

TRICORBRAUN[®]

BRING INNOVATIONS
TO MARKET

WHITE PAPER | May 04, 2015

IT TAKES A MULTI-PLAYER TEAM TO BRING INNOVATIONS TO MARKET

Craig Sawicki

Executive Vice President, Chief Creative Officer
TricorBraun Design & Innovation

Package design thrives on innovation. Brand owners are continually looking for new ways to outshine the competition, and package designers and manufacturers are continually looking for innovations that will help them do so. Innovation is our life's blood. The biggest challenge is that we never know where the next innovation is going to come from, or when.

TricorBraun learned early on to be proactive. We are continually looking for new opportunities to innovate. As my colleagues and I travel to visit customers and vendor partners, walk trade shows and present at conferences, we invite individuals and companies to share their new ideas, and especially those that they are having trouble commercializing.

As a result, during 35 years in package design and development, literally hundreds

of innovative package design concepts have passed through our hands. Some are now successful commercial products; some are not. We have reviewed many concepts that have never made it to successful commercialization. As packaging technology and material science evolve, their time may still come.

But even if they never reach the market, each teaches a lesson: most were genuinely innovative package concepts that were developed by an individual or company and that met a perceived need in the marketplace. Unfortunately, many of those concepts lacked input from outside sources with experience in bringing packages successfully to market. Many could not be manufactured cost-effectively; some could not be manufactured at all. For others, the perceived (but unconfirmed) market "need" did not really exist.

THE CREATIVE/PRAGMATIC PARTNERSHIP

To be commercially successful, innovation requires collaboration between the inventor and a partner that can refine the original design to make it manufacturable, conduct market research to confirm or deny the market need and then manufacture and distribute the package. The earlier that collaboration begins, the sooner the likely success or failure of the innovation can be assessed and the project advanced or mercifully scrapped.

Collaboration is a two-way partnership. In addition to taking advantage of our experience in design, engineering, molding and

manufacturing, the innovators that collaborate with TricorBraun also learn more about current manufacturing capabilities and current market trends—which are continually changing—which helps them in developing future innovations. We, on the other hand, get valuable insight into what new design concepts are being created, and how they may make future demands on our molding and manufacturing capabilities that we need to be ready to meet.

When searching for innovations to commercialize, we especially target packages that others have initiated, and that are

promising, but that are struggling to get to a marketable stage. Evaluating them is not simply a process of looking at a concept and making a decision. As a company with more than 100 years of experience in packaging we might be tempted to do so, but if we did that we would be doing exactly what we fault some innovators for doing—making a judgment not rooted in hard evidence and practical sense.

THE PROCESS AT WORK



Recent innovations we have developed in this collaborative way have ranged from entirely new ideas to refinements of existing packaging.

Our new bi-injected, elastic hinge, flip top jar is an innovation that was developed internally by TricorBraun. It is designed to allow a consumer to conveniently access product packaged in a jar (lip balm, for example) without having to hold the lid in one hand and the jar in the other. Pressing a catch on the front of the jar releases the spring-loaded lid, which pops open to expose the product. After use, the lid can be closed with a quick push, and clicks securely shut.

Design, engineering and manufacturing experience combined to enable us to bi-inject the jar and lid, eliminating separate molding and assembly steps. Integrating the lid and jar also ensures the lid won't be dropped during use—which our focus group research revealed as a consumer pet peeve with jar lids.



An example of a refinement to an existing package is a redesign of packages that incorporated measuring scoops. Large containers of powdered product (sports supplements and bodybuilding products, for example) are often packaged with a measuring scoop—which, when loose, immediately tends to work its way to the bottom of the powder. In a simple innovation, we redesigned such packages to add two nesting grooves in the

Instead, we put our collective expertise to work, evaluating the functionality of the package, determining whether it can be cost-effectively manufactured and conducting focus group research to confirm real consumer interest in what the innovation offers.

inner edge of the container lip. These hold the scoop in place while still allowing the opening to be closed with an induction seal.

We see many of these innovations, whether developed internally or brought to us by companies or individuals needing help, before they are commercialized. At other times we encounter innovative packages or manufacturing techniques that are already in use that we realize might have additional “off-label” commercial applications.

Plastic Technologies, Inc., for example, developed and patented an aerated PET (polyethylene terephthalate) preform that could be overmolded and then blown without the two layers delaminating. PTI's initial goal was to create a PET beverage bottle with a molded-in thermal layer. It was successful, producing a bottle that could hold beverage temperature steady for 15 minutes longer than a simple PET bottle.

But when we looked at that process, we saw a completely different opportunity: if the preform could be engraved with a pattern, then successfully overmolded, the result would be a bottle with a completely embedded design feature—a brand logo, for instance. Adjusting the size of the design or adding color could then make that message as subtle or eye-catching as the brand owner wished.

TRICORBRAUN®



In tests, PTI went through the engraving and molding process and evaluated the outcome. The result is an innovative bottle that is ideal for a premium product looking for a unique branding feature. We now have a patent application pending on that version of the process.

THE END RESULT

The need of brand owners for a continuous supply of innovative packaging to keep their brands fresh in consumers' eyes keeps package innovators working on new concepts. That need also keeps experienced package developers continually looking for those innovators who need help commercializing their ideas. The synergistic relationship that results is the most reliable pathway to new packaging that is attractive, functional and meets confirmed consumer wants.

An important part of the process is protecting the intellectual property rights of all parties. Our practice is to protect all valuable innovations, both those we develop in-house and those brought to us, with patents. Whether in our name, the innovator's name or both together, everyone's rights are protected.

To date, TricorBraun holds more than 150 patents—some for new designs, some for new processes. In the case of the multi-layer bottle, for instance, PTI holds a utility patent, but because we expanded on that process to create embedded branding elements, we have applied for our own patents.

The primary purpose of a patent, obviously, is to protect a new design or process from being used without permission. But in the world of innovation, it is also objective confirmation that what design and engineering teams and their innovator partners have created is indeed entirely new.