

THINK OUTSIDE THE PACKAGE



No matter the challenge, D. Thomas & Associates calls on decades of experience, deep relationships and a unique collective intelligence to find solutions for their clients. Here's one of their stories.

**D THOMAS
+ ASSOCIATES**

CLIENT: Bulk ice cream brands, dip stand operators and food service distributors

SITUATION

Who pays attention to something like the three-gallon ice cream drums found at your local ice cream parlor? Well, DT+A does. Specifically, former chairman Dan Hogerty II who decided 20 years ago that the existing paper and metal bucket, while



functional, was a cutting hazard for scoopers. There had to be a better solution. Dan decided DT+A was the company to develop it.

CHALLENGES

- 1) One company had all the business with a design that had been on the market since the 1930s.
- 2) Inertia would be a major hurdle; dairies, like most industries, were loathe to change routines, especially to something new and untested.
- 3) There was no machinery for a new bucket design; whatever DT+A invented, the manufacturing machinery would also have to be created.

APPROACH

As always when confronting a problem, DT+A called on its strengths — experience, innovation and relationships. Partnering with an engineering company in Columbus, Ohio, already skilled at paper converting, DT+A pioneered a package that offered a number of advantages: It packed flat for shipping and storage at the dairies; it was easily printable so companies could control their branding; and injection-molded plastic rings replaced the dangerous metal. The new design and the system to construct the components (called NMC3) became market-ready in 2005.

INNOVATIONS

- The 100% metal-free assembly machinery produced up to 12 canisters per minute
- Plastic or paper snap-on lid ensures product freshness and easy application
- Paperboard sidewalls ship flat for efficient storage, better printing capabilities and exceptional graphic presentation
- Heat-sealed paperboard bottom provides maximum endurance and leak prevention
- DT+A's design achieved a "superior" Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) score by the FDA



RESULTS



- By 2007, the DT+A design was adopted by four regional brands and had created a paradigm shift in bulk ice-cream packaging.
- DT+A joined forces in 2011 with manufacturing partner Weidenhammer, a German firm with facilities in Kansas City.
- Metal-free now claims 25% of the market and continues to grab more share every year.

BB Before we made the switch to 100% metal-free, we would take workers' compensation claims from operators making the containers at least once a month. At the ice cream shops, we would also get complaints and sometimes actual claims from employees scooping from and disposing of the metal ring containers. That's why we made the move to something ... much safer to handle at every point in our process."

Scott Becsi,
GM, *Thrifty Ice Cream* in *Northeast Dairy Magazine*

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