

## Design

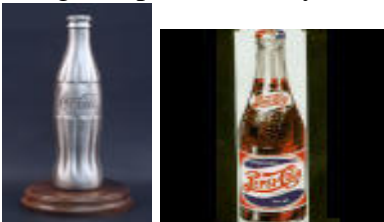
Ads are here today, gone tomorrow; (or more usually, just gone today); whereas the efforts of the designer are there all the time, calling out to the potential purchaser every single time they go down the aisle, re-enforcing the brand promise every single time the product is used. Yet there are many snipers in the bushes just waiting to pick off great designs before they get that far.

However, there are many examples around us to encourage us to fight tooth and nail for great product/pack designs. From my old industry of confectionery; Ferrero Rocher is a triumph of bull-headed obsession over cold, calculating Cost Accounting.



Making a spherical chocolate with three layers - by no means easy; using luxuriously thick gold foil - an extravagance; putting a little sticker on the top of each one - surely overkill (“How many more will we sell because of the little sticker?”); putting them in a little paper tray THE RIGHT WAY UP - “C’mon. It’s a sphere!!”; and then getting them all nicely lined up in a hugely expensive plastic box that gets thrown away anyway???. Of course, this globally successful brand only ever appeared in this way because the man who designed it happens to own the company, and had the luxury of not having to listen to anyone else.

One thing that surprises me here is that our two mega-brewers have denied themselves the potential power of package design by using, presumably for some massive cost efficiencies, the same bottle. I wonder if Coke are upset that they didn’t think of that one and get Pepsi on board years ago, when both had returnable bottles?



But thank goodness for Sleemans – a great example of building and reinforcing unique brand values through a package – and also Polar Ice in the spirits arena.



But when it comes to graphic design, I'm afraid to say that the most effective killer of great work is more often than not the Brand Manager, rather than some faceless accountant. Great designs are rarely literal to the brief, mainly because the people who write the briefs don't know anything about great designs. Neither did I, by the way; but I found a few handy tools to limit the damage inflicted to the design process:

- 1) Really simplify the brief – One objective if at all possible.
- 2) Get to know the designer, or how will you ever trust their judgment?
- 3) When short-listing the initial concepts: always include the designer's favourite – not what they think will be your favourite, or what is closest to the brief – but the one they think is aesthetically the best.
- 4) Recognise that cutting and pasting - “Can we have that logo, in that other colour, on that third background, the same size as that one over there” - rarely works and is a sign you should go back a stage in the process.
- 5) Ignore all design research (should you have to do any) and I speak as a past researcher!
- 6) Look for cohesiveness, rather than trying to optimize individual elements.
- 7) Always, but always, consider the designs as the packs will appear in store – if they are 3 together on the shelf – look at the designs 3 together on a shelf (Role



model – OXO

- 8) Ask your partner (only kidding – that what the VP does!)