



# RAP International launches 'soft touch' bottles

Every FMCG company wants its packaging to reach out and grab consumers – and packaging that stimulates all the senses is more likely to do so. As such, texture is moving along the importance continuum as a compelling way of getting consumers to buy into a brand. With this in mind, RAP International has just become the first local company to manufacture 'soft touch' PP bottles, as BRENDA NEALL reports.

**WHEN it comes to packaging design and its role in brand success, there are few people more passionate than RAP International's Andrea Protti. That his company can now offer the local market 'soft touch' bottles, popular for some years in Europe and elsewhere, has Andrea bubbling over with enthusiasm.**

'In a world of round jars and rectangular boxes, any product that breaks out of the standard mould immediately gains an on-shelf advantage. Interesting shape and texture can provide pick-me-up appeal as well as longer-lasting recognition,' he comments.

But the role in texture in packaging, he maintains, has more subliminal impact. 'Package design has the power to connect with the consumer to communicate a brand's message on a more physical, intimate and individual level. What is attracting people to brands today? We are looking for that something extra; not to just buy, but to buy into brands,' Andrea says. 'Packaging is a key interface between brand and consumer and it helps create that all-important ingredient to guarantee success: desire. And what an effective way to achieving this than with an aesthetic pack that is sensuous, soft and velvety; making it something that people want to handle?'

After much research to investigate the production options, RAP International is the proud owner of a new Kai Mei blow moulder, imported from Taiwan, that uses a coextrusion technique to create the tactile, 'rubbery' outer-layer on the supporting container body, using a thin coating of thermo plastic polyolefin resin. Pack integrity or functionality is in no way compromised and, as the bottles are made of polypropylene (PP), one of the most inert plastics available, they are compatible with most product formulations.

Customers can have their choice of shape or colour in the 'soft touch' format, as Andrea explains: 'With our new technology we can create bottles and tattles, and

even emulate tubes, in volumes up to 500ml. All our bottle moulds can be adapted, and there is unlimited colour choice.' For even more variety, RAP offers the option to only colour the inner layer and leave the outer layer natural which creates a bottle that has an appealing element of 3D depth. Andrea also recommends printing on 'soft touch' bottles rather than labelling so as not to detract from the tactile impact of the pack.

'Customers have started asking for "soft touch" for some time now, and we're delighted to be able to oblige them – there's already keen interest from cosmetic players, as we'd expect, where there is insistent pressure for competitive differentiation. When times are tough, the tough get creative – and we're confident of helping our customers do just this,' he concludes.

**RAP International**  
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## Goodbye RAP, hello ???

As readers are probably aware, RAP International was recently acquired by JSE-listed Beige Holdings. It may be the last time we'll refer to RAP on the pages of PPM, but it's certainly not the last we'll hear of it. Anything but. The new-look company, the amalgamation of RAP and Crystal Pack into Beige's plastics division, is being moulded into shape, and with Andrea to head up the marketing portfolio, expect some 'fireworks' down the line. Read all about it in our August issue.

