

5 BRANDS TO

SMALL BUT MIGHTY!

By Jill Rivkin

FROM HEALTH FOODS AND BEVERAGES TO CLEANING SOLUTIONS AND ELECTRONICS, THIS YEAR'S **BRANDS TO WATCH** CAUGHT OUR ATTENTION BECAUSE, THOUGH SMALL IN SIZE (AND BUDGET), THEY ARE MIGHTY IN INNOVATION—TAKING ON RIVALS MANY TIMES THEIR SIZE. ⚡ USING CREATIVE PACKAGE DESIGNS AND MEMORABLE MESSAGING, THESE FIVE INDEPENDENTS ARE PROVING THAT, THESE DAYS, **SMALL IS WHERE IT'S AT.**

WATCH!

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> **JAWBONE** UNITED STATES

When it comes to consumer electronics, packaging may not be the first thing that comes to mind. But Aliph Inc.'s flagship Jawbone brand of personal mobile accessories proves that innovative package design can revolutionize an electronics brand and send sales soaring.

The San Francisco-based company credits package design with propelling Jawbone "from challenger to best seller" status, says Yves Behar, the founder of design agency fuseproject who also operates as Jawbone's

JAWBONE'S "MUSEUM BOX" DISPLAY SYSTEM PROVIDES 360-DEGREE VIEWS OF THE PRODUCT AND DISPLAYS IT LIKE A WORK OF ART.

JAWBONE'S MOST RECENT INNOVATION IS THE JAMBOX, A SMALL WIRELESS SPEAKER FOR MOBILE DEVICES.

chief operating officer. "When we first started, the accessories market was dominated by consumer-annoying blister packs," he says. "Most accessories are still sold in these."

To combat this and "elevate" the product, Jawbone developed a display system called the "museum box" that provides 360-degree views of the

product and displays it like a work of art.

The packaging helped the fledgling company make its mark in a category dominated by a few high profile, well-funded brands. But for Jawbone, the task was much deeper than developing striking,

unique and market-changing packaging—environmentally friendly packaging was an equal priority.

In 2010, approximately ten years after the initial Jawbone launch, Yves and his team introduced an update on the museum box



format. The new packaging still delivers the brand's high-end image, but is now 100 percent recyclable and largely produced from recycled materials. Additionally, by allowing for near-zero draft angles, reducing wall thickness and minimizing materials overall, the brand reduced its plastic usage by two thirds.

Behar says that same care and thought is extended to every touchpoint for the brand. "Brand and messaging, product and packaging, website and media campaign are all designed by the same team," he says. "This is very different from work typically done in organizational silos."

Such meticulous consideration has created a strong following that Behar says will take the brand into new segments—a strategy heralded by the recent launch of Jambox, a wireless speaker used with mobile devices. "Our experience in

THE COMPONENTS OF THE REPLENISH PACKAGE—THE MEASURING CUP AND THE POD OF CONCENTRATE—ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE BOTTLE DESIGN TO PREVENT FRUSTRATION WITH THE PRODUCT IN USE AND STORAGE.

miniaturization, wireless technology and user experience is going to allow us to be at the forefront of new personal technologies,” he says.

If past success is any indication (Behar says every product the brand has launched in the last five years has been number one in its category), it’s a goal that is decidedly within reach.

> **REPLENISH** UNITED STATES

Jason Foster didn’t know he was going to create a “new segment in packaging” when he was using a spray bottle to iron his shirts one afternoon. But it was then that he began thinking about the delivery mechanisms for cleaning products and about the possibility of developing a smarter bottle design. And in the past four years, the former Wall Street equity researcher has done just that—created something he calls “intelligent packaging.”

Foster says that the explosion in the use of plastics over the last 60 years hooked American consumers on the ideas of disposability and convenience. “We lost the way we used to build and manufacture products,” he says. “We [used to] make products and design and build them to last.”

So, rather than create just another spray bottle with a limited useful life, Foster focused on the functionality and durability of the bottle and the delivery of the product. And, in late 2010, he launched the Replenish brand on a platform of reuse.

The cleaning-product delivery system consists of a thick, durable PET spray bottle with a built-in measuring cup and a four-ounce pod of concentrate attached to the bottom. Foster says the format “opens up advantages” from a sustainability and cost standpoint, because it uses 90 percent less plastic, oil and CO₂ than traditional household cleaners, minimizes stocking efforts and increases shelf profitability for retailers.



The components of the package—the measuring cup and the pod of concentrate—are integrated into the bottle design to prevent frustration with the product in use and storage. They also help to overcome consumer skepticism of tablets (commonly used in existing refillable bottle systems), which Foster says make people think they are buying something that feels like “grabbing air.”

Instead, the Replenish format makes the value of buying sustainably clearer: Shoppers can see the measuring cup in the middle of the bottle and the vibrant color of the concentrate inside. This new approach to cleaners “takes the water out,” as other refillable cleaning systems do, but it makes it more apparent that shoppers are buying something that is “built to be a tool.”

Foster reports that Replenish had an exceptional introduction online, and that the brand is launching in the Midwest with one of the premier natural foods retailers soon. The move from online sales to brick-and-mortar stores is a huge step for the brand, he says. “When you have seen [the bottle] and picked it up, you immediately get it,” Foster says.

Though Replenish has started with cleaning products, Foster says the innovative approach to product delivery has legs in other home-goods segments. And while it’s too soon to talk specifics, he says he has agreements in place with “marquis manufacturers” to bring the bottle to other categories.

“If you want to innovate,” Foster says, “you have to throw out all those old designs and start with a completely fresh and new approach.”

> **RUDE HEALTH** UNITED KINGDOM

Despite what we teach our children, there are times when behaving rudely pays off. And for the five-year-old, London-based breakfast company Rude Health, being rude has

produced a strong brand personality, successful marketing campaigns and high-quality, well-loved breakfast options that generate nearly \$2.8 million a year in sales.

The small-but-mighty team of seven, led by co-founders Nick and Camilla Barnard, has been busy riding the success of a 2008 rebranding campaign that repositioned Rude Health as “clever, witty, a little bit risqué but still in good taste.”

Originally a brown paper bag with a clear window and biodegradable label, the former package had backed the brand into a niche. “The packaging got lost on health-food store shelves and failed to attract further customers [beyond those with heightened sensitivity to health],” says Camilla Barnard, co-founder and marketing director.

“The Rude Health name was always the strongest part of the brand and everybody loved it,” she says. “but the packaging did not convey the company’s belief that breakfast should be healthy and tasty, but ultimately great fun.”



The husband and wife team set out to develop an updated identity and a unique personality with tongue-in-cheek language, double-entendre product names (think raisin-free muesli called No Flamin’ Raisins) and on-pack anecdotes like, “you’re so happy hot pants are back in fashion” that are not so much impolite as they are outspoken, smart and fun.

The redesigned packages use 100 percent recycled materials. They also feature images that are anything but standard for the category—no bowls of cereal or fields of grain to be seen—which allow the Rude Health brand to pop on the shelf. “Ultimately the package should make people feel full of life, ready for anything and happy,” Barnard says.

Marketing and publicity campaigns tap the power of the brand’s packaging. The packs photograph “exceptionally well,” Barnard says, so they’ve received a lot of press coverage.

Since the 2008 refresh, Rude Health has achieved nationwide distribution in the UK’s largest supermarket Tesco. In addition to extending the original muesli and porridge products, the brand has also developed two granolas, a range of light and wholesome cereals and gluten-free cereals.

Barnard says that, going forward, Rude Health has plans to cast a wider net and extend beyond the cereal aisle with the ultimate goal of “[reaching] more people and getting them in rude health.”

market quality that really embodied the heart and soul of this company at its start—an entrepreneurial grassroots endeavor,” Gold says. But, before long, it became clear that a packaging facelift would better—and more broadly—relay the quality, gourmet brand message and more effectively sell the product.

The initial packaging helped successfully launch the product in local and regional markets, and Gold recognized it could play

JUSTIN’S LAUNCH OF A SINGLE-SERVE SQUEEZE PACK WAS A HUGE TRIUMPH FOR THE BRAND. “IT WAS THE FIRST BIG INNOVATION IN THE PEANUT BUTTER INDUSTRY SINCE THE CREATION OF PEANUT BUTTER,” FOUNDER JUSTIN GOLD SAYS.



> **JUSTIN’S NUT BUTTER** UNITED STATES

Starting with just a food processor in his Boulder, Colo. kitchen, Justin’s founder Justin Gold has transformed his local business into a nationwide success: The brand is the fastest growing natural nut butter and works with such big name retailers as Starbucks, Whole Foods, Target and Kroger.

In 2002, the avid outdoorsman and devoted vegetarian began selling his homemade nut butters to family, friends and neighborhood natural food stores in whimsical, 16oz glass jars. “The original packaging had a playful, local farmer’s



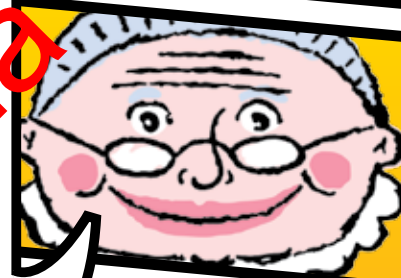


> SWEET LEAF TEA UNITED STATES

Social media has indelibly changed the way brands are marketed today. And Austin, Texas-based Sweet Leaf Tea has tapped the medium to bring its community together—from the company's base of young, energetic and passionate



**TO CONVEY THE BRAND'S
"HOMEMADE GOODNESS"
MESSAGE, SWEET LEAF TEA
FEATURES AN ILLUSTRATED
VERSION OF THE FOUNDER'S
GRANDMOTHER MIMI ON
EVERY LABEL, WHILE
MEMORABLE "GRANNYISMS"
(HEARTFELT WORDS OF
WISDOM) ARE PRINTED
INSIDE THE BOTTLE CAPS.**



an important role in driving the brand to think more "nationally." "[I needed to] take the emphasis off my playful and outdoorsy nature and convert to a more universal message of a simple, elegant and culinary experience," he explains.

In a March 2010 package and brand redesign, the new focus of the brand became the contents of the package, which Gold lovingly refers to as "The Heroic Nut." Now, a colorful illustration of an almond, peanut or hazelnut dipped in maple, honey or chocolate (depending on the variety) stands out on a white background, creating more of a premium feel. The refresh marked a major milestone for the brand, increasing sales by 13 percent and growing distribution by 400 percent.

But Gold also points to the 2006 launch of a single-serve squeeze pack as another triumph for the brand. "It was the first big innovation in the peanut butter industry since the creation of peanut butter," he says.

Though the format received huge reception, it had initial challenges: Retailers had concerns about how to merchandise the pouches and consumers had questions about how to use them. But, with a little prompting, retailers and users caught on. Today the butters are sold in 16oz glass jars, a 10-count caddy of 1.15oz squeeze packs and a box of 150 loose 0.5oz squeeze packs marketed for outdoor adventures as well as quick snacks and school lunches.

As for what we can expect from Justin's next: "Innovation!" Gold proclaims, noting a goal to implement a 33 percent renewable squeeze pack film by Earth Day 2011.

consumers to its very own "Granny" and all tea lovers in between.

In 1997, after living on a sailboat in the Florida Keys, founder Clayton Christopher was inspired to

make an iced tea that tasted as good as his Grandmother Mimi's. Together with Mimi's recipe and his childhood best friend David Smith, Christopher began brewing tea—using pillowcases as tea bags, crawfish pots for brew tanks and garden hoses to fill the bottles.

Today, Sweet Leaf's lineup has expanded to 11 sweetened and unsweetened green teas, iced teas and lemonade with a "Homemade Goodness" message that's predominantly conveyed through its handcrafted design: an illustrated version of Clayton's Grandmother Mimi is on every label and memorable "Grannyisms" (heartfelt words of wisdom) are printed inside the bottle caps. "It all has to live up to that

[homespun] promise,” says Charla Adams, brand marketing manager. “We’re finding it’s a message that both consumers and our retail partners get excited about. It looks, tastes and feels totally different from our competitors.”

In fact, packaging has played a critical role in growing the brand from the start.

“Early on, we received drawings in the mail of Granny and letters thanking us for a ‘Grannyism,’” says Adams. “Now with the advent of social media, we get to experience this on a daily basis.”

The company’s Facebook page, for instance, has grown to more than 15,500 fans who regularly contribute feedback and ideas, along with pictures of how they have reused the brand’s packaging on magnets, clothes and accessories. And Adams says that both new and long-term “super fans” regularly Tweet about Sweet Leaf products and its “Grannyisms” (e.g., “Mind your own beeswax”).

Adams says the brand is quick to engage consumers through the latest social mediums but that it maintains its unique down-home voice in that and every other touchpoint for the brand.

“Every point of contact an individual has with Sweet Leaf Tea, whether it’s via our packaging, on our website, or at an event, should feel like part of a cohesive brand message,” she says.

But, Adams notes, it is the company’s packaging that anchors the brand and “really impacts everything we do,” from blog contests, social media conversations and digital marketing campaigns.

“We are always listening to our fans to understand what new opportunities may be right for the brand,” Adams says.

Sweet Leaf is highly tuned in to the idea that packaging that meets consumer needs is the key to growth in the beverage arena. The company recently launched a 15.5oz can that is “perfect for convenience stores and quick-service restaurants” and a 64oz PET bottle in supermarkets for the tea-loving family. These launches have filled a void for Sweet Leaf customers and also opened up new retail venues for the brand.

And it sounds like there’s more “homemade goodness” to come: Adams reports that there are plans to introduce additional packaging formats later this year. **BP**



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