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## Packaging Nirvana: A One-on One Relationship With Consumers

Everything digital, everything on demand are major forces that continue to reshape our world. How we perceive truths, how we make decisions and the choices consumers make are changing as a result of these forces.

Consumers trust what their friends are saying on facebook and twitter about products more than the marketing messages they read. The messaging coming from the internet is overwhelming us like a "tidal wave" of information. Like it or not "internet chatter" is now playing a central role in the choices consumers make. We are spending more time in the virtual world and due to the marvels of technology we are doing this "on the go".

Successful brands are translating this into new packaging touchpoints. The ability to include; relevancy, engagement, interaction (back to the virtual world) through retail and ecommerce channels will produce winning brands.

Consumers are looking to their brand for a sense of community, those things they are interested in. Whether this is a cause or whether they are runners (wanting to engage with other runners) or commemorate an event or celebrate the seasons the fact is that "mass produced products/packages are transforming into mass customization". One size or one flavor does not fit all. Consumers want their version of a product or package. The ideal state for marketing is to have a one-on-one relationship with each consumer. A product made to the ideal specifications of an individual is the "end goal" of today's marketer. Mr. Bob McDonald, CEO Procter & Gamble clearly articulated this in an Ad Age article Feb. 27, 2011 ... "The eventuality of the world," he said, "is a one-on-one relationship with every consumer which results in trust, loyalty, all the things that a brand wants. So the first company in the world that is able to create that with the consumer will by definition win."

So the key question is the state of digital printing technology capable to deliver such targeted marketing? There is evidence that some large Consumer Product Companies have leveraged the use of digital package printing to create one-on-one marketing. Accomplishing this through packaging is a far simpler task than trying to address this through tailored products. Product categories such as; candles, beer, shampoo that have leveraged digital printing, beyond just ink on paper, to create customization have grown anywhere from 3 - 138% annually.

When brands use digital printing as part of their brand strategy they allow consumers to join the conversation. Such a personal touch through packaging evokes consumer engagement and connects on a one-on-one level. Consumer Product Companies that are lagging in recovery will either benchmark themselves to "best in class" and jump on board to adopt digital printing or fall further behind as they suffer from lack of differentiation.

*About the author ... Mike is founder of Ferrari innovation Solutions, LLC. He is dedicated to educate, guide and inspire those in packaging by digital printing. He is coauthor of the digital printing report titled, "Is Digital Printing Part of Your Brand or Operational Strategy?" for purchase on the Karstedt.com website. Mike enjoyed a 32 year career at The Procter & Gamble Co. You can follow him on twitter: gamechanger78.*