

# Truly own brand

Consumers get to design their own packaging. Jo Roberts reports

We all like to think we have distinctive personalities and now brands are helping people to communicate their individuality. Consumers can now fill their shopping basket with uniquely packaged products – even ones featuring their own image.

Custom-made products have been around for a while. A company called My DNA Fragrance sells unique perfumes created from individuals' DNA samples, taken via a mouth swab. DNA and fingerprint samples have also been used to produce individual works of art.

But even bog-standard packaged goods are mass-marketing the personal touch in a bid to express consumers' special qualities. Consultancy Trendwatching has picked up on a few examples, listed below.

Tissue brand Kleenex provides a service that enables customers to have their favourite unlicensed photo or drawing printed on a tissue box. The My Kleenex website allows users to create designs and styles, either by choosing one of the backgrounds provided on the site or by adding their own digital photo.

A 3D preview can be generated and different designs developed and sent to numerous addresses, enabling budding artists to show off their creative talents. At \$4.99 (£2.50) per box, this seems a reasonable price to stand out from the crowd.

The trend has extended to the baby gift market. For an individual present, Japanese firm Yosimiya is selling bags of rice printed with a newborn's photo, name and date of



birth. The bags are modelled to look like a swaddled baby. The selling point is that the bag contains the newborn's exact weight in rice. The made-to-order 'dakigokochi' are priced from ¥3,500 (£17).

As branded products struggle to be seen and heard in a crowded marketplace, featuring the shopper on the product could make mass-market brands seem more interesting and personal. Consumers are more likely to keep buying something made in their own image than a generic alternative.

## Brand Stunt of the Month

# Bubble wrap

Sony let the public shoot its new ad in a deluge of foam. By Jo Roberts

Sony is hoping to maintain its reputation for innovative advertising after using an estimated 460 million litres of foam to promote its range of digital imaging products.

The ad has been filmed in Miami, picking 200 local citizens to play around in the 'Foam City'.

People also had the chance to film their own version of events in the downtown area of the Florida city,

using a range of camcorders and cameras. More than 14,000 still images and over 15,000ft of film reel are now available for Sony to use to market the range.

James Kennedy, general manager of marketing and communications at Sony Europe, says: "We will use it strategically throughout the year as we launch new products."

He adds that fans of the ads can expect clips to be uploaded to sites such as YouTube.

Kennedy says finding a new idea to promote Sony's camera range was challenging: "This division hadn't done anything on this scale before. There are different business groups, such as Handicam, and traditionally each division has worked on its own campaigns. We wanted to create a showcase to demonstrate the products to a wider audience."



The new campaign follows the trilogy of Bravia ads, one of which showed a multitude of coloured balls bouncing down a street. Kennedy believes the new footage is just as striking: "On the day of filming, the wind created a vortex effect and people thought it looked beautiful."

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