

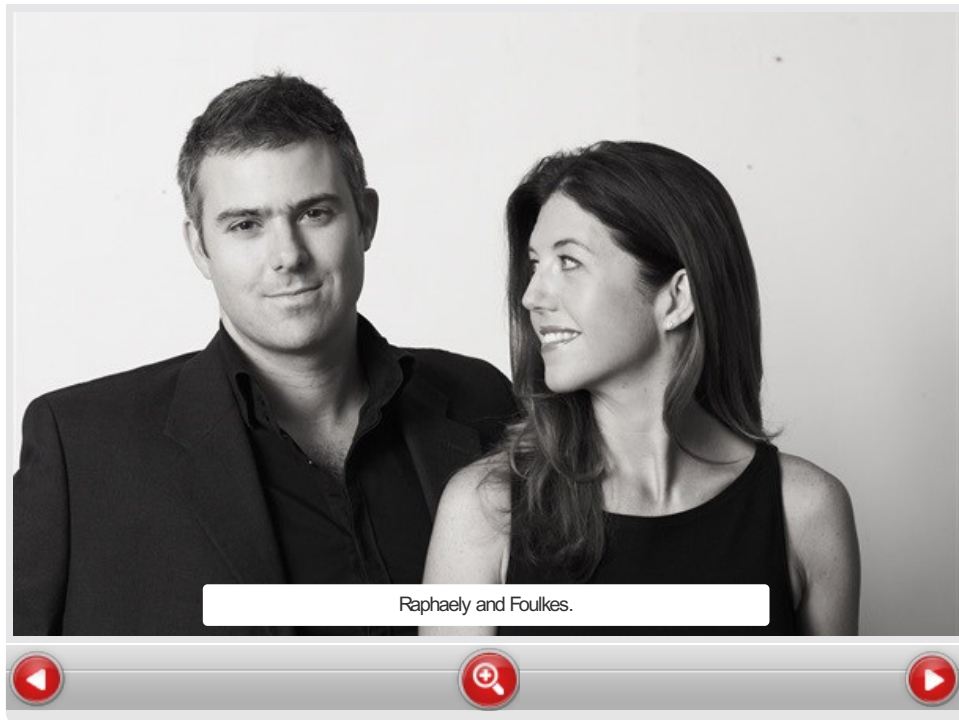
Breaking through brand clutter with Nomu

 By Leigh Andrews

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This #BrandManagerMonth, we find out what's new with Nomu, the original SA food and lifestyle concept inspiring creative kitchens across the land, from director Paul Raphaely.

Asked to share the Nomu design story in a nutshell, Raphaely says, "In a nutshell? Sure. If you aren't breaking through the clutter, you are just adding to it. We follow this rule as a general mantra, keeping consumer experience, breakout potential and making sure we stay as true to our own, personal aesthetic preferences as possible, regardless of what we do."



Describing what the essence of 'good design' means to the Nomu team in breaking through the clutter and how they incorporate good design into the customer experience, Raphaely says he and partner Tracy Foulkes, the Cape Town-based food fundi and caterer behind the Nomu brand, seem to go into older product categories with new ideas.

He says, "This automatically gives us a chance to look at how it has been done until then, and how we would prefer products to work, if they were ours and if we wanted to bring something new to the market. This would naturally tend to push an agenda of innovation as a priority, in product and in packaging."

As a result, good design in their minds would need to be obvious and impactful, have standout appeal, but also combine originality and novelty while being arresting and visually attractive.

That's why form will typically follow function in food packaging, often as a financial consideration. This is why they've been prepared to sacrifice design or packaging choices that might have made more financial sense. Instead, they favour stimulating packaging and design choices that could make better practical sense to consumers.





“Putting spices in tins and calling them ‘rubs’ for example, seemed quite exotic or maybe even quixotic 16 years ago,” explains Raphaely, but it made sense for what it was, looked beautiful and clearly stood out from all available alternatives at the time.

With hot chocolate, they’ve tried again to disrupt the market space with something he describes as “rational but gorgeous, that does an equally good job of getting your eye, and completely delivering on quality and flavour”. Tastebuds suitably active by these soundbites, Raphaely answered a few design-related questions for our marketing-minded readers...

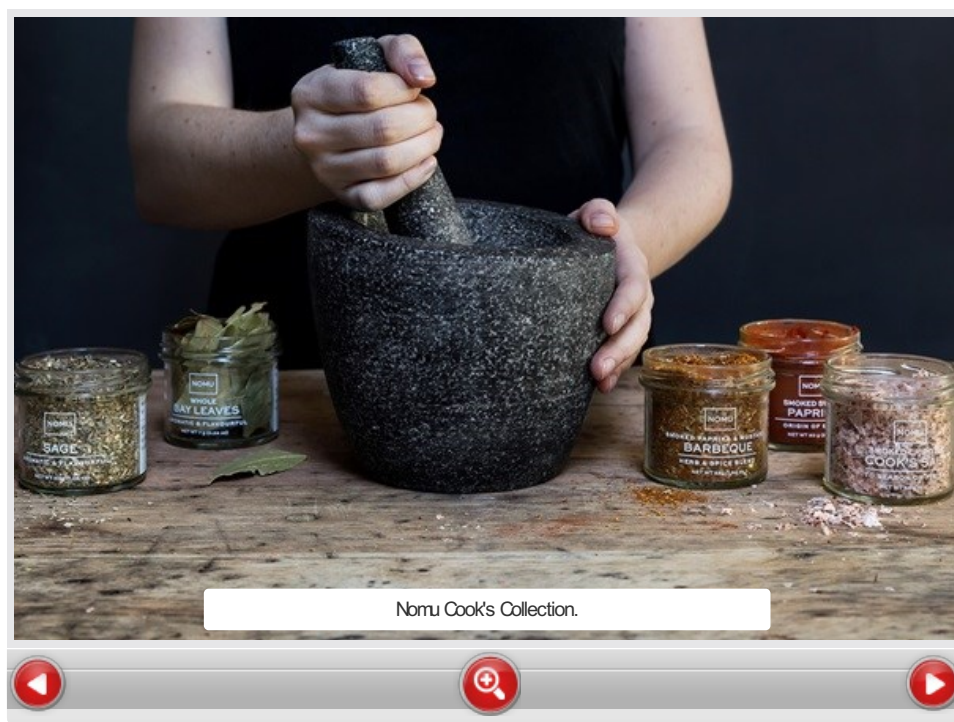
■ ***Elaborate on the importance of design-thinking as a business essential in any industry.***

Design is always a critical consideration but takes on a much heavier burden when you have no marketing budget. This is usually the case for startups and small businesses. If you get your design right, the product will be able to be talked-up and rely more on word-of-mouth referrals in the beginning, before it has spent a cent of advertising, and that’s often just referring to the pretty stuff, the decoration.

If your actual packaging design solution – the part that the customer will hold and turn and tilt in their hands, the part where they actually pour or sprinkle – is some supremely clever innovation, then this care and attention, paid right in the beginning, will outstrip any fancy marketing strategy and hopefully give you a boost to early sales and adoption that will give you time to come up with the fancy stuff later on, once you’ve focused on just getting your product out there and on shelf. When any business or industry manages to forget to consider these things, you get things like sugar in soft, paper packets that spills everywhere, every single time...

■ ***How can we better market brands through all the advertising clutter?***

Unfortunately, the real secret may simply be to buy better products in the first place. The problem is that most people simply cannot afford high quality services or products, and as such much marketing ‘clutter’ is dominated by large-volume, low-quality products that compete so loudly for our attention, adding to the clutter.



“So, we should all pay attention to ensuring that we bring something new, inventive, clever and well thought-through to market, because if you do, you are almost certain to be noticed, simply because the competition is mostly just noise...

Once you have something truly unique and smart, focus on finding the one true and unequivocal truth about that item or brand and then single-mindedly find ways to hammer that truth home, again and again and again.

❏ ***Lastly, share a few tips on designing with quality in mind.***

Be original; be entertaining with your design choices. You need to accept and understand that your customer has probably literally seen it all before and feels pretty mind-numbingly stultified and bored. Purely out of respect, try to give them something new.

Also, design from your heart, and do it for yourself. Unless you truly believe in what you are going to present to the world, it will never survive. You have to be passionate to be believable, and your customers will want to believe you. Apple and its brand loyalists are a very good example of this in action.

Lastly, if you go cheap it shows. Don't skimp on this. You'll pay for it later on.

Sounds oh-so-simple in theory, but much harder to put into practice. [Click here](#) to go further #BehindtheSelfie with Raphaely, be sure to follow both [Raphaely](#) and [NOMU](#) on Twitter for their personal and professional experiences alike, and click through to their [Instagram profile](#) for mouth-watering snaps created with their beautifully packaged products.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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