

## Optimising Packaging

The 'debate' held last November on Optimising Packaging revealed some interesting aspects of how design fits into the matrix of the client to consumer chain. As a sector that bases its core value on that of innovation it appears that this does not always manifest itself in the area of FMCG packaging. Whether this is a result of the design community not promoting their innovative skills or whether the client does not always recognise the potential of their design team is open to debate. The event demonstrated that the client is clearly interested not only in innovation but also in meeting their responsibilities when it comes to reducing packaging and dealing with the real issue of disposal.

From our perspective I believe that the design community certainly needs to develop an ongoing and deeper relationship with the manufacturers of packaging materials. There was a distinct sense from one member of the panel that the design community did not engage at all with the supplier, and although I would dispute this as there is strong evidence that designers do seek advice from packaging houses, I would also feel that stronger and more organised links would be beneficial. Design Business Ireland is quite happy to engage with the Packaging Association and identify where collaboration could occur.

In relation to the client side we, as a community need to, continually emphasise the relevance and contribution design makes to any packaging assignment. We also need the client to see each part of the chain as a team rather than individuals. Design is historically superb at adapting design solutions to meet a myriad of criteria and if the client or consumer indicate a desire for any particular function or feature to a pack designers can generally 'design' it in. The debate has been captured on film, in a series of clips, which hopefully both those who attended and those who could not will find of interest. Design Business Ireland is committed to continuing to develop relationships with organisations such as Repak and Enterprise Ireland and indeed any body that we believe can contribute to our mission of 'Promoting effective design'.

Finally one of the attendees, Andrew Kirwan from Principle summed up perfectly what I believe we have to do.

*"For me the big point was that our policy should be that the designer has a environmental responsibility in packaging design, more than in an other design for print area, to engage with the complete supply chain from brand owner through to packaging company and even client, to devise a packaging solution that will be as much as possible recyclable. The issue for Repak is that the mixes of material, within paper and within plastics, make packaging hard to recycle. Designers need to get the balance right between form and function".*

Yours



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