Integrating Holistic Packaging by Design™ Considerations into the Package Development Process Helps QSR Chain Beat the Odds and Drive Sales

A quick service restaurant (QSR) chain sought help developing innovative, functional and sophisticated packaging for a new premium coffee product.

Challenge

A leading QSR chain wanted to revive its brand, boost sales and launch a new product that would capitalize on the burgeoning gourmet coffee trend. The chain recognized an opportunity to offer consumers premium roast coffee and sought new packaging that would convey a premium image. The packaging also needed to be functional and keep the coffee warm without being too hot for consumers to hold.

The cups the chain was using for its standard coffee offering were made of white foam and were effective at keeping contents warm longer than paper alternatives, though they lacked the graphic design and ‘punch’ the brand and category managers wanted. They also were virtually indistinguishable from most competitor coffee cups.

Solution

The chain sought help from HAVI, known for their deep industry expertise and track record of delivering innovative and creative packaging solutions, with deep expertise in the QSR and foodservice markets. The team implemented Holistic Packaging by Design™ principals into the consumer research phase of the cup development, resulting in consumer and operational insights with which to understand the unique needs of both the customer (QSR chain) and consumers. With these insights, they developed best-case technical requirements for the new packaging and collaborated with the chain’s suppliers to develop solution options. HAVI presented its concepts to the chain and together they decided to produce an innovative paper wrapped expandable polystyrene (PWEPS) cup.
Made of foam with a paper-based wrapper, the cup represented an industry first and was an immediate hit. Consumers enjoyed the thermal benefits of the foam—coffee that stayed hotter longer and a container that was cool to the touch—and the aesthetic of the wrapper. The wrapper featured high quality graphics, color and branding and helped portray an image of quality and sophistication that aligned with the upscale feel of the chain’s new premium coffee.

HAVI also designed a new lid for the cup that helped to further distinguish the product from competitor offerings. Instead of the industry’s ubiquitous white tear-back plastic coffee lid, the team recommended a black lid with a raised drinking surface that resonated with consumers and conveyed the custom, upscale image of the product. The lid featured innovative technology too—a tab that could easily and neatly open and lock back onto the lid for use and then close again.

Through great collaboration and by leveraging HAVI’s strong relationships with its supply base, the QSR chain was able to move from sketch to commercialization in an extremely compressed timeline, ensuring it was able to capitalize on the premium coffee trend. When the chain launched its premium coffee in the PWEPS cups, it was a financial and operational success and helped revitalize and redefine the brand. To this day, the cups continue to distinguish the brand from competitors and delight consumers. The chain recognized HAVI among its entire global supplier base with an Innovation of the Year Award for its work on the new package, and the resulting successful launch.

**Benefits**

- **Innovative style and function** – Created unique, functional and visually appealing packaging that affords greater ease of use and comfort to consumers without degradation to coffee temperature.
- **Brand differentiation** – The chain revamped its image and differentiated its premium coffee offering in a proprietary cup and lid with aesthetics that match the quality of the coffee.
- **Customer satisfaction** – The premium coffee cups and lids consistently receive praise for performance and rank high in customer satisfaction reports.

HAVI is a global, privately owned company focused on innovating, optimizing and managing the supply chains of leading brands. Offering services in supply chain management, packaging, logistics and recycling & waste, HAVI partners with companies to address challenges big and small across the supply chain, from commodity to customer. Founded in 1974, HAVI employs more than 9,000 people and serves customers in more than 100 countries. HAVI’s supply chain services are complemented by the customer engagement services offered by our affiliated company The Marketing Store. For more information, please visit HAVI.com.

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