



THE OXFORD RESEARCH AGENCY  
SEEING FURTHER. THINKING DEEPER.

# **FMCGe NEWS Article**

## **Naturally Better by Design:**

**Wednesday 21st January 2009**

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### **Researching packaging is conducted in many different ways**

Overtaking the removal of salt, sugar and fat, going Natural was the star of new product launches during 2008. Ensuring that sales boost through going natural is critical, and new Pack Design research is now available to predict sales changes from pack designs.

Mintel found that 1 in 4 products launched in 2008 led with a Natural claim on pack. Critical to the survival and impact of these new products is how Natural is communicated on pack.

Researching packaging is conducted in many different ways. At The Oxford Research Agency, we have developed a range of approaches which enables designers and clients to launch new packs in confidence, knowing the impact that the pack will make on sales.

Here is our guide to boosting sales with better packaging research:-

### **When did you last change your design?**

Pack design changes are happening faster and more frequently. There is no wrong time to change your design, instead, you should appraise the shelf every time you go shopping and see how the competition compare to your product; can you still find it, does it show your core values, is it easy for consumers to understand what the product is and how it should be used?

The shelf is where pack design has to work. Take another look at your packaging – it might be holding you back.

### **Pack research is evolving**

Stop-watches measure time, not sales. Research shows that how fast you can find a product on shelf has no bearing on sales.

Good pack research tests packs as consumers assess products in-store. No stop watches, just excellent analysis of design.

The Oxford Research agency has a suite of packaging tools to cater for every pack design and structural packaging needs. All have the capability of providing a volume forecast for the ultimate test of a design.

### **Evolution, not revolution**

Revolutions on-shelf can be dangerous. Evolution brings consumers with you.

Our volumetric models show that Revolution in design in most cases results in lower volumes. In some cases, reductions of over 30% are seen. Take care to evolve enough to bring consumers with you and keep your equity, and your pack design will be a success.

### **In Context**

Consumers will, in real life, assess your design with other brands in the category. So, avoid testing your new design against the Current – it's a comparison which will never be made and has no context with the real world.

### **Keep it real**

Research must replicate the real world as closely as possible to have any validity. The latest techniques now allow for Real Standout and Real Speed of Find to be measured, in a totally unbiased and unprompted route.

With over 30 years volumetric experience feeding into every packaging research study, The Oxford Research agency can help advise you on how to best test your new pack designs and structures.

### **Don't forget the Brand!**

Brand equity is critical and must be at least maintained. Investigate and measure equity at every step of the pack change and ensure you understand what will happen when you change the design.

### **Standout, positively**

Standout is a good thing as long as the brand equity is not damaged. In the UK we have some of the most advanced, bright and impactful packs of any country in the world. Consumers are used to changes in colour and more accepting of this.

Measure standout simply, without stop-watches. Test whether the new colours fit with the brand and whether it will impact on sales.

### **Familiarity**

Research can test the impact of familiarity and the shock of the new, and incorporate this into volume forecasts. Being new can alienate consumers, so test the longer term impact of the change through research and incorporate it into your media and marketing plans – it will reap rewards

### **Consumers consume, designers design**

Consumers are not equipped to be packaging designers, much in the same way as they are unable to tell you how to position your brand, design your logo or direct your advertising.

Research has to be designed carefully to measure consumers' appeal of the design, and extract the information to help you evolve your design.

### **Qualitatively yours**

Pack design is filled with emotion. Qualitative research is the only route to this emotion and must be part of the research mix. At The Oxford Research Agency, we blend qual and quant research to deliver visibly better packs.

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