

Smell less and Wellness

by Michael B Halley FAIP



The series of short seminars on packaging conducted by Australian Institute of Packaging (AIP) supported by the Australian Industry Group through the Victorian Government Industry Skills Adviser initiative continued in August. Pierre Pienaar FAIP discussed Pharmaceutical and Cosmetic Packaging with twenty one registrants. The audience comprised a broad church of people from the two industries together with packaging suppliers, designers and retailers.

Pierre Pienaar is a world authority on packaging in the areas of cosmetics and pharmaceuticals as he also has technical skills in the manufacture

and dispensing of drugs and cosmetics. He told the assembly that the two industries are dynamic and there are similarities as well as differences in the requirements of packaging. Testing their knowledge he asked for a true or false answer to ten statements. Only one person won a Gold Medal but it was evident that by the end of the session there would be more contenders.

In a percentage of any population there is likely to be about two (2%) involved in packaging but almost every person every day will be in contact with packaging. The percentage of population that will be in contact with cosmetics or pharmaceuticals will be less for unfortunately a lot of the world does not have the luxury and life style that we enjoy. Pierre has noticed that natural aspects are becoming a driver in cosmetic packaging.

In both commodities the underpinning mission of packaging is VISION IMPACT! Glass used to be the dominant package form that had vision impact but a number of laminates have made inroads into glass dominance. It is also true of the manner in which tablets are dispensed. Well into the 1960s chemists were still dispensing pills from large storage vessels into glass bottles. Today the pills come to the pharmacy in tamper evident containers enclosed in an outer paperboard box with an enclosed leaflet explaining the pharmaceutical in great detail. All the chemist has to do is label the container and ensure the client understands the medicine and any side effects. Compare that with counting the tablets, filling a bottle, inserting a closure (that will not be tamper evident) and adding a label.

In support of aerosol dispensing of cosmetics Mr Pienaar suggested that without same we would have a 'Lift your Arm' shops where on your way to work you would go in and have an anti-perspirant sprayed under the arm. He contends that cosmetics in a plain bottle will not sell and brand loyalty is very important. In some cases the cost of the product is less than the package and the more exotic the package is the bigger market share. The package is also selling a promise!

Pharmaceuticals have to comply with many legal requirements and as such some ability to excite the customer is lost. This would not be as stringent on over the counter consumables so some vision impact is still possible. There are seven divisions of pharmaceutical packaging which covers the gambit of the entry of medicines and the like into the body which can be by application, ingestion or injection.

Those who attended now know more than when they signed on and not only packaging aspects were explained. Keeping pharmaceuticals in the bathroom subjects it to the worst conditions and ingesting after the use by date is certainly not recommended as it potentially has lost its efficacy and will not do you any good.

A discussion arose from a question that leaves an opening for some package designer to cater for a niche that may be beneficial to market share and the consumer. However if you were not at the seminar you will forever remain unaware of the opportunity. Check the AIP website for more seminars in September and October.