing your brand’s ability to communicate on-shelf. You must interpret her needs, her wants and aspirations to fit in among her brand choices.

If you ask questions, she will talk. And her answers will help you uncov-



Soft, luxurious graphics and a swooping “S” make Stride gum fashionably at home in the most discriminating of handbags.

er a unique selling proposition. If your brand is “me-too” you can still invent a salient point of difference within the realms of formula, structure or even function.

Dr. John Gray, the author of *Women are from Mars, Men are from Venus*, writes, “A woman’s sense of self is defined through her feelings and the quality of her relationships.”

Creating a brand’s motivational pull to encompass her world allows you not only to tap into her desire to speak of your brand, but also to harness the exclusive “pass-around” factor. Women may talk about brands, but they also tend to share their brand treasures with family and friends.

Making sure that she can recall your package’s colors, shapes, and symbols, such as “it’s the green box with the red triangle on it” will not only enhance her ability to verbally recall what your brand looks like, it may also encourage her to buy extra SKUs for her friends.

She is multi-faceted

Today’s woman has many demands on her time. She is multi-tasking—balancing work, child rearing, exercise, her family’s health and, of course,

shopping! As a result, she watches less TV than her male counterparts, but reads more magazines to uncover details about the products she desires. Fifty percent of Internet users are women seeking information about services and brands.

Consider enhancing your print ads, promotional campaigns, and web presence with the motivational pull and visuals that she may recognize on the shelf.

If your brand's packaging fits in her world as a "star" or the "headliner" that woman will line-up to see, hold and buy, you will ensure that she will not forget your brand's trade dress and that she will talk about it in a memorable, relevant and, even, inspirational way.

By taking these steps, you can build a visual world for your brand that evokes associations and emotions, which harness instant purchasing power! If you can reach just one



The Venus Razor's soft, curvaceous shape—and packaging that mirrors its outline—makes the most of "her" visual territories.

woman, you hold the ability to reach "a village," her village, where she shares her brand preferences.

Today, the familiar ad agency metric of target rating points is quickly being replaced by a woman's voice, talking loud and clear about YOUR brand to all who will listen. Be sure she falls in love with your brand's packaging by giving her something to talk about! **BP**

The author, Terri Goldstein is strategy principal of The Goldstein Group, a brand design and communications consultancy. This article is excerpted from Terri's upcoming book *The Seducers—the Seduction of Shopping*. Contact her at 212.946.2833 or terri@goldsteinbrands.com.

Where to go for more information...

◆ **Market research.** At Weinman Schnee Morais, call 212.906.1900 or visit www.wsm-inc.com.



the goldstein group^{llc}

brand direction > brand connection >

The Goldstein Group is a bi-coastal Brand Identity, Design and Communications Consultancy with headquarters in New York City and California. Terri Goldstein with her two Creative Directors and their team of six designers, have been collectively involved in the restaging of America's largest brand icons for over 20 years. They also conduct branding seminars to internal marketing and design teams to facilitate the development of an intuitive visual vocabulary, allowing brands to be seen, felt and quickly understood. Utilizing their proprietary Shelf Sight Sequence™ and Consumer Connect Process™ programs, The Goldstein Group takes the industry to new heights with a visual-based approach to Package Design And Brand Communications. To learn more about how your brands perform in the marketplace, contact Terri Goldstein at 1-212-946-2833 or at terri@goldsteinbrands.com