

# Guitar Hero III: Shorewood



Packaging and in-store displays

**The Guitar Hero III game was not only Activision's largest franchise to date for 2007, but was also the largest project of the year for Shorewood Packaging, as Dustin Wills, vice president, West Coast Sales, Shorewood Packaging, told MediaPack**

Continuing to fulfil the fantasy of 'what it's like to be a rock star' theme of its two predecessors, *Guitar Hero III* was available from autumn 2007 on PlayStation 2 and 3, Xbox 360, and Wii video game system from Nintendo. Strategic partnerships were secured with all the major and independent music record labels and publishers to allow unrivalled access to their deep history of music catalogues, along with artists' original recordings for even greater authenticity. Among the names on the game are rock giants like The Rolling Stones, Smashing Pumpkins, Alice Cooper, Kiss, Beastie Boys, and Tenacious D.

## The challenge

Activision needed packaging and printed collateral as well as a series of displays for a number of major US retailers, each with different product counts and display footprints. The initial order was multi-million units of an oversized paperboard O-sleeve, litho inserts and manuals. There were 27 different SKUs, for a total of 129 parts, and four structures for the job.

In addition, Shorewood wanted to create the entire project under the auspices of its greenchoice initiative to prove that an environmentally responsible packaging solution could work without inhibiting creativity or increasing cost.

## The process

Shorewood handled the entire job from pre-press to delivery for the entire retail launch, including point of purchase displays.



The size of the O-sleeve was the first challenge

Its digital, packaging and display teams worked hand in hand to come up with the solution.

"The sheer size of the paperboard O-sleeve was our first challenge," says Wills. "It is approximately 29-inch x 29-inch flat, meaning that it had to run one-up on a sheet. This created unique challenges to hold and control colour across the piece, as well as ensure accurate gluing along the sleeve edge."

The environmental impact of the paperboard alone would be gigantic, with millions of sheets of virgin SBS (solid bleached sulphate) stock. Wills approached Activision to allow Shorewood to run the job on the environmentally friendly paperboard substrates and paper available through its greenchoice programme.

According to Wills, "Everyone at Activision was keen to do something that involved not

only virgin stock but also post-consumer stock. With such a huge project, its impact would clearly demonstrate that concerns about the environment need not be a flash in the pan, and that environmentally friendly solutions would work.

"We worked hard to make sure that the stock would work – and that means not only convincing the operations people that we could keep the cost the same but also showing the creative people that while there might be compromises, their concepts need not be affected unduly. It is important to be upfront, and so in our original presentations, we printed unaltered files on the different stocks to show them what the differences were, and how the post-consumer material could work."

In addition, the shift to greenchoice needed to be as invisible and seamless as possible: "It's not enough to show that the stock would work creatively, and that we could keep the costs the same, but we also had to make sure we could get enough of the materials, and get them on time."

## The packaging

Activision chose ArctiCoat stock from Cascades that has a 40% post consumer waste content. In addition, all of the inserts and manuals were run on Infusion paper stock that carries 30% post-consumer waste content.

"The extent of our 'green' efforts was a dramatically reduced environmental impact as a result of the post consumer waste content sheets we ran the job on, and the inks we used incorporate renewable vegetable-oil based components in their formulation," says Wills.

The Shorewood Display group produced the entire in-store promotional programme for *Guitar Hero III*. Those included temporary floor displays and a giant in-store permanent display for Toys 'R' Us, which included LDC TV Screens, mounted Xbox 360 consoles and two guitars per station to allow consumers to experience the game in all its rock glory before buying it.

## The details

"Colour consistency across a large amount of units and platforms was a key challenge," says Wills. "Shorewood Digital, our in-house pre-press group, had to make sure all of the files were built consistently across the board so that we could achieve quick make ready and throughput but still keep the colour consistent."

The packaging itself was produced in four of Shorewood US plants – O-sleeves in Indianapolis, IN; Newport News, VA; and Springfield, OR; the wraps were printed in Springfield, OR and Louisville, KY. Displays were produced at Shorewood Display in Thorofare, NJ

## The branding

Shorewood's greenchoice logo is printed on the back of the cartons. ●