

# In-store services to help you interact with shoppers

Retailers and brands can use in-store services to turn necessity shoppers into ambassadors.

Donna Bennett reports.

**C**reative Instore Solutions (CIS) is a global design and manufacturing powerhouse that focuses on customised point-of-purchase solutions that blend creativity with structural engineering to produce in-store activations that help sell and showcase its clients' products.

Deane Hubball, Group CEO, said brands that are ultimately successful will be the ones that invest in delivering digital alignment correctly between on- and off-premise.

"From ensuring websites are mobile-enabled, something currently under-considered, to maintaining a complementary online and in-store presence, multichannel is not just a buzzword used to forecast the future, it is the reality right now," he told *Retail World*.

"Engage with your shoppers at the point-of-purchase and give them a holistic brand experience.

"We focus on providing tailored solutions, with omni-channel marketing capability, that are designed to act as brand extension vehicles which ultimately drive incremental sales."

CIS has an exclusive partnership with Tapit, world leaders in delivering branded content to consumers via near field communication (NFC).

NFC is a form of contactless communication between devices such as smartphones and tablets. It allows a user to wave the smartphone over an NFC-compatible device to send information without needing to touch the devices together or go through multiple steps setting up a connection.

For example, when a shopper taps their smartphone on a contactless payment terminal, it is able to identify their account (and even their personal preferences and shopping habits) and takes payment through an application on the phone.

CIS exclusively distributes Tapit technology through point-of-purchase systems to the FMCG, convenience and other retail sectors globally.

"The truth is the retail economy is dominated by mobile," Mr Hubball said.

"By 2015 there will be over 863 million NFC-enabled smartphones in the market globally and we now have the technology, through Tapit, to engage with these devices in-store to educate and build trust in the brand, but ultimately to secure a sale at the point-of-purchase."

He said the integration of the Tapit technology will allow shoppers to tap their phones on Tapit symbols integrated within point-of-purchase units to receive selected branded content that can be updated remotely as frequently as desired.

He says that as store sales trickle and sales per square metre decline, the response from most retailers is almost automatic: "They will cut labour, reduce costs and sacrifice service".

"Unfortunately, this only aggravates the issue," he said. "With even less service and theatre to differentiate the stores and an increasing customer focus on price and convenience, retailers will re-evaluate their value proposition to include multiple touch points, one of which will be digital."

Clever brands will go even further and use digital to leverage unity between their online and in-store presence.

"Currently, key grocery retailers are providing customers with a sterile 'vanilla' in-store experience," he said.

"The popularity of the grocery retailer concept store, coupled with the rising trend of pop-up kiosks, will drive consumer demand for the unique and innovative."

He says shoppers are even urging brands to provide distinctive multi-sensory and multidimensional experiences and he believes this trend will only continue.

"There is a distinct opportunity for brand owners and retailers to get creative, to look outside the square to capture the imagination of shoppers," Mr Hubball said.

"Customers are more empowered than



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ever before and therefore it falls to us as an industry to innovate, be creative and provide the most engaging customer experience."

Delighting the shoppers through targeted and unique in-store experiences will ultimately turn them into loyal brand ambassadors in this highly competitive retail environment. The focus should be on iconic and innovative point-of-purchase displays.

"It is more important than ever for brands and retailers to be equipped with displays that get their products noticed and become, by extension, brand ambassadors in the marketplace," Mr Hubball said.

This "last six feet" is and always has been the key opportunity to turn the shopper into a purchaser.

"By utilising the opportunity to stand out and differentiate yourself from the crowded retail environment, revenue yield for retailers will undoubtedly increase, as too proliferation in brand loyalty, all by creating an unrivalled in-store experience," Mr Hubball said.

CIS specialises in bespoke in-store activation, refrigerated and ambient displays for clients across multiple markets, including FMCG and retailers.

Don KRC enlisted the expertise of CIS to design and manufacture its new off-location refrigerated and ambient display in a first for the smallgoods category.

The semi-permanent solution is instantly recognisable as the Don KRC brand, with premium placement and high in-store visibility to evoke theatre that is reminiscent of a street vendor's food cart.

The iconic unit, which was created specifically as an off-location activation, is designed to create a stage for Don KRC meal solutions and will be rolled out nationally.

The ingenuity of design and construction using moulded steel, wire shelving, refrigeration, Foamex and polyurethane will ensure the longevity of activation, with a life expectancy of more than three years, ensuring optimum return on investment for Don KRC.

"The cart allows us the flexibility to activate in line with our promotional calendar, making it easy to manage through seasonal changes, providing value to our retailers and creating in-store theatre," Don KRC Trade Activation Executive Christina Vuckovic said.

"The premium in-store positioning will generate impulse purchases and further brand recognition and return on investment for Don KRC," Mr Hubball said. ♦

## Shopper marketing

**M**arkitforce is a specialist marketing logistics provider with operations throughout Australia and New Zealand.

As part of Australia's leading marketing and communications company STW Group, Markitforce offers brands and retailers an efficient POS management solution and also provides print management and product fulfilment services.

"We are seeing an increasing amount of brands escalating their investment in shopper marketing campaigns and promotions," Markitforce CEO Alan Higgins said.

"There continues to be a tendency to increase spend on below-the-line activity, with a greater return on investment than mainstream media.

"Pallet displays and self-merchandising floor and display units allow for brands to integrate POS displays into their product supply chain as part of an integrated approach and, in most cases, our clients are opting for direct-to-store distribution to reduce lead time and increase efficiency through the number of stores a merchandiser can call on in a day."

Markitforce with STW Group are using consumer insight, data and research to their advantage and to help quantify their clients' spend.

Mr Higgins recommended that retailers engage with the brands, shopper marketing teams and agencies, to use insights and data to create tailored campaigns and promotions to drive sales.

He also urged retailers to embrace in-store theatre, colour and increased consumer engagement that can be derived from effective POS displays and promotions.

"Gain valuable insights from your available sales data and the various methods of collecting consumer feedback to justify shopper marketing your initiatives," Mr Higgins advised.

"Digital marketing in a targeted approach needs to be an integral part of every shopper marketing campaign. Consumers want to be better informed and want to feel a connection to brands and retailers."

Mr Higgins believes customer satisfaction is worthless, but that customer loyalty is priceless. ♦

## Merchandising

**M**erchandising has long played an important role in any category and is now more important than ever.

Lynne McKay, GM Retail Activation, Retail Safari, points out that products now live or die by what happens on the selling floor because most shoppers decide on their purchases when in-store.

"Many categories rely heavily on merchandising activity to influence purchase behaviour as it builds excitement, educates consumers and drives awareness," she said.

Retail Safari provides a complementary suite of retail marketing services that connect the consumer with a brand in environments where the ability to influence is at its strongest.

The integrated channel structure activates brands along the purchase journey, triggering the impulse to buy at critical points both in-store and out-of-store.

As part of Australia's biggest sales and field marketing group, CPM Australia, Retail Safari offers unrivalled international experience and know-how combined with local insights, national coverage and execution excellence.

### In-store activations

Ms McKay said that business and brands are finally starting to realise that sampling really works.

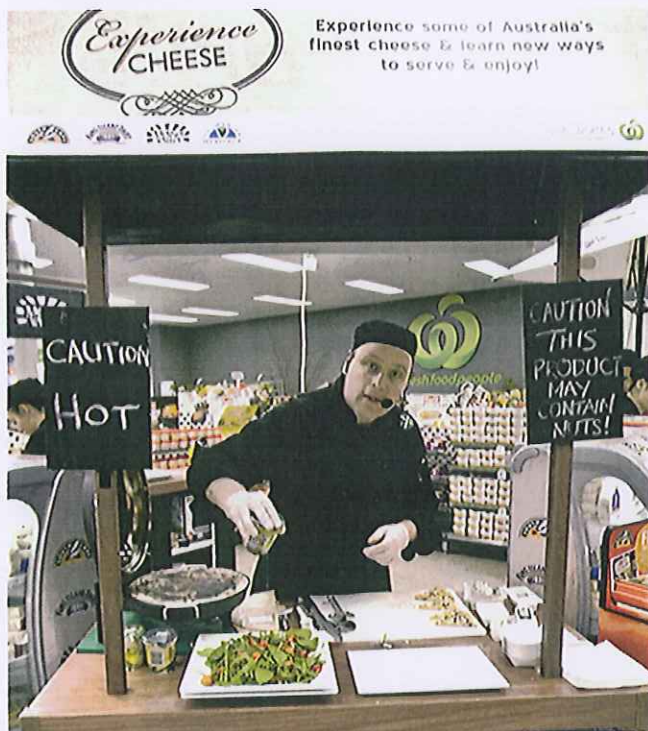
"In a cluttered world where marketers are fighting for their share of the pie within

closely managed client budgets, brands are noticing the immediate returns that sampling can offer at the point-of-purchase where shoppers are making decisions most of the time," she said.

The in-store sampling model has changed over the years as shoppers and retailers become more attuned to interaction and engagement. Even the name has changed. 'In-store sampling' is now more commonly referred to as 'in-store activation'.

"This means that brand manufacturers and retailers alike expect 'something to happen' when shoppers interact with products they can touch, taste or feel in-store," Ms McKay said. (That 'something' is sales.)

"In order to execute a 'best in class' in-



store activation and achieve the greatest results possible, you need strong retailer support and a willingness to allow creativity and innovation into stores from the beginning of discussions surrounding promotion of the brand/product.”

Processes are there for a reason and must be adhered to, but Ms McKay said there is no reason why all the necessary practicalities of executing anything within a store cannot also be exciting, different, visually appealing and educational, connect emotionally and, best case scenario, turn a learner into a lover of a particular brand or product.

It should also provide a solution to a shopper's immediate dilemma (eg, What's for dinner tonight? What do I serve at the party on the weekend? How do I make the house smell great?).

“Stores or retailers that are open and willing to try something new that has not

been done before reap the benefits,” Ms McKay said.

A more obvious way to support sampling in-store is ensuring adequate stock levels throughout the activity.

“The old saying ‘stock sells stock’ is never more evident than when shoppers are clamouring for more and you are happily able to provide it,” Ms McKay said.

Merchandising should focus both on increasing basket size and driving visibility of products, but the retail environment continues to change and challenge.

“For us as retailers, manufacturers and agencies, it's important that we remember to put the consumer at the centre of our thinking,” Ms McKay said.

Retail Safari offers retailers some tips:

- Effective merchandising POS could entice shoppers to enter a category section.
- Maintenance of displays is critical to maximising sell-through.

- Consider end-cap headers, including product information, to drive category visibility.

- Develop pallet solutions, but support with effective pricing and stock maintenance.

Offer shoppers guidance by:

- Presenting readily available data to help them choose the right product for their needs easily.
- Improving the category's ‘shopability’ by facilitating navigation, influencing the perception of quality and value, and making the shopper feel informed.
- Testing set flow and signage to make it easier for shoppers to find what they need.
- Identifying optimal placement of categories to maximise basket size.
- Continually measuring and monitoring pricing and merchandising execution and impact. ♦

## Retail Safari in-store sampling case studies

### Retail Safari field merchandising

**Client:** Mattel

#### Client objectives

- Growth in market share.
- Increasing awareness of core brands.
- Excellence in field.

#### The brief

- To regain share of business lost over previous months to aggressive competitors in the toy category.
- To increase ‘availability and visibility’ of key Mattel core brands – Barbie, Hot Wheels and Fisher-Price – through effective merchandising.
- To provide a field capability that will provide a competitive advantage for Mattel during periods of peak sales.

#### The solution

- A fully dedicated team comprising account and regional managers and field merchandisers visiting some 2,000 outlets.
- A merchandising team that is retail banner specific allowing specialisation across the various banners.
- The task is to build relationships at store level, enabling the attainment of at least three additional off-location displays (unpaid for) at each outlet.
- With more than 1,400 lines, the focus is on creating a large brand presence at store level.

#### The results

Retail Safari has been in-field since March 2006. Since the introduction of the team, sales volumes have increased by 16 per cent and shelf presence by some 34 per cent. Both are continuing to trend upwards.

### Best in class: the Lion specialty cheese expo

#### Client objectives

Give shoppers greater confidence and knowledge in purchasing specialty cheeses by creating an environment of education on the versatility of these products at a local level.

#### The brief

Create an exciting and innovative in-store activation program that becomes a best-in-class consumer engagement in a local environment.

#### The solution

To emphasise the local flavour, Retail Safari created a welcoming farmers' market atmosphere, where shoppers could relax, learn, taste and purchase. A range of sensory stimuli was used. Apart from the ability to touch, see and taste products, recipes were brought to life even further via mini-tech screens, showcasing how easy they were to replicate at home.

#### The results

The program is a huge success in-store, with thousands of shoppers converted to being consumers and even advocates of specialty cheeses. ♦

