

TROUBLE SHOOTING GUIDE FOR SHELF READY PACKAGING

Shelf Ready Packaging

Shelf Ready Packaging (SRP) has been implemented in Australasia for several years, with the largest roll-out levels occurring between 2009-2011. It has been proposed that within best practice in the area of shelf replenishment, the use of shelf ready packaging can help to achieve improved on-shelf availability and sales.

ECRA has sought to assist industry in the implementation of SRP in recent years, particularly with the development of the ECRA Retail Ready Packaging (RRP) Toolkit and in brokering alignment between major retailers in regards SRP requirements. At the ECRA Convention in 2011 Coles and Woolworths co-presented their alignment around product specifications and the ECRA Toolkit. The message was clear:

- replenishment processes need to be as close to “one touch” as possible
- Retailers are committed to the utilisation of shelf ready packaging
- Coles and Woolworths are aligned around the content of ECRA RRP Toolkit

Current Issues

ECRA’s 2012 examination of issues relating to ensuring that goods located within a store premise are always on-show to shoppers, entailed ‘*Winning at the Shelf*’, highlighted several issues relating to the effectiveness and utilisation of SRP. The ensuing report stated:

The introduction of Shelf Ready Packaging (SRP) has the potential to greatly improve the efficiency of shelf replenishment for a number of categories. The reaction to SRP at store level has been mixed. Many examples of poorly designed SRP were found during the study. As a result it was often felt to be easier and more effective for personnel to fill the shelves in the traditional manner (i.e. disregarding the SRP). For some stores, SRP was not deployed as it didn’t physically fit on the shelves. Both these outcomes suggest that SRP design standards may need a review at category level.

Store discipline in deploying SRP was also inconsistent. Design issues aside, many stores did not adhere to their company’s deployment standards and there appeared to be little repercussion for not complying. The result was that many products intended to be merchandised on the shelf in SRP were not.

To assist in overcoming these issues, ECRA has produced the following *Trouble Shooting Guide for Shelf Ready Packaging*. The guide is structured around the ‘Five Easies of SRP’, and focuses on the three key aspects of execution - product, process and people.

The Five ‘Easies’

The five easies underpin the implementation of all forms of SFP and allow trading partners a framework for open dialogue to avoid prescribed solutions or technical specifications.

Each is described in more detail below, along with common issues and potential solutions.

Five Easies

Easy to Identify
Easy to Open
Easy to Shelf
Easy to Shop
Easy to Dispose

Easy to Identify

Assists the choice of the correct product and rotation of stock through the supply chain with particular emphasis on the distribution centre, back of store and shelf replenishment processes. Packaging should clearly communicate what's inside and assist store personal identify product in back rooms. This communication should be visible on more than one side to maximise sight lines and identification. Packaging should be easily identified.



Common Issues

Product	Process	People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand/size/variant information is unclear to stakeholders Category/Product type is unclear to stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The product can't be found in (over)crowded back room Product cannot be seen on shelf by shoppers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storeroom/filling staff struggle to understand carton information Storeroom/filling staff struggle to identify specific SKUs Shoppers struggle to identify specific SKUs

Potential Solutions

Product	Process	People
<p>Clear recognition of brand, product type and variant on the packaging.</p> <p>Use pictures and symbols where possible on all sides.</p> <p>Good use of colour, highlight brand and variant.</p>	<p>The use of clear carton identification guidelines that include both human readable information and barcode and numbering guidelines.</p>	<p>Store staff require clear recognition of brand, product type and variant on case for store staff.</p> <p>Should take a minimum amount of time to identify.</p>

Easy to Open

The packaging should facilitate easier and quicker replenishment processes. It should allow for easy opening in one or two steps preferably without the aid of tools such as knives. The opening process should be intuitive: store personnel should be able to see how to open, how to use and how to dispose.



Common Issues

Product	Process	People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SRP requires more than one simple process to open Box tears as it opens leaving an untidy edge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear on which part of SRP is to be removed Glue / tape makes opening difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff can't easily identify where/how to open Opening instructions take too long to read/understand

Potential Solutions

Product	Process	People
<p>Do not tape over opening features .</p> <p>No rugged or sharp edges.</p>	<p>Reduce time, clean / no tear for best finish and reduced need for cutter.</p>	<p>Target opening in the shortest possible time.</p> <p>Clear and simple opening instructions.</p>

Easy to Shelf

SFP should enable quicker, faster and simpler replenishment processes than decanting individual product. Without this requirement being met, the solution is not fit for purpose. The packaging must be strong enough to maintain the integrity units through the supply chain.



Common Issues

Product	Process	People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SRP does not fit on the shelf Tray is weak and difficult to handle, trays weight and design are not fit for purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SRP does not make the replenishment process faster - impacts productivity The relation between the SRP and the space allocation in planogram are not aligned SRP makes stock rotation practices difficult to manage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SRP is not deployed correctly by fill staff (i.e. not used) Filing staff unsure whether need to deploy SRP on shelf

Potential Solutions

Product	Process	People
<p>Simple opening instructions.</p> <p>Do not tape over opening.</p> <p>Good product stability.</p>	<p>Single 'one touch' movement onto shelf faster than decanting each unit.</p> <p>Two cases deep on the shelf, where the unit size allows.</p> <p>Easy opening in minimum time.</p>	<p>Easy for store personnel to load onto shelf.</p>

Easy to Shop

SFP should not create any barriers to purchase. The shopper should be able to easily select and return the product. It should allow the shopper to easily identify the brand, product and variant. Colours and on pack messages should assist shoppers in fast identification and product selection.



Common Issues

Product	Process	People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SRP hides the primary packaging details, product, variant, size etc. Appearance on shelf detracts from brand values. When opened and used on shelf the SRP degrades the brand values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planogram does not facilitate benefits to be derived from SRP via brand blocking and variant identification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shopper cannot remove or replace the product easily Shopper cannot identify the product or variant

Potential Solutions

Product	Process	People
Product and variant identification. Improve brand recognition. Primary and secondary packaging work in harmony.	At-a-glance recognition of category and unimpeded access to shop product.	Neatly presented clearly visible and easy to find. Easy to remove and replace.

Easy to Dispose

Packaging materials chosen should be recyclable or re-usable and appropriate logos should be displayed on the base panel. For products with multiple packaging type materials should be easily separated for recycling. Packaging should be easy to stack and remove from store aisles.



Common Issues

Product	Process	People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different materials are glued together and difficult to separate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SRP results in a 'sea of cardboard' on shelf fixtures which are not cleared in timely way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff cannot identify/understand recycling attributes of SRP

Potential Solutions

Product	Process	People
Packaging break down in minimum time. Minimal use of tape.	Straightforward to dismantle, separate and recycle or return materials.	

Other Considerations

Common Issues

Product	Process	People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in cost of goods. • SRP products do not successfully navigate the supply chain without damage • Negative impact on supply chain efficiency and effectiveness • Product is not suitable for SRP • Negative impact on sustainability commitments and targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variation in shelf depth between retail trade partners causes difficulty in determining appropriate OM's and design outcomes • Compressed timelines result in sub-standard outcomes • Significant changes to manufacturing / packaging lines • SRP is not used in store 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor understanding of packaging impacts of the introduction of SRP by Category Managers /Buyers • Solution for one retail trade partner is not the same as the solution for another retail trade partner

For more information:

- [Retail Ready Packaging Edition 3](#)
- [Carton Identification Guidelines 2012](#)
- [Industry Guidelines for Bar Coding and Numbering of Trade Items](#)