

THINK AND ACT GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY



In an increasingly dynamic and competitive retail landscape, how can brands and retailers maintain a competitive advantage?

Steve Howell of Creative Instore Solutions shares his insights on the silent salesperson, entertaining in-store theatre displays and the imperative to think and act globally and locally.

Established in 1995, Creative Instore Solutions is a global point of purchase design and manufacture powerhouse blending creativity with structural engineering to conceive sustainable designs which drive sales. It's an award-winning combination that sees them work with a blue-chip client base around the globe.

'Our philosophy is to 'think and act globally and locally,' says Steve Howell, managing director, Creative Instore Solutions. 'We work across North America, Europe, Australasia and are currently expanding into China and India. Just this month, our global executions include design, manufacture and distribution of display units for Red Bull in the US, PepsiCo in Australia, BIC® in France and Kellogg's in the UK. It's imperative that we create sustainable designs which connect globally but are tailored for local execution,' continues Howell.

The current landscape is dynamic, competitive and constantly changing, mainly structural - such as online shopping, international shopping and changing consumer desires and habits, all creating an environment of 'Future shock' for many of our retailers.

In this current climate a united vision and drive is vital but the need to understand local markets and tailor point of purchase design and merchandising in alignment with cultural, technical, sustainable and retail mandates is the tipping point to achieve sales.

Red Bull adopted this highly successful approach, as evidenced by the recent adaptation of the awarded Red Bull Rhombus display into a non branded yet highly recognisable, display unit. The retailer, who loved the display, expressly barred any recognisable graphics or logo placement but it was imperative for the brand to get cut through and connect with the target market. Working in collaboration, CIS and Red Bull agreed on slight modifications to the existing design which would utilise economies of scale on the former investment, but which also allowed them to localise the point of purchase display to meet the demands of the retailer. The challenge was to own real estate through the subliminal use of the Rhombus design and globally recognised brand colours. The final result has been a success for both parties.

'We value a close working relationship with our clients,' says Deane Hubball, group chief executive officer, Creative Instore Solutions. 'It's our partnership approach and integration at both global and territory level that allows this kind of free communication flow, which ultimately creates successful, tailored solutions for our client, the retailer and us.'

Creative Instore Solutions are renowned for their innovative designs and engaging instore theatre. Their client portfolio

includes global leading brands such as Red Bull, PepsiCo, Twinings, Lenovo, Garmin, and Kraft. They have been awarded more than 50 Australian and international industry Awards, since their establishment.

'We know that people research before they shop these days (the zero moment of truth (ZMOT)), so the key is to create informative theatre that will build confidence with the brand. A successful display unit will also attract and engage shoppers so that even if they had a pre-determined consideration, with the right approach you can swing their purchasing decision,' says Howell.

'Following this line of thought 'the second moment of truth' (SMOT) is product trial, usage and experience so your displays should find a way to fulfil consumer engagement without the need for immediate sales support,' continues Howell. This later point is of particular concern to products with highly involved purchasing decisions, such as our Garmin GPS unit, especially during peak retail periods such as Christmas.

Matching online prices and discounting promotions can't be the only differentiating factor for retailers. Inspiring consumers and adding value to the shopping experience is even more important than before as competition escalates.

'Creating an emotive connection with the brand through experiential shopping is the secret ingredient. Instore theatre is a point of differentiation for retailers. Entertaining and engaging display units will attract customers and encourage emotive purchasing. How many times have you fallen prey to the look of delight on your child's face, which was prompted by the purchase of a 'momento?' says Howell.

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