

Packaging in the Experiential Economy

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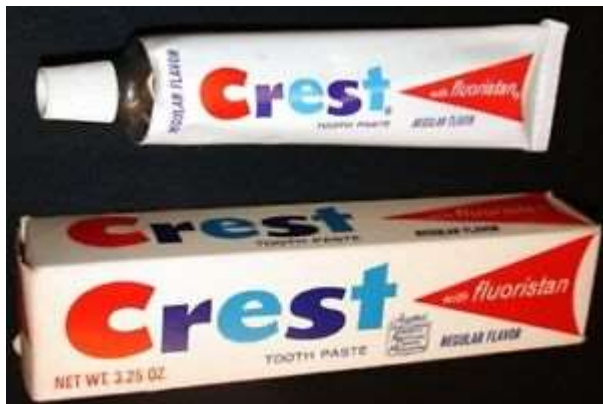


By Mike Ferrari, [Ferrari Solutions, LLC](#)

Remember when toothpaste cartons were simple? Just 20 years ago, the norm was a white carton with two-to-three-color printing and a health endorsement boasting that “four out of five doctors recommend” the product. The entire message was about health and cavity fighting.

Yet the message has changed to focus on “whitening” and “brightest teeth.” Carton design has also changed with the marketing message. Today the entire dentifrice aisle is illuminated with metallic stock, laser etching, nonconventional shapes, and embossing. The sparkle in the package communicates the results of using the product on your teeth. All these embellishments added cost for a nominally \$4 item.

Why were these changes necessary? Consumer habits began to change. Consumers started to respond more to the experience of the package and product than the health claims. And if consumer brands didn’t provide this experience, they would risk losing market share.



Have toothpaste cartons reached their peak? Is there no more to be done? Probably more changes likely! As consumer habits and interests change, so must packaging. This same story occurred with skin care products where consumers responded to the desire for radiant skin. Folding cartons for such products also adapted artwork to include sparkle through use of metallic stock.

If consumers today are responding to experience, then the package is vital in gaining that first important trial purchase. However, packaging continues to play a role in the unboxing or product-use period. If this moment continues to create delight and the product delivers the promise, the

brand is rewarded with a repurchase. It is in these two critical touch points with the consumer that packaging adds value. These are known as the first and second moments of truth that can drive purchase and repurchase, creating brand success.

Now more than ever, carton converters need to create a portfolio of innovation. In the current experiential economy, it is not enough for a package to just be different or stand-out on shelf. Rather, it is about adding value. The internet, ecommerce, and social media are all creating new marketing channels that provide new levels of engagement and experiences. This is the new frontier and the challenge for brands. Printers and converters that offer solutions in this space will become preferred partners. Consumer preferences are changing fast, and brands are reacting by trying to find new ways to make valuable connections. Does your business strategy for the next three to five years include innovation that adds value?

I'll be speaking at PPC's upcoming [Spring Meeting](#) in Baltimore to help carton converters do just that. I hope to see you there.

About the author:

Mike Ferrari is a brand packaging consultant and the founder of Ferrari Innovation Solutions, LLC. Retired after 32 years of service at The Procter & Gamble Co., he is dedicated to educating, guiding, and inspiring those in the packaging industry to grow. Website: mike-ferrari.com.

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