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Verrecchia Heads P-O-P at DIC

BURBANK, CALIF. — Michael Verrecchia recently was named senior vice president of marketing for **DIC Entertainment**, whose product portfolio includes such brands as Strawberry Shortcake and Trollz. He had been with Hasbro Inc. for nearly 14 years.

At DIC, Verrecchia oversees the marketing group, which works closely on P-O-P efforts with the consumer products group.



Verrecchia

"In the past, it may have been if we had money left, then we'd do something at retail from a P-O-P standpoint," Verrecchia says. "Now we realize that it's vitally important and needs to

2005 TRENDS
Exclusive Survey Results

Marketers name names...



Most receptive to new display ideas

Meijer



Most likely to execute accepted display programs

Costco



Most rigidly enforces display specs

Wal-Mart

Natural Pet Nutrition Eyes 2,000 Stores in '05

New category-management system debuts in Wild Oats Markets

By Craig A. Shutt

WESTMINSTER, COLO. — **Natural Pet Nutrition** says natural foods stores lack an effective pet products aisle, so it built its own. To promote Pet Promise, a line of natural pet food, the company (a subsidiary of Nestlé Purina PetCare) created a category-management system that positions competitive product next to its own. It includes gravity-feed racks, brochures, information and graphics panels, a floor display, a self-standing aisle violator and two floor decals. The company hopes to outfit 500 various retail stores per quarter throughout 2005.

Of natural-food shoppers, 71% have pets, but only about 5% buy any products for them in natural foods stores, says Anthony Zolezzi, president. "Pets are the number-three category in grocery stores and account



Finding the right balance between meeting retailers' specifications and giving them something unique requires thinking that's simultaneously inside and outside the box, says DaRif. "It's somehow differentiating yourself inside their box. My analogy is, 'What can you do in a school uniform and still make yourself an individual?'"

The Imprint of Technology

Brand marketers, eternally preoccupied with how to differentiate their brand through P-O-P, suggest that technology may soon provide an answer.

Miller Brewing, for example, has rolled out Pace Challenge touch-screen computers for on-premise promotions. They "allow us to give out instant, personalized premiums to the specific customer," says Shea. "That's a big step versus the old promotions, where you would just throw out T-shirts and hats, and everyone got the same trinket."

This technology, he says, will take another step once instant messaging on cell phones in the United States catches up with that in Europe and Japan. "That's just the tip of the iceberg of what's really coming. I don't think anybody's going to be able to rely on paper point-of-sale to get across his or her message. Everybody's there, and who's going to break

through? That just becomes decorative wallpaper. What's different?"

Like Shea, Bruce Bieber, president of Seattle-based P-O-P agency Perpetual Promotions, believes that "as marketers become more savvy about the [cell phone] technology, it's just going to explode. All of a sudden, the consumer is the kiosk. It's still being developed, but it will come down fast."

Bieber explains that his clients want graphics that catch the eye, and technology that stimulates multiple senses. "In a lot of cases, it's going with a great image," he says. "Mostly, it's trying to add some motion, or some lighting, or some interesting mini-neon." Sound cards are a "mixed-bag," he adds, because employees "look to disable them as quickly as possible."

Cultural Diversity

In an increasingly global economy, companies that want to standardize their displays across various markets are using graphics that depict people of many cultures. "I'm finally noticing people realizing that there are people out there other than white, Anglo-Saxon males," says Sherwin-Williams' DaRif. "We, as marketers, and especially as merchan-

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