

EPDA EXPERTS ON “SWEETS”

A lot of epda members make their core business in the food market. That’s why we chose “SWEETS” to be the topic of our next issue of the “expert on” series. Our journey takes us across Europe with a slight detour to Asia:

Interestingly, our Swiss, Swedish and Dutch contributions all teach us that authenticity and heritage play an increasingly important role.

Schaffner & Conzelmann, Switzerland – COOP FINE FOOD

Artisanry and tradition are major trends in Switzerland – and beyond
The trend favouring artistry and tradition in confectionery emerged in England two years ago and has gradually taken hold elsewhere in Europe.

Images of confectionery illustrated alongside the ingredients, accessories symbolizing the region (place of origin) or a situation in which the product might be eaten are employed to create a mood. Such imagery suggests to the consumer how the product tastes and where it originates from. This new world of images requires a different division of the packaging construction as well as new packaging materials.

Our example shows some of the «best in class» products from the Fine Food Series of the Swiss retailers COOP, whom our agency has worked with for about ten years. In the course of this year the packaging will be re-designed in line with the changes in stylistic taste and product expectations that have evolved in the upper price segment over the years. As the packaging architecture and the silver colour have such a high recognition value and are readily identified with Fine Food, the redesign focused on a new interpretation of the brand and a radically new style for the illustrations.

Silver Designkontoret, Sweden – MARABOU ALADDIN JUBILEE CHOCOLATE BOX

Increasing interest in retro design and heritage in Sweden
The chocolate artisan Marabou has produced flavoured chocolates in Sweden since 1916. In 1939 Marabou created the first affordable luxury chocolate box that could be bought and enjoyed by every income group. This product has remained “a classic” known in every Swedish home. In 2014 we were asked to design the 75th jubilee chocolate box for Aladdin.

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Consumer trends show an increasing interest in retro design and Swedish heritage. At the same time, topicality and visual appeal are key factors in the purchasing behaviour in this category.

The design we created is a clear historic reference to the original box from 1939 and a reminder of the historic journey of the Aladdin box until the present day. The jubilee box is a collection of the nine favourite chocolates created during the 75 years of innovative praline creation. On the back of the box, each praline is illustrated in detail alongside a description of historical and cultural events that influenced the confectioners' creation of different shapes and flavours.

Stratmore, The Netherlands – ORIGINAL OLD DUTCH BUTTERSCOTCH

Authenticity plays a key role in the Netherlands

Consumers want authenticity. If we look at what is happening on the market right now and see which products are doing well, it is clear that authenticity plays a key role. It is clearly associated with locally sourced products and products from an identifiable and trusted source, as well as traditional products with a long track record.

Authenticity is the art of being transparent: it applies to real products that are pure, produced on a limited scale, without any window dressing. In this hyper-connected world, people embrace products which allow them to trace and identify the product origin, the production, and the way it is packed and sold. All these products/brands have the same profile: firstly, they are small players in markets where big brands dominate, and secondly these small players employ a minimal communication strategy. In practice this means they don't use any advertising or promotional campaigns but rely instead on the packaging to communicate their product/brand story.

Original Old Dutch Butterscotch by J. Authentic Icons is an example of an authentic product. It has its origin in Zeeland, a province of the Netherlands. Based on the recipe, throughout the years, Zeeuwse Boterbabbelaars became famous. For tourists it is a typical token of Holland. In this gift box, the iconic symbols and illustrations, which are related to the product, are used in a slightly modern way. This makes the packaging appealing and still traditional in a recognizable way.

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The Western influence on Russian packaging design, which had been evident for many years, seemed to have vanished in the wake of economic crisis. Authenticity is gaining in importance again. Two Russian members comment as follows:

Idea Brand, Russia - Sergei Kotenev

The modern packaging design of sweets in the Russian market is very much influenced by European and American trends. This is due to the fact that the country was closed to imports for a very long time. When the iron curtain fell foreign brands with a beautiful, bright and appetizing package appeared on the market. This image of Western culture and graphic design was the basis for the design of modern consumer goods. But now, as the market becomes over-saturated with foreign brands, there is a new design trend towards authenticity. In the confectionary category there is more emphasis on enticing the consumer. Sweetness - always a positive factor with the emotional benefits of joy, childhood memories and playfulness - is incorporated and exploited in the design. For example, the agency Depot WPF offers a sense of fun and playfulness that is appropriate to the product ranges in this category. Please see <http://www.depotwpf.ru/news/40/>.

Wellhead, Russia – CHUDO LETO

In times of economic crisis the consumer is looking for domestic moderately priced products

There is a very interesting situation in Russia now. With the collapse of the Russian currency the trends of the past years have been swept aside. We recently began a project involving research into customers' buying preferences during times of economic crisis. The first results obtained indicate the following trends:

- The consumer tends to economize on confectionery and sweets. Expensive brands (there are many international brands on our market, e.g. Ferrero) are more likely to be purchased on special occasions.
- The consumer is inclined to seek alternative, more affordable products (but not the cheapest!)
- The consumer is shifting preferences towards domestic food producers. Firstly, due to the belief that local food is fresher and more natural. Secondly, Russia wants to move away from being a source of primary goods.
- In times of crisis sweets (endorphins) positively affect our mental wellbeing

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We expect two major trends to develop:

1. An increase in the number of affordable Russian brands with a simple, identifiable image (e.g. our Chudo-letto project)
2. The younger generation of urban dwellers will exert a greater influence. This new generation, comprising multiple income households and accustomed to café life and online shopping, will bring a new impetus (knowledge of food, experience of different culinary styles, etc.).

The following two examples are of projects for the brand owner Nestlé in the European and Asian marketplace:

AMPRO Design, Romania – JOE WAFFLES

Romanian brand & packaging design AMPRO Design was selected by Nestle Romania to redesign the entire range of packaging for Joe Waffles. Joe's redesign started with the repositioning of the entire portfolio and the launch of a new Joe product, Unveiled Temptations, a waffle coated with chocolate and filled with milk cream.

Although the brief seemed simple, the actual redesign of Joe's packaging had to match the new brand platform. After internal testing of at least 8 design paths, we decided to opt for a solution that used a realistic photo image with a sketch to illustrate the lightness of the product and geared to the appropriate group of Joe's consumers.

Bravis International, Japan – KIT KAT CHOCOLATORY

Kit Kat is sold in over 70 countries. Nestlé decided to open a store-within-a-store in a Japanese department store to enhance the brand's value. The store name "Kit Kat Chocolatory" combines "Chocolatier" and "Chocolate Factory." Yasumasa Takagiya, a top Japanese pastry chef, uses high-quality ingredients to produce a 300 limited edition of "Sublime" Kit Kats daily, as well as store-exclusive flavours such as Strawberry Maple, Orange Cocktail and Matcha Green Tea. The aim is to attract a new layer of mature consumers that cares about taste, ingredients and the shopping experience.

We designed simple, sophisticated packaging suitable for luxurious, authentic chocolate. For differentiation purposes, the Kit Kat logo has been reduced in size with a large handwritten font for the series name. Each series has its own vibrant colour for maximum visual impact. In Japan, regular confectionery brands are increasingly finding success with the premium store-within-a-store model. The first Kit Kat Chocolatory opened in January 2014. A second followed soon after, with more on the way.

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You would like to learn more?

Please contact:

Schaffner & Conzelmann

Jean Jacques Schaffner
jjschaffner@designersfactory.com
www.designersfactory.com

Silver Designkontoret

André Hindersson
andre@silver.se
www.silver.se

STRATMoRE

Frank Swolfs
frankswolfs@stratmore.com
www.stratmore.com

Idea Brand

Sergei Kotenev
kotenev@ideabrand.ru
www.ideabrand.ru

Wellhead Russia

Svetlana Tkacheva
pr@whead.ru
www.wellhead.ru

Ampro Design

Irinel Ionescu
irinel.ionescu@ampro.ro
www.ampro.ro

Bravis International

Hugh Sasada
hugh@bravis.com
www.bravis.com

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