

# Let's start a debate

Some years ago, I attended a lecture given by a small manufacturer who included in a short talk, on his approach to business, a dismissive sentence on packaging. He said his company spent as little as possible on design and presentation of packaging of his product, because: "It is not worth the investment".

I sat there and wondered, thinking how influenced I was by the way a product is presented. The investment in packaging should probably be proportionate to the value of the product, but give me two apparently otherwise equal products, and I am likely to buy the one attractively packaged over the one wrapped in brown paper. And I suspect you are too.

That talk has always stuck in my mind; and it came to mind again recently when I started talking to Laila Zollinger, Chairman of the *Pewter Live*<sup>1</sup> sub-committee, about the marketing of pewter. Laila said to me: "Most businesses have:

*inputs, for instance raw materials, skills, energy and so on, a transformation process and an output.*

"Into which of these", she asked, "should they put their greatest effort?" She replied to her own question: "Interestingly, many people would say that a well-produced item is what their aim is. But, producing a beautifully crafted item is but a first step to becoming a successful pewter smith. What is the last step then? A satisfied customer, because they are likely to return to buy again. The question then arises as to what customers are looking for when they buy an item. More often than not, the whole buying experience is influential - the item, obviously, needs to be first class; as does service and packaging.

"No-one is going to be impressed with shoddy packaging. If you are selling through social media - is the website easy to navigate? Is it eye-catching and inviting? Is there an easy-to-reach contact?

"The foregoing is designed to be food for thought, and not a definitive list. However, one thing I learnt from studying in my MBA course", added Laila, "is that a *satisfied customer* should be our output focus. This is because a satisfied customer is likely to return, whereas even the most beautifully-produced item is unlikely to sell if, say, service is rude or packaging is shoddy."

## Alan Williams

And I offer a bottle of passable claret for the best response to this proposition. (Editor's decision final!). Ed.

*The Pewterer*, Volume 10, number 1. March 2019.

Editor: Alan Williams

Published by Alan Williams, 14 Dandridge House, 31 Lamb Street, Spitalfields, London E1 6ED and endorsed by the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, Pewterers' Hall, Oat Lane, London EC2V 7DE

Articles: copyright the several authors 2019. Get-up: copyright Alan Williams, 2019.

No reproduction without permission. All enquiries to the Editor.

<sup>1</sup> *Pewter Live* is the annual pewter design competition run by the Worshipful Company of Pewterers.