

MediaPack

The international business magazine for media packaging

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Ringling in the (seasonal) changes

Here we are in the run-up to what is a very the busy season for just about everyone in this industry. That's why the theme for this issue of the magazine is the holiday season – the time when special packaging abounds, when people have to gear up for production in overdrive, and when retail 'shrinkage' is likely to occur.



As some avid readers will notice, in addition to a theme, we have introduced other elements, which will become regular features: our showcase, for instance. In this issue we pay homage to the creativity behind any and all packaging designs and innovations in the past 25 years of the CD. And 10 years of DVD. (How time flies...)

There is also the first in our new Case Study series. This one looks at how a company worked out a solution that combines packaging and display elements with concerns about the environment. Indeed, there is so much on this very important topic that you might be forgiven for thinking this is a 'green-themed' issue. It isn't, but the next one will be.

Finally, another theme. Let me reprise the question I asked attendees at the kdg media talks, where I took part: "When is packaging not packaging?"

When, as with our industry, it is part of the product – to be kept and cherished, not thrown away. We are moving back to the days of vinyl albums when the sleeve notes were nearly as important as the record itself. Packaging, especially in today's increasingly digital industry, sells content. So we all need to work together for its success: designers, content owners, replicators, publishers – and your humble fourth estate representatives will also do our bit by getting the message out.

Look at the recent – and bold – Radiohead initiative: download the new album for free if that's what you think it's worth, but if you want a deluxe box set, made to order, pay £40 for it. The IFPI figures on page 11 may make slightly grim reading but it's not all completely bad: for two years running now, CDs have been the Christmas gift of choice – largely because of packaging. It's a declining market, sure, but still very important.

And on that seasonal note, enjoy this issue of *MediaPack*. Happy holidays, and best wishes for next year.

Elizabeth Toppin, Editor