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Branding. By Design

The Holidays, By Design

It's that time of year: Store windows and front lawns are adorned with decorations. Family tables are graced with the special china that only makes an appearance once a year. Main streets are stippled with twinkling lights. Everywhere we go, there are signals that it's the most wonderful time of the year. Even the cup of coffee that you pick up on your way to work is flaunting a holiday sweater pattern, and when you log onto Google, one of the O's is a turkey or a Christmas wreath. The holidays are here, and marketers everywhere know that design is an integral part of the season. According to Reuters, the holiday shopping season is "a crucial period for retailers that can account for up to 40 percent of annual sales." It's no wonder that consumers buy during the holidays, as luxe seasonal colors and cheerful imagery ornament every retail shelf and online store.

Businesses know well that the resources spent on holiday design are worth every penny. During seasonal promotions like Black Friday, Small

Business Saturday, and Cyber Monday, consumers scramble to sift through seas of giftable items in hopes of finding the perfect presents. Enter design—in an ocean of household items, cosmetics, and confectionary treats, a glistening bow or a jubilant cartoon snowman might be the eye-catching point of difference in the mind of the consumer.

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While seasonal colors and imagery can seem enticing, it is treacherously easy to stumble into the territory of tackiness. Mick Clark, managing director at the UK packaging enterprise WePack, observes that while such changes as color shifts and the addition of glitter and ribbons can add the "touch of luxury people are looking for during this period... we are seeing more and more

companies trying not to steer too far away from the original design and only making minor changes during the festive seasons." This way, if companies are left with overstock after the holidays have passed, the items are still sellable and don't seem completely seasonally irrelevant. Brands must also make an effort to maintain their core identifiers, despite temptations to swap colors and use flashy seasonal shapes and symbols.

Hershey's chocolate delivers a masterful demonstration of this approach. Hershey's fall pack displays autumnal leaves rather than Halloween symbols, allowing the product to remain sellable well beyond October 31st. Many brands are trying to focus on making holiday products look seasonal rather than holiday-specific in this way.

However major or minor the holiday overhaul, seeing our favorite products dressed up for this special time of year brings joy into our hearts. Great design is capable of inspiring this feel-good state of mind.



Hershey's autumnal seasonal packaging works seamlessly for Halloween and for the weeks to follow.

This is what our agency strives to achieve year-round in pursuit of stronger, more personal brand-to-consumer relationships. Because when all of the wrapping paper has been tossed and the china has been stored, consumers still want to feel like their holiday purchases belong in their homes. [B]

From our family at GGB to yours, happy holidays!

If you think your brand should be featured in the next column, contact me at terri@goldsteingroupbranding.com