

TECHNOLOGY IN DISPLAYS

"Bells and whistles" are effective if they help displays achieve objectives

SKOKIE, ILL. — In today's world, we are surrounded by technology. "Young people today have grown up with it and can't imagine living without it," says Tom Nook, vice president — research & innovation with **Harbor Industries** of Grand Haven, Mich. "Teenagers have never known life without cell phones and instant messaging. Twenty-year-olds wouldn't dream of going anywhere without their cell phones, and most of them have never seen a TV without a remote control. Even 30-year-olds can't remember what life was like without Pac-Man, which was invented 25 years ago in June. Trying to reach, let alone influence these people without using technology is just useless."

Bruce Bieber, president of Seattle-based **Perpetual Promotion** doesn't agree. "Most of the work we do is for smaller beer/beverage companies so budgets are usually lean. What we often produce is a printed piece with little in the way of electronic bells and whistles. We created standees for the Blue Boar character for Henry Weinhard's Ale, for

example. They were just graphic pieces, but the graphics were so outrageously energized that the pieces were being stolen from retail stores by our target audience of 21+ males and taken back to their dorm rooms. Now that was a level of shrinkage we didn't mind!"

"Technology in and of itself is neither good nor bad," says Jeff Pacelt, CEO of **DNI Marketing**, St. Charles, Ill. "It all depends on whether or not it helps the display achieve its objective."

Some Determining Factors

"If you're trying to get people to buy a new video game, for example, a static display is useless," adds John Wyer, DNI vice president — marketing. "You have to provide something that will allow the prospect to experience the feel of the game itself. The same is true of a movie DVD for which you want to show previews or trailers."

Nook of Harbor Industries agrees. "One of the most profitable and fastest growing areas for many supermarkets is wine. We produced an interactive dis-



Reactrix Media Systems, San Carlos, Calif., installed a floor display for an adidas store in Australia. The floor's images change as customers walk on or wave their hands over the floor.

play that allows the shopper to scan the label of a bottle and view all the relevant information about the vineyard where it was produced, whether it is sweet or dry,

and so forth," he explains. "The display can also tell shoppers what type of food it goes best with and where they can find it in the store. It can even offer them a dis-

By Bob Baker