

# Make the package pop

Label-related enhancements could boost trial of own-brand products.

By Kathie Canning

**M**uch has been said about the gains private brands have made in quality over the years. And those gains have worked to bolster consumers' acceptance of store brands.

But retailers also have come a long way when it comes to labels on store brand packaging.

"Historically, the 'value' was [conveyed] by a more simplistic graphic and a better price point," notes Lou Iovoli, vice president of strategic partnerships and marketing for West Henrietta, N.Y.-based Hammer Packaging Inc. "This sometimes led consumers to feel the product inside the package might not represent the same quality as the competing national brand. Today, through the use of high-quality design on a variety of label decorating styles, consumers perceive the private label brand as the equivalent to the national brand with the added bonus of a lower price point."

Of course, retailers always will find room for improvement. And label-related enhancements can make the difference between losing and gaining a sale.

"New brands really need to have visual appeal on the store shelves so that consumers will reach for the product," says Justin Slarks, project manager and director of marketing for Sleeve Seal, Little Rock, Ark. "I think that consumers are unconsciously very aware of quality of presentation of a product and that any shortcuts in graphics, printing or shrink

quality really stand out next to competitors with top-notch presentation."

Slarks points to two label-related aspects that retailers need to evaluate: the physical label quality — which covers print quality, film quality and shrink quality — and visual or graphic impact.

"Both are very important in this competitive market," he stresses.

Retailers also would benefit by staying on top of new label-related innovations. We profile three such innovations here.

## Digital printing platform

New from Colordyne Technologies, Brookfield, Wis., is the 3600 Series digital printing platform. According to Taylor Buckthorpe, the company's director of market development, the solution empowers brands and private label manufacturers to produce and manufacture their own packaging.

"It allows them to be more agile in their marketing campaign, any sort of target-marketing activities," he says. "If they wanted to do personalization or anything like that, they have that access right at their fingertips."

And personalization is a big driver for the millennial consumer, Buckthorpe points out.

"You look at the Share a Coke campaign or what Bud Light did with their bottles, things like that. Those are all interesting campaigns that are somewhat millennial-driven to really speak to a new generation of consumer that has a lot of buying power," he says. "I think that you'll see a lot more brands start to pick up on that personalization, that target marketing."

The solution's print quality — at resolutions up to 1,600 dpi — also is a big plus, he notes. So is the potential cost savings.

"We have a couple installations today — one being a private labeler in the adjuvants and surfactants arena, doing fertilizers and things like that," Buckthorpe says. "They do all of the production in house, and it's been a huge cost savings for them. They're saving about 23 percent to the bottom line on their labeling costs" and also realized improvements in the label quality.

He notes that Colordyne also has the 2600 Series digital printing solution for lower-volume operations, as well as an even smaller benchtop solution.



## Packaging



The new SSL-1600 Vertical Sleeve Labeler features a two-lane, dual synchronized head system that provides unique speeds and can employ two independent functions for each labeling head.

### Thinner shrink labels

For its part, Sleeve Seal recently developed machines that can apply thinner shrink labels — and at faster speeds. That means the private label manufacturer — and ultimately, the retailer — save money, Slarks explains.

The new SSL-1600 Vertical Sleeve Labeler features a two-lane, dual synchronized head system that provides unique speeds and can employ two independent functions for each labeling head, the company notes. The new self-contained SSL-600i Vertical Sleeve Labeler, meanwhile, is a versatile, high-performing shrink sleeve labeler that can be combined with any of Sleeve Seal's label accumulation systems to run for countless hours in harsh environments.

“Also, Sleeve Seal is able to print a full 10 colors using rotogravure printing,” Slarks adds. “We don’t see many brands use our full capabilities, but this is changing with the level of competition in the market. Unique combinations of colors, pearlescent inks, metallic inks and matte and glossy varnishes are being used to create a new generation of great-looking labels.”

He adds that today is an exciting time for shrink labels.

## Packaging

“Sleeve Seal customers are enjoying reliable precision label application at high speeds and are able to create more sophisticated-looking labels at a similar cost to their standard labels through the use of thinner films,” Slarks says. “Designers are able to apply high-end design to products now that the print quality and precision of application have caught up with their concepts.”

### Power of a preview

Hammer Packaging is now able to offer the engineering to allow retailers to see a variety of labeling styles with their graphics, Iovoli says. This “preview” allows the retailers to decide on the best look for the package.

“We offer the whole array of decorating — shrink sleeves, pressure-sensitive labels, cut and stack labels, roll-fed labels, in-mold, etc. — to meet our clients’ needs,” he adds.

Hammer also offers a number of print formats and can cost-effectively match the label to the best technology, Iovoli notes. The company prints sheet-fed offset, web offset, flexo and digital.

“The most rapidly growing product Hammer offers private label is Hammer PRISM,” he says.

“This is a custom-expanded gamut ink system that allows retailers to efficiently run multiple products together while allowing them to look individual.”

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— **Justin Slarks**, project manager and director of marketing, Sleeve Seal

Hammer also provides many promotional printing techniques to allow retailers to run on-pack promotions for their products, as well as cross-branding promotions, Iovoli says.

“Many private label brands miss out on low-cost opportunities to promote their products because they are not allowed or willing to talk with converters direct,” he maintains. “We are always open to a discussion!” **SB**