

DESIGN

Cheese Spread Whips Up A Brand New Bowl

Mrs. Kinser's Pimento Cheese Spread adds some corners to stand apart from the competition. BY MIKE BEIRNE

The idea: A new container for Mrs. Kinser's Pimento Cheese Spread will hit the refrigerated sections of grocery stores by June 1 with support from FSIs, in-store sampling and print ads in trade magazines. The marketer, Reser's, Beaverton, Ore., is a refrigerated food manufacturer with 12 plants and about 2,000 employees.

Why this is significant: The spread category, whether it be chicken salad, tuna salad or cheese, is a generic sea of clear containers topped with white lids. The \$250-million category—\$50 million in annual sales for pimento cheese spreads—has been flat for decades (per IRI) and is crowded with mom-and-pop competitors. Reser's saw an opportunity to execute stronger brand marketing with a better bowl.

Who will buy it: Blue-collar boomers who grew up with cheese spreads. Reser's managers also are betting that the new branding and packaging can win over the heads of households as young as in their 30s. Mrs. K's stronghold is in the East, and the company intends to begin distribution in Texas and the West Coast.

How it was created: Murray Brand Communications, San Francisco, was recruited to interview sales reps, plant managers and customers. Both parties also conducted a situation analysis of their competitors. Together, with some lobbying from North Carolina plant employees, they realized that no other manufacturer or retailer had done anything to revitalize the spread category. So they saw this malaise as an excellent opportunity for incremental sales.

A proprietary "sqround" container, basically a round cup with corners, was selected for the new look. This shape enabled Murray to use labels for highlighting the brand, its 60-year heritage and visual serving suggestions such as using the spread for salads and appetizers. Airlite Plastics, Omaha, Neb., took labels printed by another supplier and applied it inside the plastic of the container making the container look even more high tech compared with the competition. Reser's premium brand, Sedgefield, also will debut in a sqround pack.

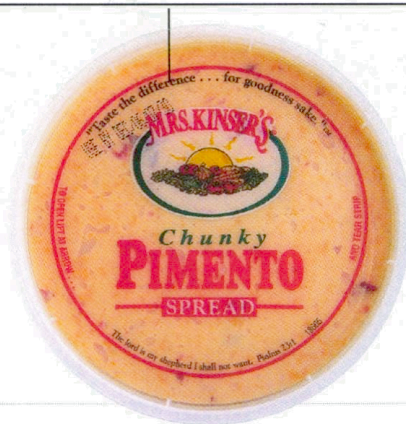
Challenges: "We've got to make the old familiar things contemporary and relevant," said Dave Lakey, Reser's vp-marketing. The new look had to signal Mrs. Kinser's core brand-values—time honored recipe and commitment to quality—and also show potential consumers new ways they can serve cheese spread.

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THE ORIGINAL DESIGN

Problems: Mrs. Kinser's looked like everyone else. The package did not convey a sense of trust or anything about the brand's long history.



Prototypes

Logo looked too big-brand. It didn't signal Mrs. K's homespun heritage.



Prototypes

Too deli-looking. Mrs. Kinser's is more than a sandwich spread, which this implied.

THE FINAL DESIGN

What's behind it: The bowl is clear for the sake of familiarity and to help consumers distinguish what flavor they're buying. Center label makes the brand prominent and provides space to present the product with a visually appetizing image. Side labels and lid highlight quality ingredients, as well as serving ideas, like a pimento, lettuce and tomato sandwich, while flagging www.mrskinser.com for more info. [Site launches June 1.]