

A little package with big messages

Without some key elements of the packaging, the Little Big Shot has — in the words of its chief marketer and ambassador David Kurrasch — no shot at winning over the consumer during that all-important, first-impression in the aisle.

About the size of a golf ball, the brass nozzle with a ball-bearing control mechanism benefits from a blister pack that simulates the nozzle in action. The packaging shows one end of the nozzle attached to a hose, while the other end shoots a powerful spray of water.

The package also tells the story of performance, conservation and — perhaps most significantly — a Made-in-the-USA story with the added emotional power of “assembled by disabled U.S. veterans.”

“We didn’t set out by saying, ‘Let’s have a veteran built product to use as a marketing strategy,’” Kurrasch told *HCN*. “We feel very fortunate to have found the veteran groups to work with us. And we wanted to help put people to work.”

Kurrasch, the entrepreneur and founder of K-CO Innovations, said the first objective was to find the right suppliers to turn the brass in the United States. Research lead to two: Alger Manufacturing in Ontario, Calif., and Avanti Engineering of Glendale Heights, Ill.

Two factories were necessary to meet the in-season volume of 50,000 nozzles per week, he said. Assembly takes place in sheltered workshops of veterans hospitals in Long Beach, Calif., and, more recently, Milwaukee.

An immediate marketing challenge for the product was to make clear to the customer that it was a nozzle, and not a coupler or some other form of hardware.

“Typically, hose nozzles have handles,” Kurrasch said. “They have dials, they’re much bigger than this. They look different. The package had to tell people

from 4 ft. away that it is a hose nozzle.”

The success the nozzle has had at Bed Bath & Beyond indicates the packaging’s success as an impulse purchase. “People don’t tend go into Bed Bath & Beyond looking to buy a hose nozzle,” he said.

Kurrasch says the veterans, many of whom are disabled beyond the ability to find work elsewhere, are precise and engaged in the assembly of the product. And the message on the package — though not aggressive — resonates with consumers.

“I’ve heard stories from people who didn’t have a need for a new nozzle, but they wanted to support a product that was providing jobs for veterans,” Kurrasch said.



Little Big Shot's Made-in-USA packaging has been successful for the company.