

Brand Security's

White Knight—Packaging

The hazards of nonsecure packaging go beyond product damage and can lead to a severe devaluation of a brand. Numerous decisions in packaging and component choices are logical options for brand security.

BY JOHN PERKINS

With today's expanding global marketplace, companies and their brands are more vulnerable than ever to security breaches. Each year, according to the National Retail Federation, approximately \$41.6 billion worth of goods are lost throughout the retail supply chain due to theft, tampering, and/or shipping and retail damage. Security packaging is a business imperative for retailers and consumer packaged goods manufacturers. But how do you determine a secure package? Some security packaging, for example, provides theft barriers by being unable to fit into a standard clothing pocket or by requiring the use of a tool to access contents. However varied the definition of secure packaging has become, security means protection of contents, intellectual property and the value of a brand.

Stopping Product Counterfeits and Tampering

For the most part, the product's packaging is the first interaction a consumer has with a product. As such, product counterfeiting has become a significant issue, costing brand owners valuable time and money to combat—as well as the costs required to regain consumer trust. Counterfeiters strive to replicate this intimate connection between a consumer and a brand for illegal profit. Through

the power of security packaging, brand owners can protect their product as well as their brand with authenticity and anti-counterfeiting features.

MWV has identified a trend toward tamper evidence solutions for pump, sprayer, closure and dispenser applications. Consumers are more inclined to purchase a product that has visible tamper evidence features in place compared to products without because the visual element provides reassurance that the product was previously untouched or unused by anyone. Furthermore, there is an increased demand by consumers for personal care and cosmetics products with fewer preservatives and more natural ingredients—especially creams, lotions and soaps—and, to meet the demand, brand owners are reinforcing and redesigning product packaging to prevent pre-purchase opening, protecting the formula from being in contact with the air, which may cause spoilage or contamination and, therefore, also damage the brand.

Product tampering, too, costs distributors millions of dollars in lost sales revenue.

There are several tamper evidence systems for dispensers available that block the neck or lock ring in order to obstruct the dispenser from being primed on store shelves. The blocking clip is the tamper evidence feature that gives the consumer visual indication of product

tampering. Other systems cover the spout of the dispenser, which both prevents consumers from priming the pump in-store while securing the product from outside contamination. However, the spout cap is more of a protection system than a tamper evidence feature because consumers can easily remove the cap in the store before purchasing the product.

These issues can effectively be addressed by combining two systems and multiple features to create an overall safety system—tamper evident features, spout protectors, blocking clips and nonremovable closures used in combination, for example. MWV has experienced success with a technology that ensures a metal-free fluid path and also has lock-up/lock-down features. Three-in-one systems such as this guarantee the first use to the consumer, and, therefore, help ensure consumer confidence in the product. These systems, too, can provide tangible benefits once purchased—tamper evidence clips can be re-purposed to serve as a spout protector to shield against contamination and dryness as well as spilling during transport and traveling, for example—that add further value.

For premium products and product lines at high-end outlets, anti-divergent packaging technology is an additional security packaging that may be considered. This covert packaging solution uses barcodes and serial numbers, also known as serialization, so brand owners can track their product shipments to ensure they

arrive at their predetermined destination. In other words, this technology helps prevent products from diverging off their planned shipping and delivery paths. The high-end fragrance market, where licensing agreements specify exclusive logistics and sales partnerships, is known to invest more in this technology because these high-recognition, highly sought products have a higher potential for counterfeiting.

Going Global Securely

Today more than ever, brands must truly operate on a global scale to ensure profitability. Emerging markets—such as Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and India—offer brands an opportunity for exponential growth, and a company's operating capacity and distribution channels must be able to satisfy the demands of local markets scattered worldwide. For brand owners looking to expand into emerging markets, it is imperative to partner with a packaging solutions provider that offers secure packaging and a secure supply chain that has the ability to strengthen long-term customer affiliations in high-growth parts of the world.

Material scientists working side-by-side with brand managers and supply chain experts is critical when striving for next-generation solutions that change the way packaging performs, protects and communicates. Innovations that result—including radio-frequency identification,

anticounterfeiting technologies and interactive “smart packaging”—make packaging more functional, durable and secure and provide dividends for the brands that utilize them.

Sustainable Security Solutions for a Better Future

Brands are also starting to be defined, in part, by consumer-friendly, sustainable security packaging solutions. Retailers often seek the best eco-friendly products that address current, environmental concerns evident in consumer trends. And alternatives to traditional plastic clamshells are very visible manifestations of this push. Sustainable paperboard-based solutions are renewable—often using 50–60% less plastic, on average, than clamshells and, in some examples, up to 50% recycled materials. Packaging such as this can also achieve smaller footprints on shelf while offering the safe-to-open attributes consumers want and maintaining the product display benefits of plastic clamshells and the theft resistance critical to loss prevention. ■ GCI



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