

PROFITABLE PRINT RELATIONSHIPS

The Successful Print Sales Circle

Print Product Inspiration Podcast 11:

Packaging

Hello, and welcome to another month of The Print Product Inspiration Podcast. This month we're talking about packaging.

Now, it's probably a pretty obvious market to talk about, but actually, as an industry, I don't think we make enough of packaging. Typically, in the printing industry, if we talk about cartons, we get visions of plain brown cardboard boxes, which is really dull. They're produced by specialist-cut manufacturers. There's not really opportunities for many companies to create packaging, but both of these perceptions are totally wrong. We have some really good opportunities to create some very profitable opportunities from entering the packaging market. I was preparing a webinar recently for a client that wanted me to talk more about packaging and I was Googling images to go with the science for this. And actually every image that came up on my searches showed printed cartons four color printed cartons.

So as an industry, if we just think of plain Brown, cardboard cartons, we've got it wrong because when we're searching on the internet, the images we're getting, the images that people are putting up and the images that people are seeing are all of printed packaging. Clearly people expect print on their packaging now, and we have opportunities here to help produce packaging for those markets. It doesn't have to be just for the specialist suppliers. There are opportunities for everyone of all sorts of runs. And in a moment, I'm going to take you through a number of examples where you could perhaps get involved with packaging, but I want to start off with a story of one sheet fed printer that I knew. And they had traditionally worked on high-end commercial prints and they were finding those markets declining. There was suddenly a lot of competition coming into the market and trying to have a share of this pie as well.

And they were finding that their business was getting harder to win and they needed to come up with some new ideas. And they brought in a new member of staff who suggested that they looked at selling packaging as well. And they started producing some beautiful printed cartons for small brands. It created a much higher profit margin for what they were doing because these brands were much more conscious about the look of their product as much as the cost of the packaging, they were able to help these brands because they had the knowledge of how the packaging could be

finished to create a higher perceived value and a better look of luxury for these brands. So the brands won, but the printer did as well. And we all have an opportunity to do this because there are so many opportunities in the packaging market these days. Let's just have a look at some of the opportunities that exist for short run.

Let's start off with retail. So a lot of higher end shops need to create a great experience for their consumers on the high street. So they don't turn to the internet. And one of those is all about creating a nice box that your purchase goes into. That's the thing that can make all the difference that make people feel they've had a really premium experience and they want to go back to shop at that store again. With restaurants, home delivery has got more and more popular over the past few months. And I think that trend is here to stay. I think a lot of people who've traditionally ate out, now see there are opportunities for a more premium takeaway experience and they want that. And as part of that, your meal has to become presented correctly. It needs to come in something better than just the foil and cardboard carton or the plastic box.

There's an opportunity for printing companies here to produce high-end packaging, that's suitable to put a takeaway meal in. And then we come to e-commerce. Now e-commerce is a huge market, and I'm not suggesting that you necessarily target all the major brands, but there's a lot of people who are starting up their own e-commerce businesses at the moment who are much smaller or who are developing e-commerce because they suddenly see a need for this, as well as a traditional retail business. And they need help with creating the right packaging as well. They need help in creating packaging that reflects the values of their brands, packaging that you can help with. In addition, there's a lot of startup craft businesses as well, and they need packaging. They need nice boxes for all the items that they send out. And I'm not just talking about corrugated packaging here, either.

Remember that if I buy a piece of jewelry for my wife, as well as the box it comes packed in that takes it through the post. It's really nice if there's a proper high-ends box, that's inside the packaging that's been sent out purely for the delivery. So there are good opportunities in this as well. And let's remember that these businesses also need additional collateral as well. They may want to send out a small catalog or brochure or a postcard or a thank you note with each delivery. So it's not just packaging at this point. It's also about all the extra print that you can create at the same time. What about art? Some high-end photographers are sending out limited edition prints that cost a lot of money. And again, they need to be packaged correctly. Some go out in really nice boxes or just some paper wrapping to protect the print when it's rolled up before it's put in a tube.

All of these things make a difference. And then of course, there are many companies who still have a retail presence and they need packaging for their items. And some of those people will go for longer run packaging that's maybe better produced by the more specialist suppliers in this market, but they also need special offers and they need test products as well. And this is a really good opportunity for all types of printing companies to get involved. Now clearly, what you can offer depends on the type of press you have. If you're able to put through thicker substrates, then naturally you have better opportunities in this market. However, my wife went to an online pamper party recently and she ordered some products at the end of the party. And they all came out to her beautifully wrapped and each tube and each pot of product actually had a paper wrapped around it.

So it was printed, I think, on about 170 GSM. So just a medium way art paper, but that made an extra wrapping. And she loved the look of these. She said it felt like her birthday when she

unwrapped these products. So that little bit that the company had spent on some very lightweight packaging to make the products look better, more than repaid themselves because she's now placing regular orders through this company. So you don't have to have a specialist carton press to be able to enter this market. In addition, remember that many people can't afford to have cartons that are printed as well as they'd like, or as well as we'd like to produce for them. But there's a big opportunity for labels here as well. Labels can really elevate packaging, so having a printed label, just to close a box or to close some wrapping or a bigger label that goes on the outer box that says something about your brand, as well as having the postal details.

All these sorts of things can make a big difference to the perceived value of what you're buying and to the customer experience. And these are so important in the direct to consumer businesses, whether you're looking at e-commerce or home delivery, the better you can present your packaging, the better customer engagement you get, the higher prices you can charge, and the more likelihood you have of getting repeat customers. So if we put these messages over to customers, we have a good opportunity to sell packaging. Again, it's up to us to come up with complete solutions, to imagine what is possible and to show our prospects and our clients, how that can make a real difference to their businesses. So they have a logical reason for wanting to buy these products from you. I hope that's given you some good ideas. I think packaging is a big market that's set to expand more.

And I think that all of us have opportunities in this market. Now next month is going to be the final episode of the print product inspiration podcast. And I'm doing a slightly different one next month. I'm going to talk about chocolate. And what I'm going to do is some of you know that I have a friend who's an art sand chocolatier, and I just want to take us through the journey of how print can help him build his business with a whole range of different products. It's not really about chocolate. It's actually about how you can help any business that's similar to this one with a whole range of products to give you some more ideas for that. And then in year two, we're moving to a new podcast, one I hope with a slightly easier to pronounce name for me. And I'm going to tell you all about that next month. So I look forward to seeing you next month to talk about chocolate for the final episode of The Print Product Inspiration podcast.