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Growing Your Business:

STRATEGIES & TACTICS FOR THE LONG TERM

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AllpakTrojan Shares Insights to Winning Ways

Building an Award-Winning and Profitable Niche with Unconventional Assignments

Many packaging designers, converters and printers seek the comforts of large customers and long press runs. This makes good sense. These factors represent a tried and true approach to profitability. This traditional model, however, does not represent the only formula for success. Significant revenues and promising profits loom beyond standard, cookie-cutter assignments.

AllpakTrojan offers customers a one-stop option for a wide range of complex packaging challenges. The company, headquartered in Renton, Wash., actively seeks out the most difficult and demanding packaging projects. They want unique and unusual challenges. Even small runs are welcomed.

“Weird is good!” is the mantra for Wayne Millage, the company’s innovative president/general manager. “We don’t consider ourselves to be in the packaging business, we see ourselves as problem solvers,” explains Millage. “We embrace innovation and never shy away from the unique and unknown.”

Working together as a team, AllpakTrojan solves unusual and challenging assignments. Their success builds organizational confidence, which strengthens their leadership role. The company knows how to take ownership of the process and gets all parties aligned with a common mission.

“The focus is always on the customer experience,” says Millage. “Our sales force is viewed as the internal customer and a barometer of how our work is ultimately perceived. If the sales force has a good experience, the customer will too.”

The importance of great supplier relationships also maintains a top priority at AllpakTrojan. The company gets the most out of every relationship



AllpakTrojan used Color Resolution International’s TrueColorBalance™ ink process to match the outer carton of this Krusteas Pumpkin Spice Bread Box to the customer’s already existing box.

because they seamlessly incorporate outside partners into their multifunctional team. Supplier selection is based on the partner’s ability to align with AllpakTrojan’s business model and demonstrate a compatible strategic mindset. Partners are expected to bring ideas, new products and technical support throughout project implementation.

Color Resolutions International (CRI), a leading ink manufacturer that specializes in packaging inks and coatings for fine graphic reproduction, has been a valued supplier for many years. Their expertise is not limited to ink, but encompasses knowledge of the entire printing process.

“We enjoy being brought in at the conceptual stage,” says Paul Fulton, vice president of strategic accounts for CRI. “AllpakTrojan encourages suppliers to introduce new products and resources, use their company as a testing facility, provide operator training and be onsite to help identify and solve customer challenges.”

The approach is working. AllpakTrojan has enjoyed double-digit sales growth for the past five years. During that same period, profit levels have outpaced the sales increases. It also has generated lots of industry recognition. This past year, AllpakTrojan won 35 packaging and printing industry awards. The list of honors includes the Best of Show Award from the Association of Independent Corrugated Converters’ design competition, CorrPack 2006 TAPPI Awards and the FTA Excellence in Flexography competition (for the second consecutive year).

Redefining Your Niche

Prospects have not always been so rosy. Not all that long ago, AllpakTrojan’s business focus was narrowly defined – primarily serving a small cluster of customers in the electronics industry. Their business suffered significantly when a large percentage of the work in that segment moved to Asia.

In 2002, Millage was brought in to revive the company. His strategic focus was to diversify the account base. The new focus targeted growing companies and aggressively pursued the latest consumer trends.

Today, AllpakTrojan serves some of the best-known national brands. It also provides creative package and structural design, fine graphics, commercial printing and advertising and point-of-purchase displays for many small- and medium-size companies. For many of these companies, AllpakTrojan serves



Wayne Millage



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as a single-source packaging supplier, taking projects from concept to completion.

Customer Is King

When serving the most complex niche, packaging solutions require a thorough grasp of the customer: knowing the customer's capabilities and their constraints; understanding the marketplace and the outside factors that influence it; and, recognizing customer expectations and how they define success.

Top-tier customers, such as Nike, Starbucks and Nintendo, require higher quality packaging. Graphics play an important role in their brand image and marketing efforts. Typical assignments in this market segment often are filled with complex, not-so-typical design needs. These customers want innovation, they need more sophisticated solutions and they demand business-building results.

AllpakTrojan targeted Nike for more than two years. The business courtship included a sustained due diligence effort. The team gathered background, analyzed information and explored insights to prepare for future and, at this point, uncommitted assignments.

In 2006, when AllpakTrojan got a foot in the shoe company's door, they were set to hit the ground running. The big break started small, with a single flexo project. The opportunity quickly expanded, and the scope dramatically changed. The second assignment involved four more-complex display jobs, with a five-day completion window. Most companies could not accommodate these demands. Many would not even try. For AllpakTrojan – with their advanced preparation, along with well-designed implementation systems and capable human resources – they were able to deliver. Today, the two companies partner on numerous packaging assignments each month.

“Many competitors have the same tools, but few if any know how to develop their infrastructure to support the full-scope of their capabilities,” said Millage. “It begins with customer intelligence that is supported with solid mental capital, effective communication and efficient project coordination.”

It Takes a Village to Build High-End Niche

Understanding the customer is important, but it's not enough. Success in the top-tier packaging niche also requires superior internal resources. Companies hoping to compete in this niche must take a long, hard look within.

AllpakTrojan constantly focuses on the internal elements of the business equation. The ISO 9001:2000 certified company recently hired an Organizational Development Manager to help uncover talent within the company. For years, they have proudly employed one of the industry's highest ratios of support to sales personnel. The company also uses the latest development tools. In fact, the company recently hosted a Kaizen event for employees and suppliers to help key team members gain the confidence to seek out and master challenging assignments.

One specific example of how the process works is a recent project with Ghirardelli. Complex and demanding packaging needs for the world-famous marketer of premium chocolate products are recognized throughout the industry. AllpakTrojan and CRI recently teamed up on a project that required multiple shades of brown, including solids, shadows, midtones, and highlights, as well as blue and gold. The flexo team met, gathered critical input from CRI, and devised a solution through the team approach. The graphics were modified, ink was formulated, and all the other variables were defined and controlled. The team delivered impressive results.

“Ghirardelli was extremely pleased with the product we delivered and as a result they've assigned many more projects,” said Bruce Hutcheon, vice president of sales and marketing at AllpakTrojan. “CRI played a huge role on this project. They consistently deliver and are such a trusted partner. On

the Ghirardelli work, they literally came through with flying colors.”

AllpakTrojan plans to continue down the strategic road less traveled. They have proven that “weird” can indeed be good. The company has carved out a solid niche, providing value-added services and one-stop shopping to companies aggressively seeking innovative packaging ideas. With a bring-it-on attitude, an eagerness to take on challenging assignments and strong relationships with trusted suppliers like CRI and others, the future looks very bright indeed.

Since 1962, AllpakTrojan has been providing customized packaging solutions for an ever-increasing customer base. The Renton, Wash.-based company possesses one of the largest graphic and structural design teams in the Pacific Northwest, allowing them to provide customized packaging solutions. In addition to corrugated packaging, folding cartons, single-face laminate and point-of-purchase displays, AllpakTrojan offers “AstroGuard™” insulated thermal packaging and “CushionFold™” an environmentally sustainable protective packaging alternative to foam and wood. AllpakTrojan can be contacted at www.allpaktrojan.com or (800) 227-7775.

Color Resolutions International (CRI) is an international packaging ink company focused on water-based and UV inks for corrugated, flexible packaging, envelopes, tags and labels, and folding cartons. CRI uses proprietary InkChemistry™ to custom tailor inks for any application. The company provides technical assistance and expertise in resolving printing issues. For more information about CRI, visit www.colorresolutions.com or call toll free at (800) 346-8570.



Allpak's DRO is a six-color-plus UV vacuum transfer rotary die cutter that is capable of running at speeds of 11-thousand sheets per hour, while maintaining two-tenths of a millimeter register from color-to-color.