



Courtesy of Guy Welch Photography.

You Have Eight Seconds

Why now is the time for innovative packaging

I know you just started reading this article, but I'm going to ask you to stop reading for a moment and look at your smartphone. Look at your inbox and note how many unread emails you have. I'll go first. I have 256.

How many do you have? 50? 100? More than 1,000? When I ask this question in my presentations, the most unopened emails that someone in the audience has had is 47,202. But that's not the most I've ever seen. In fact, the reason I started asking this question is that I recently looked at a picture on my friend's phone, and then I clicked back to her home screen. When I did, I saw the red dot on her email app, and it said she had 150,635 unopened emails. I said, "Kelly, you have 150,000 unopened emails?! Are you planning to read them, delete them, or what?" She said, "I know, I just can't get through them."

We Can't Get Through the Digital Deluge

Why is the number of unopened emails

you have relevant to print and packaging? Because our attention is being pulled in so many different digital directions that we can't possibly get through it all. In one day, the average person receives 121 emails¹ and is exposed to 4,000 advertisements². In that same day, we spend an average of 53 minutes scrolling through Instagram and/or Facebook³. And don't even get me started on video content, where YouTube leads the way with an average of 5 billion videos watched every single day⁴.

Between a Goldfish and a Horse

Behavioral scientists have determined that the attention span of the average consumer is eight seconds. Let's put that in perspective: The attention span of a goldfish is nine seconds. The attention span of a horse is seven seconds. So, humans are somewhere between a fish and a horse.

What does this mean for packaging today? It means that brands have less time and more competition for our attention than ever before, and digital messaging

Our attention is being pulled in so many different digital directions that we can't possibly get through it all.



By Vicki Strull, Vicki Strull Design



Courtesy of Guy Welch Photography.

alone is not going to grab it or hold it. Packaging has the power to launch brands, drive brand revenue, create memorable brand moments. I'll go as far as to say that brands don't exist without effective packaging.

And they surely don't exist without consumer engagement. That's a huge driver behind today's innovative packaging — to engage consumers in that eight-second sliver of life and create a customer experience so enticing it results in a purchase.

When I strategize with brands about packaging and how to create that level of differentiation within their brand story, I often talk about using the printing and production innovations that exist today. One of my favorite design strategies when consulting with brands is versioning, an effective means of engaging consumers, increasing sales and building brand loyalty. Smart packaging and tactility are two more favorite strategies.

A Million of One to Millions of Ones

Versioning exists on a spectrum: on one end there's mass production, making a million of one version of a package, label, cover — whatever the product is. At

the other end of the spectrum, are single versions — millions of ones.

From the mass production side of the spectrum, the continuum expands to greater levels of customization, from random versioning to affinity versioning to one-of-a-kind, and finally to completely personalized versioning.

The Four Levels of Versioning

Random versioning is when you don't know where a package is going or who the purchaser is. For instance, every time a new Pixar movie is released, random versioning is everywhere in promotions and product tie-ins — shampoos, popcorn containers at the movie theater, wrapping paper. For a movie like "Toy Story 4," some items have Woody, some have Jessie, some have Buzz Lightyear, and so on. The brand doesn't know who the recipient or purchaser is, so it's random versioning.

The next level of customization is affinity versioning. This is about connecting packaging to a specific interest group, demographic, geographical area or a combination of factors. Consider a consumer packaged good that creates promotional packaging tied into college football. They design and place products

targeted to the SEC in the Southeast, while products targeted to the Big 10 are placed in the Midwest. Digital print innovations enable brands to create affinity versioning in real time, during the season and playoffs, because of digital print's ability to ramp up fast and produce short runs cost effectively. When customers enter the store, instead of just seeing shelves of the same product, they engage with the one that connects them to their team. Remember, brands have just eight seconds to make that connection. If a label or package can quickly capture a customer's attention, it can also entice them to pick up the product. Research shows that the things we touch while shopping can affect what we buy⁵.

The next level of customization is one-of-a-kind versioning, where every single package is unique. That means I am the only person in the entire world that has a particular version of a package. King of Pops is a gourmet frozen treats brand with a cult following. Last Halloween, they designed five special edition flavors and wrappers. The wrappers had ghosts all over them, but no two were alike. King of Pops sold out of the initial print run of 18,000 and had to make 25,000 more to last until Halloween! It was the first time the company ever sold out of a flavor.

Then there are the millions of ones — personalized versioning. This packaging is targeted to an individual consumer and may have even been designed by that consumer. We see personalization all the time in direct mail, for example. The piece

could have a person's name on it, but it could have a customized photo, or it could have something else that's unique to that specific recipient. For example, Canadian coffee company Tim Horton's has a very loyal following, so much so that store employees often know customers by name. If Tim Horton's wanted to connect better to their customers, they could leverage their customer data and send a customer a direct mail piece for their birthday, connect with them via email and/or an app, and invite the customer to come in on their birthday for a free cup of coffee. And what if, on the day the customer comes in to use the promotion, their cup has their name or photo on it? Imagine the loyalty that level of personalization would inspire! And how about the social media impressions that would create?

Beyond Versioning: Tactility, Substrates, Embellishments and More

Captivating consumers isn't just about versioning. It's about piquing a consumer's curiosity enough that they take the package off the shelf. Tactility is an essential part of connecting with consumers. According to neuroscience, when a person picks up an object, something called the "endowment effect" occurs⁶. They start to feel as if that object already belongs to them, and consequently, begin to add more value to it — all subconsciously.

For packaging, this means that high-quality substrates, tactile finishing and embellishments are critical to engaging



Courtesy of Guy Welch Photography.

SEE INSIGNIA LIVE!
Pack Expo #5110
PrintingUnited #10351

SGIA 2017
PRODUCT
OF THE YEAR
FINISHING AND
DIE CUTTING

shapes speak. shapes sell.

KISS-CUT, DIE-CUT & EXPAND WITH INSIGNIA!

Make your mark with packaging, stickers, store graphics and promotionals. When you offer in-house die cutting with Insignia, your customers will appreciate the quality and fast turn-around on their high-value products. It's designed for easy operation and fast changeovers on short to long runs.

Die-cut, kiss-cut (with easy depth-of-cut adjustment for stickers and labels), emboss, and fold/glue in-line on a whole suite of products handling stocks up to 30pt thickness. Insignia is 100% made in USA and is offered in 4 sizes; 15x20," 20x20," 24x24," 30x24."

Affordable, endless die-cut possibilities.

Let's get started! Fill out the Production Match form at rollemusa.com/production-match

rollemusa.com
800-272-4381
youtube.com/rolleminternational



Rollem
INTERNATIONAL

Insignia
DIE CUTTING



Courtesy of Guy Welch Photography.

Captivating consumers isn't just about versioning. It's about piquing a consumer's curiosity enough that they take the package off the shelf.

consumers. Today's innovations in finishing and embellishments offer options like never before — digital foiling and sleeking that allow for versioning; digital laser-cutting that creates hairline cuts; alluring film laminates, textured varnishes, UV coatings, holographic effects and more. These embellishments are practically irresistible to the touch! And that's exactly how brands maximize the endowment effect with the eight seconds they have!

Connecting the Digital and Physical Worlds

At the opening, I talked about how immersed we are in our digital worlds. We can't escape it, and I'm not suggesting that we even try. Instead, I'm suggesting that we integrate our digital and physical worlds for a seamless and memorable customer experience. With QR codes, invisible watermarks and other image recognition techniques, brands can engage consumers by linking packaging to loyalty programs, how-to videos, event registrations, promotions, coupons and so much more. With augmented and virtual reality, brands are immersing consumers in the brand experience before they even leave the store.

No Better Time for Packaging

All this is to say that now is a time of tremendous growth potential for

packaging. Powerful design strategies such as those I've described, along with strong partnerships between designers and print service providers, will inspire brands to see the possibilities and power in packaging innovations to capture consumer attention, drive engagement, increase sales and build brand loyalty. All in eight seconds.

References

- ¹ campaignmonitor.com/blog/email-marketing/2019/05/shocking-truth-about-how-many-emails-sent/
- ² forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2017/08/25/finding-brand-success-in-the-digital-world/#7839740c626e
- ³ vox.com/2018/6/25/17501224/instagram-facebook-snapchat-time-spent-growth-data
- ⁴ videonitch.com/2017/12/13/36-mind-blowing-youtube-facts-figures-statistics-2017-re-post/
- ⁵ sciencedaily.com, Mathias C. Streicher, Zachary Estes. Touch and Go: Merely Grasping a Product Facilitates Brand Perception and Choice. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 2015; 29 (3): 350 DOI: 10.1002/acp.3109
- ⁶ Kahneman, Daniel & Knetsch, Jack & Thaler, Richard. (1990). "Experimental Tests of the Endowment Effect and the Coase Theorem," *Journal of Political Economy* 98, 1325-1348. *Journal of Political Economy*. 98. 1325-48. 10.1086/261737.

Vicki Strull is a design strategist and speaker who advises top-tier and emerging brands on how to leverage the power of print and packaging. She consults with print service providers and OEMs to create new revenue streams through print innovations. Vicki will be speaking at PRINTING United in October 2019. To download the infographic of The Four Levels of Versioning, visit vickistrull.com/4-levels-of-versioning.