

# DESIGN EFFECTIVENESS AWARDS 2009

## WAITROSE FRESH HERBS

### 4 Packaging

#### 4.3 Own Brand – Food & Drink

Client: Waitrose Limited

Design Consultancy: Lewis Moberly



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Entered by Lewis Moberly 3rd June 2009

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Herbs are as rich in myth and magic as they are in flavour and fragrance. Repackaging Waitrose fresh herbs was a great opportunity to spread the word and present genuinely shelf-talking packs to engage consumers.

Opportunities can be found in surprising places. Fresh herbs were a small part of Waitrose's fresh fruit and vegetable category, with generic designs that created little shelf presence and encouragement to purchase. Waitrose took the initiative to dramatically re-invigorate the category capitalising on the trend towards scratch cooking.

There was a 12.8% increase in sales comparing January – May 2008 versus the same period in 2007 when the new design was phased in.

Some specific herbs show even more significant growth e.g. Lemon Thyme sales which are up 28.8%, Flat Parsley 27% and Coriander 20%. Waitrose believes this is primarily because the new copy has drawn attention to these herbs and their usage.

Penetration in Waitrose increased 5.1% within the herb category from December 2006 to December 2007. Waitrose continues to over-index on fresh herbs as a percentage of total grocery sales.

There was a 6% market share increase in fresh herbs for Waitrose comparing 2008 sales with 2007 sales.

This gave a significant value gain to Waitrose, considering fresh herbs are an ingredient or garnish to a main meal.

Design costs were paid back by the increased revenue generated within two weeks of sales. "This is a significant achievement," says Alistair Stone, Vegetable and Salad Buyer, "and one that reflects the great response we have had from consumers buying into and being more aware of the brand."

Consumer response to the new packaging has been overwhelmingly positive and the creative awards won by design and copywriting have boosted morale within the Partnership, encouraging an ethos of investment in design.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

#### 1 Outline of project brief

- **The business objective:** to increase sales of fresh herbs.
- **The challenge:** to generate new interest in the category and to provide a powerful creative concept with high shelf impact – and to do it cost effectively.

#### 2 Description

Waitrose, part of the John Lewis Partnership, has over 200 stores and is the UK's seventh largest supermarket group. Renowned for its food expertise and quality, it targets a discerning customer base many of whom are keen cooks. It has a larger proportion of customers who are either 'Food Lover's or 'Badge Foodies' than any other supermarket group.

The fresh herb range is merchandised within the fresh fruit and vegetable department in the branch' with the packs of cut fresh herbs being sold from hook displays, whilst potted fresh herbs are merchandised along side the packs of cut herbs on tower shelving. This display is both impactful and easy to shop.

#### 3 Overview of the market

AC Nielsen values the fresh herbs market at £80 million per annum.

Alistair Stone, Vegetable and Salad Buyer, in conjunction with two key suppliers, saw the opportunity to increase sales and further differentiate Waitrose by promoting their fresh herbs range. Its positioning would be high quality, fresh and intriguing – telling consumers things they didn't know about the herbs and encouraging usage.

#### 4 Project launch date

The new packaging was introduced over the period January to April 2007.



BEFORE

### 5 Outline of design solution



#### The label and the language

The labels feature a strong, copy led style which unifies the range. The simple black and white graphics allow the fresh green herbs to be the hero. Lewis Moberly researched each herb and found a wealth of interesting information about each one. Each label tells its own story: some relate myths about the specific herb e.g. **Romantic Rosemary... symbol of love and luck and friendship**, **Majestic Basil 'King of the herbs'**, and **Scented Thyme 'source of courage'**, others suggest usage e.g. **Cool cool Mint... not just for jelly!**, **Simple Sage, good for the goose**, **perfect for pork**, all are an intriguing and evocative call to action.

Moving along the shelf, the labels create an animated dialogue with the consumer, encouraging experimentation.

The typography-led design is economic to implement and ensures ease of printing for the suppliers. Only two colours are used – black on a white background – except for the seasonal 'herb of the week' which flags its arrival in store with tabloid-style bright red.



HERB OF THE WEEK

5 Outline of design solution (continued)



**The pack structure**

The simple pack structure had to remain the same so that suppliers did not have to change their packaging lines or costs. Lewis Moberly opted for transparent packaging to show off the product which helps self selection. Combined with the label description, it creates a fresh, inviting, newsworthy and mouth-watering range.

### SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The pack sizes and prices remained the same. The only change was the packaging design. This has encouraged consumers to re-evaluate the product – and buy it in their droves.

#### Increase in sales

There was a 12.8% increase in sales comparing January – May 2008 versus the same period in 2007 when the new design was being phased in.

Some specific herbs have shown an even more significant growth e.g. Lemon Thyme is up 28.8%, Flat Parsley 27% and Coriander 20%. The Waitrose buyer believes this is primarily because the new copy has drawn attention to these herbs and their usage, e.g. the Lemon Thyme copy reads... ***'Lemon Thyme Magic of the Med. Rub it, roast it, stuff it, savour it, strip the leaves and breathe in!'***

PERCENTAGE GROWTH 2006–2008



#### Increase in market penetration

Penetration in Waitrose increased 5.1% within the herb category from December 2006 to December 2007. Waitrose continues to over index on fresh herbs as a percentage of total grocery sales.

#### Increase in market share

There was a 6% market share increase in fresh herbs for Waitrose comparing 2008 sales with 2007 sales.

#### Increase in market value

This gave a significant value gain to Waitrose, considering fresh herbs are an ingredient or garnish to a main meal.

### Waitrose distribution

Fresh herbs distribution remained constant throughout Waitrose's stores so sales increases were due to higher penetration and consumers buying more. The products are also available via Ocado, the internet retailer in which the John Lewis Partnership has invested.

### Consumer behaviour and attitudes

No formal market research has ever been carried out on Waitrose fresh herbs so information about who is buying the products is anecdotal. Branch Managers believe that it is regular customers who are keen cooks. *"From the very beginning our general thought was that this was a range that could be even more sellable to our customer profile,"* said a London manager, adding, *"The range has certainly brought new interest to the section."*

Ad hoc comments from customers in the Finchley Road branch show just how appealing Waitrose fresh herbs are to them:

*"It's there when you enter the shop and it really catches your eye. I often find myself reading the packs and buying something."*  
(Female, aged 48)

*"They're like a magazine with a headline. I always look now to see what the seasonal herb is."*  
(Female, aged 37)

Several said that the range had reinforced their opinion of Waitrose:

*"It looks so fresh and modern, like Waitrose."*  
(Female, aged 30)

*"Whenever I want to cook something special I like to come to Waitrose and I find these packs very inspiring."*  
(Male, aged 36)

### Staff morale

The John Lewis Partnership is renowned for the good relationships it fosters with its 'partners' – those people with whom it works both internally and externally.

These are just a few of the positive comments given by staff:

*"I actually find myself buying more fresh herbs now!"*

*"The range enhances our reputation as the supermarket for 'foodies'."*

*"It creates a really visually impactful display."*

### Design awards and the impact on staff

Waitrose Herbs has won a Gold at the New York Festivals, a Silver at Epica and a Bronze at Eurobest. The range has also appeared in the Communication Arts and the D&AD annuals both for packaging design and copywriting. These accolades have an enormously positive impact on staff. As Pete Collis, Customer Service Manager, puts it, *"It makes us feel proud and reconfirms our opinion that we're working for a quality food retailer."*

### Further developments

Waitrose fresh herbs redesign has been so successful that Lewis Moberly have since redesigned the frozen herb range using a similar graphic and anecdotal copy approach. The packaging is opaque as frozen herbs are not as attractive as fresh ones, albeit in eye-catching colours to contrast with the black and white typographic panel.



## WAITROSE FRESH HERBS

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### **Payback on design costs through increased revenue**

Design costs were paid back by the increased revenue generated within two weeks of sale, allowing Waitrose to drive profitability within a relatively short period of time. "This is a significant achievement," says Alistair Stone, "and one that reflects the great response we have had from consumers buying into the herbs."

### **Why the design was so commercially effective**

"What's special about this design," explains Alistair, "is that it gave consumers a new perspective and created shelf presence and vitality around an established category."

Research resources: TGI, AC Nielsen, Waitrose's sales data.

### **NO OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS**

The launch of the redesign of Waitrose fresh herbs was low key and limited to in-store displays.

*"Design was and remains the main way of promoting fresh herbs," says Alistair.  
"Design is key to selling a range like this – it's the most important aspect because it's the showcase for the product."*