



## PS: Business and Technology Newsletter Bonus

### PACKAGE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT PRE-CONFERENCE BONUS COVERAGE



## A SIMPLER TIME: KEYNOTE SPEAKER PETER CLARKE DISCUSSES A DRAMATIC CHANGE IN PACKAGE DESIGN

The more straightforward the package message, the more consumers will trust the product inside

According to **Product Ventures** president and founder Peter Clarke, the world has changed, and package development will need to make its own seismic shift to meet changing consumer needs. In the wake of a lingering economic downturn, health scares over packages and products, and corporate scandals, consumers desire simplicity in packaging that tells them exactly what it will provide.

Clarke, who will keynote **Packaging Strategies' Package Design and Development Summit**, stated that the buying public has become more wary of packages that do not deliver on their promises.

"Five years ago, a product may have told an elaborate story to create buzz and interest," said Clarke, in an interview with Packaging Strategies. "Now, consumers want a simple, straightforward message. There's a lack of trust in the marketplace, and this is an emotional response for consumers who are skeptical and scared about the safety and health of a product."

Clarke will offer his view on the future of package development and the necessity of connecting with consumers during a keynote address on March 3 during the **Summit**, to be held March 2-4 at the Sheraton Sand Key in Clearwater Beach, FL. The conference agenda was just announced and including four leading brand owners and some of the country's most prominent package design and development companies.

Product Ventures fits that bill as one of the most successful U.S.-based package design firms, having fueled the successful package rollouts for a who's who



*"We created that mess with the world we live in, and now there's a bit of a pullback to actually do it right."*  
Peter Clarke,  
Product Ventures

of leading consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies.

Clarke stated that a new focus on cost cutting due to the tougher economy has brought structural packaging to the forefront as an ambassador for the brand. Expectations also have been raised, and so have the stakes in packaging development.

"The package really needs to be the fortress for the brand," Clarke said. "It needs to maintain trust and combat any negative issues that arise. It must be well-designed, effectively communicate, offer sustainability, and be available at a decent price."

Consumers have become more aware of sustainability, a fact that Clarke said is now showcased on packages that use less or alternative materials and get rid of unnecessary shipping containers.

But beyond that, consumers want to feel good about the packaging too. Greenwashing claims have marred some of that trust, and truth in package advertising will become more critical.

But a key to sustainability and cost-cutting movements is to better articulate the package message, whether it is a value-added feature or benefit or a more sustainable material. In the past, according to Clarke, a lot of "noisy packaging" would attempt to offer too much in marketing messages while confusing consumers.

Paraphrasing one of Clarke's heroes, Henry David Thoreau, he said that consumers now want simplicity and less clutter. That relates to sustainability. "We got a little greedy and overdid things without considering the world we live in and a healthier life," he said. "We were a bit excessive. Now it's up to us to be smarter." **PS**