Pursuit of Packaging in a Pandemic: A Sweet Success

by Carey Rellis, President, Good Karma Consulting

Let me begin with the positive punchline: I am now the proud owner of actual gondola store shelving.

Along with many other consumer researchers, I prefer (and am pining for) in-person research to re-emerge as a possibility. Qualitative shelf-set studies have been a passion of mine for nearly 20 years, so when two packaging projects came my way from the same client company I was at first, thrilled – then progressively more terrified – as we postponed once, twice, and...ran into the “drop-dead” date for learning. The team needed convincing they could make a more informed decision based on virtual IDIs than by relying on business judgement alone.

If a picture is worth 1,000 words, a video is worth ten times that in USD. So, I created a shelf set in my pantry and simulated a shopping experience using karmaVision (wearable video technology that captures an eye-level perspective). Sharing this video that demonstrated a simulated shopping experience and illustrating how it would still be possible to allow the consumer to direct the experience while watching and shopping during the interview...saved the study. We prepared for the interviews by shipping high quality printouts of package graphics to each participant in separate envelopes with each shipment labeled, coded, and topped with a clear instruction to keep the envelopes unopened but within reach for the interview.

An unexpected bonus of this experience was having the clients view the shelf and their product within a competitive set in real time, and with the same perspective as the consumer.

By the end of the two days of online interviews, client, consumer, and Carey shared a clear vision of what the near future holds: human connection and quality insights both obtained at safe distances. All it took was creativity, flexibility, online shopping prowess to obtain shelving, 88 SKUs of chocolate to stock it (truly essential!) and a stress-alleviating sledgehammer for the shelves (some assembly required.)

Bio
Carey Rellis is founder and president of Good Karma Consulting based in St. Joseph, Michigan. Building better brands, customer experiences, and connecting clients with their decision-making audiences has been Good Karma Consulting’s passion and focus for nearly 20 years. She delights in serving an international clientele stemming from a cultivated list of Fortune 100 and private corporations.