



Steve Howell is a Director of Creative Instore Solutions, and has more than 24 years experience in below the line marketing, specialising in the design and manufacture of point of purchase displays. Creative Instore Solutions began in 1995 in Australia as a boutique powerhouse that blends creativity with structural engineering to conceive designs that sell. It's a winning combination that has enabled them to develop a blue chip client base. Creative Instore Solutions now have offices around the world in China, North America and Europe with a global network of design, manufacturing and logistics.

# Looking for real estate opportunity

I was recently watching 'Ben 10' with my son, his favourite cartoon character, who has a mysterious watch-like alien device called an Omnitrix. It can morph him into different alien life-forms, each with their own unique powers, to then do battle with the powers of evil, both human and extraterrestrial. It started me thinking that this ability to morph and transform your original form into something adaptable and more powerful is a pretty good metaphor for Point of Purchase design. You may be thinking 'that's a bit of a leap' but I think it's got legs.

The aim of POP is to attract attention and drive impulse sales. To do this you need to create designs that house your product in a way that makes it stand out from the crowd, and to achieve prime retail real estate, away from the shelf aisles. This is pretty straight forward; however there are ways that you can take this idea further. By taking your original design and then adapting it into different shapes, sizes and applications, you are providing architecture that can take on an entire category. With subtle branding, one product can then claim ownership of the entire category offering. I think that is pretty powerful, even without the help of an alien device.

The best place to start is to identify where the opportunity lies within the real estate. Sometimes it is obvious, such as when new legislations effect how certain products are displayed. For example the Australian Government is implementing a ban on displaying cigarettes in retail environments which means that by 2013 one of the most prime pieces of retail real estate will be up for grabs. However sometimes you need to be more subtle, and identify spaces that are not being used, such as leeching onto the side of ATM machines, or at the counter where people sign their credit card slips.

Recently the new category of Energy Shots has been introduced to the market, offering a prime opportunity to create new POP solutions and take ownership of this burgeoning group of products.

Working with Red Bull,

Creative Instore Solutions has created the E-shots 'Coin Tray' to house the 60ml 'bullet' cans.

When introducing a new product in the market, you have to consider where it is going to fit in the greater scheme of the retail environment. Energy Shots are highly compulsive, so the best place for them is at the counter. This area however has been traditionally

dominated by chewing gum and confectionery. The relationship between the cash register and these products is so strong it gives excellent benefits to the retailer to keep them there. You therefore need a compelling reason to make room for something else and aim to create a leader in the category to become a new 'destination' for the shopper.

When working with Jason Sargent, Regional Commercial Manager at Red Bull, I asked him to contribute a few comments to this article to shed light from the brands point of view. His main aim is to protect his hero product while introducing new varieties, and not dilute the message to the consumer. He says: "Manufacturers and retailers cannot risk in-store space and consumer messaging opportunities on 50/50 propositions. You have to do your homework and be confident you have a product the consumer wants or needs."

doesn't need to look any further, and the brand is positioned as a market leader.

Convenience is a fast growing sector, and so it is important to identify available real estate and how we can attack it. Not every brand can dominate the category, so it is important to grab the attention of the retailer by giving them a solution that is versatile enough to adapt and grow as their needs do. It's also important to capture the imagination of the shopper to give the product the best chance of surviving and growing by making them want to open their wallets and buy.

"I'll give the last word to Jason from Red Bull, who claims: "Customer is King and if you want to be considered as an independent and valued captain of a category you must have the consumer at heart. Category solutions are the POP standard of the future and lay waiting for brave manufacturers." CW

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What goes for the brand certainly goes for the design concept the brand is housed in. The Creative Instore Solutions-designed Red Bull 'Coin Tray' can be a counter unit, a wall fixture or modular unit that can expand horizontally or vertically and therefore become a solution to house the entire category. Through smart design and subtle use of branding, Red Bull can become the predominant 'hero' product in the category that all other brands are then displayed in. The 'Coin Tray' is also designed to be specifically used for people to sign their credit cards slips on top of so that every time someone signs for their petrol they will be signing on top of a red bull product. And potential sales will follow.

Jason believes: "The most important element when considering a new POP item is 'is it functional for the consumer to shop and the retailer to sell from?' If the idea or design doesn't meet these criteria then we won't make things for Red Bull's benefit only."

For me, this means thinking about how you can add value to the retailer by understanding and working within the existing space and making it look and function better. By creating an actual 'category solution', the retailer



Red Bull Coin Tray.



Other designs to create a Category Solution for E-Shots.