

# Are we able to properly address customers' real demands, rather than just print one more beautiful label?

**A**s a customer, I search for products and brands that can deliver offers beyond the trivial. A brand with a clear message, a product with a real purpose. We are all multi-shoppers with different needs seeking multi-solutions. But, as manufactures and development teams - are we properly addressing real demands, rather than just printing one more beautiful label?

My purpose here is not to be so sceptical, but as a creative professional I support initiatives that add-value to the customers and to the community – rather than just conceptualise a cute packaging to be placed on the shelves. I believe we reached a level where creativity is really a pain-point in order to establish new standards.

On one hand, I see companies still focusing on colourful printings, fancy embossing, various fragrances, trying to be the most creative to fit their new SKU on a tiny corner of a retailer outlet and hoping that the new item will save their sales and profit. On the other hand, we see the retailers closing hundreds of physical stores and focusing their efforts into converting the E-commerce as their main distribution channel for many categories. Creativity definitely has a higher challenge now.

At the beginning of the E-commerce era, we thought that we had found the perfect channel to store as many items as necessary, and the convenience brought from that would allow us to just keep adding SKUs to an endless menu. What we've discovered is that shoppers want the purchase process to offer more and more, be faster and simpler, and online stores are giving shoppers the option to "save the shopping list" in order to keep their favourites easily accessible.

This mean that we are telling shoppers that they can skip the shopping journey again, with no need to keep navigating after the first page displayed.

Many professionals in the sector believe, as I do, that the tissue categories will definitely become "star categories" in this online market place. Our products

don't bring a lot of engagement during the purchase process, unless there is a narrative to be told or a real cause behind the product. If the main goal of a corporation is just based on selling 'more paper', this corporation will now find strong competitors willing to focus on the process of better selling paper.

## AfH Waste Issue

Packaging, plastic, waste ... the entire world is talking about these topics.

When we focus on the process of helping clients to consume better (them being final consumers or establishments), we encourage them to buy our products and to buy better products.

Take, for example, an interesting example from the AfH market. The negotiation can be very narrow when the main concern is pricing – making it very difficult for companies to approach them with any other 'reason why' for buying their products.

Price is such an important variable because it is driven by the 'waste issue' these places need to deal with. And then I ask you: how is it possible that most companies do not hold hands with distributors or even with the main groups of AfH clients (in hospitality, education institutions, hospitals, entertainment) to understand the reason for their high consumption? Especially if they are wasting more than actually using the product.

So, when I say we should focus on the process, more than on the product, it is because maybe we can sell the same product but using a better option for the client. The 'single-sheet central dispensing rolls', for example. The paper is the same, but the mechanism offered with the 'centrefreed' dispenser is innovative – and again, is a simple innovation, but why are big corporations not focusing just on offering that kind of better offer?

You are saving your client's money, while reducing waste – plus, reducing consumption minimises the risk of



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expensive pipe blockages.

## 'Internet of Things' fighting waste

Another initiative, a little bit more 'tech focused,' is the paper intelligent dispenser. This one carries a chip with it, connected to an App, that collects data from the daily consumption and lets the cleaning team know when it is running out of paper. So, no need to 'waste their time' passing by all the toilets to check if they need a refill.

With the consumption data, collected by the chip, the establishment can build a forecast that will help with a more accurate supply management with future purchases.

There is so much innovation in the tissue sector. My call here is to understand how we are focusing our creativity in order to bring more relevant solutions.