

EB: Can you tell us more about the Carling and Caffrey's campaigns?

SM: 'Cold' was a big central platform for Carling. Bear in mind that Carling Extra Cold was doing very well for us in the on-trade as a dispense mechanism. We began to wonder how we could make that available in the off-trade. Having the cold indicators on cans was the big step forward for us.

The campaign was called 'Cold You Can See' and the ink was activated at 4-6°C, as is the case with most thermochromic beer packaging. It was something genuinely new and useful for the consumer on the can, and was seen as a huge opportunity to celebrate and amplify 'cold' in the home as much as people were enjoying it in on-trade premises.

Caffrey's introduced a 'cold knot' icon around 2007, providing a point of difference that showed it still had a lot of modern appeal. There was a huge liking for the brand and the cans made a huge impression in the market when

they were launched. People were very positive about the extra-coldness. Mixed with the smooth delivery, it was another thing that stood out in the world of ales where the competition hadn't done a great deal of innovation since the days of the widget and creamflow.

EB: Why is temperature such a big deal to consumers?

SM: We've got a lot of data about impulse purchases – it's a big part of our business, particularly in the off-trade. We've got stats that show 80% of shoppers want to buy cold beer; 80% of those will drink the beer on the day of purchase, one in three will drink it within two hours of purchase. It's not going away, as if this was some kind of nineties fad. Whoever can meet that requirement in the most motivating and convenient way is going to win. Our brand always talks about "Rocky Mountain cold refreshment", and now it shouts and celebrates it too. It's the brand that's most wedded to thermochromic technology. ■

Ink science

Thermochromic ink is a microcapsule technology that comprises an organic acid and a colourant, suspended in a liquid solvent. At room temperature, the solvent keeps the acid and the colourant separate, leaving the ink colourless. However, when the temperature falls below the melting point of the solvent, the components come into contact, electrons interact and a colour appears.

Nick Threadgold, a Ball Europe product commercial engineer, worked with Molson Coors on all three campaigns. He explains that the sheer size of the designs for Coors Light posed a big challenge.

"To get a good colour change, you need a thick cover," he says. "We needed to use a lot more ink than a standard design, which gives problems on the line. Typically we produce 1,600-1,800 cans a minute; the speed can cause issues if the ink mists and contaminates other parts of the design. But we learned a lot beforehand by working on the other designs."

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Cover story



A plan for success

Gordon Henman, packaging technical manager at Marks & Spencer, tells **Patricia Roffey** about the company's ethos on environmentally friendly and sustainable packaging.

Marks & Spencer (M&S) is three years into Plan A, a commitment to change 100 things over five years, while aiming to become the world's most sustainable retailer by 2015. So how's the track record looking for M&S on its packaging front?

Its commitment to build Plan A into every one of the 2.7 billion individual products bought from M&S each year appears a massive undertaking. But in transforming its packaging systems and processes, the retailer has revisited simplicity, and in doing so has broken with industry norms. M&S acknowledges that its goal puts down a bold marker that demonstrates its commitment while driving the search for innovative solutions to environmental challenges.

Voluntary agreement

Earlier this year M&S joined other retailers in signing up to Courtauld Commitment 2. This follows the original Courtauld Commitment, a voluntary agreement between major UK supermarkets and the Waste and

Resources Action Programme, a non-governmental organisation that targets improvements in resource efficiency and which aims to achieve the more sustainable use of resources over the entire lifecycle of products throughout the whole supply chain.

While still keeping goods safe and protected, and packaging appealing, Courtauld Commitment 2 seeks to impact less on the environment and increase transportation efficiency.

Less packaging is smarter

For example, most of the furniture market favours a part-corrugated and EPS packaging solution. Unfortunately, the EPS, in the main, ends up in landfill.

M&S is planning to deliver its furniture in sustainable corrugated packaging solutions, as opposed to EPS packaging used by the majority of its competitors. M&S's approach means that more than 8t of waste that would have gone to landfill has been eradicated. In volume terms, that's enough polystyrene to fill six 40ft articulated lorries. This an ethical approach

because plastics are reckoned to take up to 500 years to decompose and are made mostly from non-renewable oil sources.

Benefits

As M&S pushes for environmentally friendly packaging, the approach is reaping benefits in:

- efficiencies across packaging and operations
- environmental reduction with greener solutions that cost less
- improved control of packaging design and quality for local and overseas production
- enhanced perception from consumers
- accurate measurement of packaging materials and waste
- increased speed to market
- incremental sales and profit.

Marks & Spencer packaging technical manager Gordon Henman notes that Plan A's targets were initially based around retail packaging. "When we launched version one of Plan A, it was all about a 25% reduction in those areas, and they

