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BRANDING STARTS WITH THE PACKAGE **- Block & DeCorso Helps Update Brands to Appeal to Today's Consumers -**

VERONA, NJ March 2009 – When you think of re-designing a package or extending a brand, a New Jersey ad agency may not come to mind as one of the places you would turn to for assistance. Yet that is where some of the freshest new facings on the supermarket shelves are originating: New products such as Pompeian OlivExtra Plus, as well as established favorites in the company's line of olive oils, vinegars, and



cooking wines; Gabriella Italian cheeses; Modenaceti balsamic vinegars; and Hero nectars. All have been designed by Block & DeCorso in Verona.

This reliance on the New Jersey agency is especially strong among firms based in Europe that recognize Block & DeCorso's talents for understanding which product attributes would appeal most to U.S. consumers. It began prior to Bill DeCorso becoming president of Block & DeCorso. Early in his career, DeCorso had helped a little-known pasta brand, Barilla, develop a more appealing appearance when it first entered the U.S. market.

Barilla believed the closed box, which hid the product from sight, created a mystique that made consumers buy it. DeCorso convinced the company that Americans buy with their eyes and he insisted on having a package with a window that made it easy to see the quality of the product. The rest is history; the new packaging and a strong branding campaign in print, radio, outdoor and at point-of-purchase soon made Barilla a household word in the Metro New York area, America's biggest pasta market.



Despite their expertise, Block & DeCorso's package design team doesn't have the last word; the agency uses market research to develop messages that touch the consumer. "It usually starts with brand positioning or, as we call it, a brand promise," DeCorso explains. "Either the brand promise exists or we work with the client to develop one."

Taste tests are also conducted to determine if product taste profiles match consumer expectations in America. Sometimes products are ready for market, sometimes they require reformulation, and occasionally, the findings mandate a positioning in the marketplace that is different from what the client originally thought it would be.

Bill Monroe, CEO of Pompeian, called upon Block & DeCorso to not only create the company's branding campaign, but to design the labels for a new product: OlivExtra Plus, containing both Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Canola Oil, plus the hot new food supplement, Omega-3 DHA. Block & DeCorso's package design positions the product as "The Smarter Cooking Oil™," because DHA nourishes the brain, eyes and heart! An earlier line extension, without the DHA, had helped Pompeian increase market share in the olive oil category, so there are high expectations for the launch of OlivExtra Plus.



As part of the packaging design project, Block & DeCorso conducted focus groups to determine the preferred configuration for the new OlivExtra Plus product.

Block & DeCorso also designed Chef Mario Cisaró's new signature pasta sauces, which capture the essence of traditional Italian recipes made with the freshest ingredients, such as the San Marzano tomatoes which are featured on the label, along with a photo of Chef Cisaró who was associated with some of the finest restaurants in Italy, including his own: Ristorante Mario. A leading U.S. importer, Source Atlantique, imports the sauces.



Block & DeCorso's packaging work has been recognized by Graphic Design USA, a top publication in the communication and graphic design field, which presented a national award of excellence for the agency's packaging for Thai Pavilion, a line of Asian cuisine imported by Source Atlantique.

In addition to package design, Block & DeCorso's team provides trade and consumer advertising, FSIs, in-store promotions and displays, recipe booklets, sell-in material, websites and other services for food and beverage accounts. Block & DeCorso specializes in new product strategies, beginning with research and running all the way through to the checkout counter or restaurant tabletop or menu.



For Lotito Foods, Block & DeCorso developed the look of the branding for the cheese importer's Gabriella of Italy line and the packaging. A case in point was Gabriella of Italy's unique Pecorino Marsala, which owner Chris Lotito created using two of Sicily's best known DOP exports: Pecorino Siciliano artisan cheese and wonderful tasting Marsala.

Block & DeCorso has been building strong brands since 1968. As a full-service agency, Block & DeCorso develops

integrated marketing communications programs, spanning both trade and consumer media, for national and regional accounts. Block & DeCorso is located at 3 Claridge Drive in Verona, New Jersey, (973) 857-3900; fax (973) 857-4041. Additional details about the agency are available on the Internet at www.blockdecorso.com.

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