



## A DAY IN THE LIFE

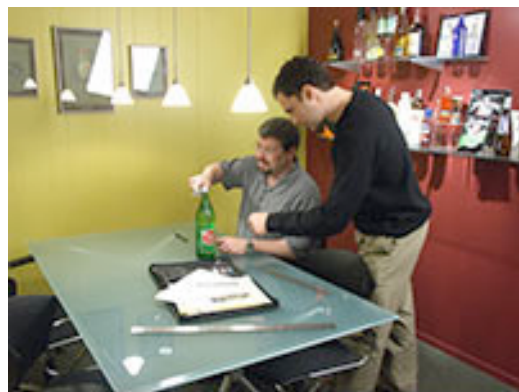
### More Power to the Packaging

"The Proof is in the Packaging," says Dan Matauch (ma-TOOCH), principle/creative director at **Flowdesign**, a brand identity and package design firm based in Northville, Mich. A graduate of the Michigan State University's Packaging Science program, Matauch has spent the past fifteen years in the packaging design field. He has worked with start-up and Fortune 500 beer, beverage, food, spirits, and other consumer products goods companies, developing brand identity, new product packaging and package/brand redesigns.



*Dan Matauch, principle/creative director at Flowdesign*

Matauch recently spoke with Joseph Cattaneo, President of the Glass Packaging Institute, and shared his experiences about the ever evolving new product development process, the latest trends in glass packaging design and decoration and the importance of packaging as a branding vehicle.



*Dan Matauch, principal of Flowdesign, with Dennis Nalezty, senior designer, examine the closure finish on a Mountain Valley Spring Water bottle.*

**Q: You've worked with a number of consumer product goods companies...how is the packaging scenario different today from, let's say, 10 years ago?**

A: Packaging has taken on a much stronger role in the advertising of a product and new product launches. Ten years ago, there wasn't such an emphasis on packaging design per se. Product manufacturers were trying to look for ways to cut costs in packaging materials and logistics, instead of viewing packaging as a marketing vehicle to generate product awareness or create some consumer excitement out there for a product.

**Q: What do you think has contributed to this change?**

A: In the early/mid 90s, a number of new, start-up companies were hitting the market with products featuring head-turning, innovative packaging designs—and as a result, they were taking both sales and market share away from the major leagues players. Brands such as AriZona Iced Tea and SoBe were able to stand out from crowded store shelves with their unique proprietary bottle shapes and packaging design that featured bold colors and graphics. Here's another packaging design success story: SKYY Vodka leaped into the marketplace with its beautiful cobalt blue bottle—and it was the packaging that created its on-premise buzz and product awareness. Belvedere Vodka and Grey Goose also put themselves on the vodka map with their eye-catching frosted bottles that feature the "window effect." These companies didn't have a huge advertising budget, but they did put a priority on the packaging design, and by doing so, the big guys were caught off guard.

**Q: How has the new product development process changed and evolved in the last ten years?**

A: What you see now is that a lot of consumer product companies realize that it's important to work with the packaging design firms from the very beginning of a project—sometimes as early as the conceptual level. Before, the brand manager would approach the packaging design firm and say, "Well, this is the product we want to create and we want it to look like this." The process has, fortunately, evolved into a more collaborative effort where all the aspects of a new product are discussed: integrated design approach, typography, illustration, graphics.... We also address the quality and innovation in the use of packaging materials, and how the new product will match up with branding objectives.

**Q: What are some of the popular glass packaging decorating trends right now?**

A: What really stands out right now in the marketplace are these EFFEN Vodka bottles. These glass bottles feature a rubber sleeve that is both practical and visually stunning. Other popular design and decorating methods at the moment include the use of transparency inks and spot coatings, which means instead of coating the whole bottle, you can just coat certain areas of the bottle.

**Q: Given that packaging design is such a critical component of a product's branding and identity, what do you see are the advantages that glass has as a packaging material?**



A: If a product company can own a shape, the brand equity is eternally sealed in that shape. Take for example Coca-Cola's signature glass bottle, the Sobe bottle, Chanel's square bottle... Since glass is such a great material to work with when developing custom shapes, it is hands down the best material for structural design and definition. And if you can work in the tactile feel into the product's packaging, that's important for developing another sensory element to the product. A good example of that is the BAWLS bottle and the little beads on that bottle. You're able to engage the consumer because they can see and touch the beads. Now that's a powerful packaging message right there. The proof is always in the packaging.

**Q: What are some of the more rewarding products you've worked on developing?**



A: The Catdaddy Carolina Moonshine bottle—now *that* was a fun project. The client was open to giving birth to a far out design—and we really pushed the envelope to create a really gorgeous two-tone coating effect. And as far as the shape of the bottle, we were successful in developing a cross between a nostalgic moonshine-shaped bottle and a contemporary sleek, slender bottle.

**Q: How do you get your inspiration for your work?**

A: I try to work off the brand name—that will help trigger the feelings and ideas for the direction of the design. And just the sheer excitement of working on developing a new product inspires me—to bring it to life *and* to the marketplace.

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