

Smart moves for brand building

Smart Media is the platform of choice for the food and beverage supply chain, from small suppliers to large retailers. GS1 Australia CEO **Maria Palazzolo** explains.



SMART Media is a win-win for food and drink suppliers and retailers. In 2013, GS1 collaborated with industry to create a complete digital marketing solution, which enabled brand owners to store, capture and share product content with retailers and marketplaces.

The challenge for brand marketers is to find the right balance in presenting product images and customer-facing information, so they stand out among thousands of website pages and advertising catalogues.

Most suppliers don't have the information consumers need about a product in a readily accessible format, which retailers can use to help them and the supplier grow sales. Smart Media provides suppliers and manufacturers with a one-stop shop to create, manage and share professional product photography and accurate consumer product data with trading partners in one central location. Having this single source of truth increases efficiency and accuracy.

MEETING CONSUMER DEMAND FOR QUALITY

While Smart Media subscribers can provide all product images and information themselves, it is proving beneficial for suppliers to take advantage of a high quality but affordable service where GS1's Melbourne and Sydney studios photograph and capture all on-pack product

information and source other important content. Informal research conducted by GS1 has found that when brand owners have products listed on major online retailers' websites, they are often only presented with basic information and a poor quality photo. This is insufficient for today's investigative shopper who demands more product details such as country of origin, nutritional information, allergens and a list of ingredients. Should brand suppliers utilise the suite of Smart Media services, all this information, plus more, is available to their retailer and trading partners. Retail photography

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specialists take quality, high resolution product images for both online and print applications. They can then provide the brand owner with:

- 2D and 3D images;
- 360-degree photography;
- planograms;
- rendering; and
- clipping paths

GS1's barcode testing service is also employed to ensure product barcodes scan at point-of-sale.

VALUE-ADDS & UPDATES

GS1 can also provide romance copy to make the item instantly more appealing. It will weigh, obtain the product's dimensions and capture all the product's available on-pack information including instructions for use, marketing claims, certification logos and any other consumer-facing content, which is then uploaded to Smart Media. In addition, any updates to products, packing, ingredients, and a host of other data, are automatically sent to trading partners. Suppliers provide final review and sign-off through an online approval process.

These high-quality digital assets allow suppliers to meet their retailers' requirements for websites, planograms, print and online catalogues. President and CEO of Elyptol Tim O'Connor says GS1's Smart Media platform is "phenomenal". "With experienced market people taking our photographs, we don't do any of that anymore and it's saving us an enormous amount of time and mistakes," he said.

Nestle's Mandeep Sodhi, head of digital supply chain, agrees. "There are other features of Smart Media like the workflow component and the messaging, which allows us to know exactly where the information, data and images are when we launch a new product."

CONSUMER RESEARCH ONLINE AND IN-STORE

Creating this content is becoming increasingly important as research reveals that consumers are highly engaged with their online food and grocery shopping and seek detailed information about the products they buy. Not only are they researching nutritional product information online, they then use their smart phones to assist them in-store as they seek more information or cross-check their research. According to the Nielsen Global Health and Ingredient-Sentiment Survey, grocery shopping is not a "low-involvement purchase", with a reported 75 per cent of the population concerned about the long-term health impact of the ingredients in the food they buy. To attract these shoppers, retailers need to show all their products in the most favourable light and in a format demanded by well-informed consumers.

The national shelf management manager for Metcash Food & Grocery Michael Joiner says it is an ideal solution for receiving product information from suppliers.

"It definitely saves us time and effort downloading images, digital assets, and other virtual data."

INTERCONNECTIVITY

An added benefit is that Smart Media can connect directly to the Google Manufacturing Centre for suppliers that want to manage their products in Google Shopping, saving them time loading the Google toolset. GS1's Smart Media, which is mobile and tablet compatible, is based on international image and data standards and is used by more than 700 companies across Australia. It also allows users to see who is accessing their content.

Whether your brand is a new online marketplace seller or a large multinational, Smart Media is the preferred platform for sharing digital assets with trading partners. It gives brand owners confidence and peace of mind in knowing they are meeting retailer requirements and providing the best opportunity to sell more products. *

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maria Palazzolo is the CEO of GS1 Australia. She has been CEO since 2002 and with the company since 1983. Palazzolo has worked extensively with retail, FMCG, logistics and IT industries. She has produced and implemented many industry specifications in a range of sectors.



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