

WHEN IT COMES TO STICK PACKAGING, LEAVE IT UP TO T.H.E.M.

Marlton, NJ – As a package format, stick packaging is still in its infancy in the US. But forward-thinking marketers of all sizes have found a place to incubate and advance their ambitions. So as you start to see more and more stick-packaged, single-serve vitamins, infant formulas, beverages, supplements and the like on America's supermarket shelves . . . think of T.H.E.M.

T.H.E.M. is the short form for the cutting-edge packaging company otherwise known as Technical Help in Engineering and Marketing. What makes T.H.E.M. so unique is they are making it possible for major marketers to test the single-serve, stick-packaging waters with minimum investment and risk.

Neil Kozarsky, President of T.H.E.M., explains, "Major marketers in many categories want to advance new marketing initiatives, such as line extensions, with our Slim Stick® single serve packaging. It's in our best interests to stay at the forefront of this technology by expanding our ability to help new players enter the market. At the same time, it helps us improve response time and capacity for current customers."

Some big names are among those new players. 4-C, Unilever, and Nestlé have all recently introduced stick pack products to the marketplace. And according to Kozarsky, "Once a major brand successfully introduces a product in a new package format, others are certain to take notice."

T.H.E.M. recently completed a major expansion of its pilot plant operations, nearly doubling the size, and has added four new packaging suites dedicated to prototype stick packaging. Each packaging suite is equipped with state-of-the-art HEPA air handling systems with humidity control, and all have integrated bulk handling capability. T.H.E.M. also offers comprehensive laboratory support to evaluate, test and launch products in flexible stick packaging. T.H.E.M.'s prototype packaging facility meets industry standards for quality and consistency.

When new product introductions take off and expand, T.H.E.M. works very closely with contract packager Power Packaging (an Exel Company), who has been producing stick packs since 1998. "The relationship between Power and T.H.E.M. is ideal," states Kozarsky, "Between our two companies, we can literally start from the concept stage and carry the project through to mass

distribution measured in the billions of units. Most important, this represents a tremendous value and range of services for clients of all sizes.”

So just what is a Slim Stick®? The Slim Stick® is flexible packaging made of high-quality, multi-laminate materials. It’s packaging that makes it easy to take a single-serve portion of just about anything, just about anywhere. It’s increasingly the consumer-preferred single-serve option for bottled water mixes. Product formats can include liquids, powders, pastes, cream agglomerations, lotions, and gels. And depending on the quantity of product, they can fit in anything from a wallet to a purse.

“Only a few years ago,” according to Kozarsky, “many people were wondering, ‘What is a stick pack?’ Today they’re asking, ‘Why isn’t our single-serve product in a stick pack yet?’ The package is a real hit with consumers.”

With larger co-packagers not equipped to deal with small volume production, T.H.E.M.’s R&D and production operations fill a gap that is making stick packaging possible for a wide range of entrants. Quantities can range from one to fifty million. Small quantity production is ideal for market evaluation and testing, scale-up, specialty merchandisers, or line extensions. As production needs increase, leave it up to T.H.E.M. to support the roll-out requirements of major marketers, thanks to their strategic relationships with larger contract manufacturers like Power.

Having introduced stick packaging in 1996, T.H.E.M. is regarded as the North American leader in this particular package format. “We really are proud of our track record in helping major brands successfully introduce stick-pack based products to the market,” Kozarsky comments, “When you see a product in a stick pack today, chances are that T.H.E.M. had a hand in it, whether as the supplier of the packaging machinery, engineering and technical support, or as the resource that produced the initial sticks.”

Founded in 1973, T.H.E.M. has served as the gateway for North American companies to find innovative packaging solutions. By monitoring packaging trends globally, T.H.E.M identifies innovations from all over the world for application in a diverse range of industrial and consumer product companies in North America. Visit www.them.net.

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