

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR GAINING A COMPETITIVE EDGE

Ease of Use program for consumer packaging launched



During the Australian Institute of Packaging (AIP) National Technical Forums, which were held alongside AUSPACK 2009, Judith Nguyen, Director and Consumer Representative for Arthritis Australia launched the Ease of Use program, a first for consumer products and packaging in Australia and New Zealand.

According to Judith Nguyen, Arthritis Australia and Arthritis New Zealand have developed the Ease of Use program to recognise companies that design user-friendly and easy-to-open consumer packaging and products.

It is a recognised statistic that the world population is aging and the wealth of older consumers is rising. By 2008-09, the 50+ population will have a disposable income in excess of \$120 billion, 25% more than any other age group. One in three, or 8.5 million Australians and New Zealanders, will be aged 50+ by 2011, growing to 15.6 million or 44% of the population by 2050. The 50+ age group is increasingly made up of Baby Boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964.

“With the unavoidable aging population in Australia and New Zealand, now is the time for manufacturers to design products and packaging that actually considers openability and ease-of-use. The reality is that as a body ages upper body mobility, finger strength, dexterity and reach are limited. Eyesight also becomes restricted as we age. These limitations in function reduce a consumer’s ability to open packaging and this does have a major implication on design of products and packaging. The EOU program will enable manufacturers who are already designing user-friendly packaging and products to be recognised for their efforts,” Ms Nguyen said.

“The Baby Boomers are demanding, and will not suffer in silence with hard to use, difficult to open products

and packaging. They are increasingly willing to switch brands when products or packaging fail to meet their changing needs,”

“Some of the packaging designs that cause ‘wrap rage’ include: cans with pull ring tabs, ‘invisible’ or unaligned tear notches, hard to tear strips on cardboard packs, zip tracks that won’t re-seal, press and seal strips with nowhere to grip, jars with round plastic lids and no serration, tightly sealed foil lids, screw-tops on jars needing super-strength to open, miniscule instructions and containers that are child-proof and adult-proof,”

“It is important however to note that Baby Boomers are also prepared to change to easy-to-open products and show willingness to pay more for packaging that is user-friendly,” Ms Nguyen said.

“The Ease of Use program is an opportunity for manufacturers to seriously start considering ease of opening as a critical element of their packaging and product design. It will give participating manufacturers a unique advantage. The Ease of Use trademark on products will send an immediate user-friendly signal to consumers as well as an assurance of quality,” she said.

Any product or packaging that has user-friendly easy-to-open design may qualify for the Ease of Use trademark. This covers everything from food and beverage packaging through to household, garden and sporting goods.

According to Ms Nguyen, manufacturers who earn the Ease of Use trademark will gain a powerful business tool assuring consumers that their needs are being recognised and the logo will also differentiate user-friendly easy-to-open brands in-store quickly and easily.

To learn more about achieving the unique Ease of Use Certification for your business contact:

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