

Sustainable metals

communicating the message

Design Directions 2009/10
An innovative programme of awards

Sustainable metal
Brief devised in collaboration with
The Worshipful Company of Tin Plate Workers
Page 1/2

RSA Design Directions 2009/10
rsadesigndirections.org
Page 37/38

Communicating clear messages about complex environmental issues can have an impact on society, the environment and economics, and through widening the understanding of the issues generally people can make more informed choices.

Background

The natural resources required for the manufacture of metal packaging are some of the most plentiful available from our natural resource base, with aluminium and iron-ore being the third and fourth most available after oxygen and silicon. Recycling of metals significantly cuts down the use of virgin raw materials and energy and the more they are recycled the more their environmental credentials are improved by effectively reducing the amount of CO₂ released continuously over time. Increased recycling of steel and aluminium will save on natural resources and further reduce the carbon emissions for packaging in these materials. Metals offer excellent performance capabilities, protecting contents to offer optimal product quality; its excellent performance capabilities means there is little waste through out the product life cycle, especially at home¹. Metal packaging also performs strongly on the three dimensions of people, planet and profit:

- people rely on metal packaging because it is safe and trust worthy. It has high nutritional value and does not need artificial preservatives and additives
- through the effective use of the planet's resources: limiting energy use, lowering emissions (CO₂) and saving water consumption. Their high levels of recycling help to create a cleaner society
- metals work to perform at low cost at maximum functionality, ensuring products packed in it are an economical solution

The challenge

When it comes to packaging, sustainability is a complex issue. The wide variety of packaging formats, the materials used to manufacture them and the different interpretations of how these measure up in sustainability terms can lead to a lack of clarity and understanding. Indicators and criteria can vary according to different packaging materials; as a consequence the sustainability debate in industry and society can become fragmented, confused and often predicated on assumptions.

Recent indications show that increasingly metal packaging and its performance is not understood in the context of the sustainability. One performance measure might be the volume trend of canned products sold on the UK market². Another measure would include the number of requests from retailers to move pack formats on environmental grounds. Contemporary perceptions of metal packaging are predicated on largely negative values linked to aesthetics and nutrition – as a result it is seen as outdated, providing food containing additives and preservatives. Additionally the production of metal is perceived as heavy industry and as therefore CO₂ heavy.

How might a repositioning of the metal packaging debate persuade consumers and retailers (as it is they who indirectly make choices for their consumers) of the material's benefits as a 21 century packaging material? How might the humble food can be repositioned in order that its virtues as a sustainable material can be as readily understood as other, more obviously recyclable materials?

The brief

Design a coherent, multi-part campaign that communicates to retailers and other packaging decision makers (eg legislators and brand owners), in a clear and simple way, the benefits of metal as a sustainable food packaging material, delivering healthy, nutritious food. Remember, this project is not asking for a re-engineering of the metal food can.

¹ see Steel University – Steel packaging applications

² the latest statistics on this are available on the Canfacts website

RSA

- Your proposal should do the following:
- re-position the basic food can, creating a positive attitude among packaging decision makers, giving them confidence to choose it
 - include a variety of communication tools and identify the communication channels for the campaign
 - set out the key messages for the campaign and how they will be disseminated

Aims

- to turn around the traditional perceptions of the food can
- to encourage retailers to include canned food among those they promote for their 'eco-value' in terms of packaging, offering it as a sustainability benchmark for fast moving consumer goods
- to engage retailers and legislators through a new way of presenting this argument
- to give an overview of the target audience, its current communication channels and how to influence them

Submission details

- A3 boards (max. 4) showing design development and final designs, demonstrating your knowledge of this market area
- a short, typewritten text (max. 400 words, sans serif, 14pt) expressing idea development, from research to final designs
- any models or mock-ups should be submitted as photographs or print-outs mounted on an A3 board (this can be in addition to the 4 design boards) – do not submit 3D work at this stage
- evidence of research
- one sketchbook related to the brief
- all work (except sketchbooks) should be submitted on A3 lightweight card and everything should carry an RSA label on the back; do not submit work in plastic sleeves or on foam board, metal, wood or perspex, or in boxes; these requirements are in the interests of students to ensure the safety of their work whilst in storage and transit, and to ensure that it can be displayed for judging

Schedule

Dates for submission of entry forms, fees and work

Thursday 19 November 2009

Deadline for Entry Form(s)/Fee(s) for all projects

(including *Directions Plus*)

Entry Forms/Fees should be sent under separate cover

– **not** with your entry – to:

RSA Design Directions Registrations
8 John Adam Street
London WC2N 6EZ
UK

Monday 16 November
– Friday 11 December 2009

Submission period for all project entries

(except *Design Directions Plus**)

Entries will be accepted at Brooks Transport Services Ltd on any weekday within the dates stated between 08:00-18:00, excluding weekends and bank holidays. Entries arriving after 18:00 on Friday 11 December 2009 may not be accepted

Please remember that all entries should be sent or delivered to:

Brooks Transport Services Ltd
Unit 2/15
Second Avenue
Bluebridge Industrial Estate
Halstead
Essex CO9 2SU
UK

All Entry Forms/Fees should be sent or delivered to:

RSA Design Directions Registrations
8 John Adam Street
London WC2N 6EZ
UK

**Design Directions Plus* – Submission date for entries for these projects is:
Friday 8 January 2010