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Never Mind! Pepsi Pulls Much-loathed Tropicana Packaging

By [Linda Tischler](#)

Laid up with the flu recently, my daughter sent her boyfriend out for chicken soup and orange juice. What he brought back appalled her. "There was this carton of juice on the counter that looked like the generic supermarket brand," she told me. "I thought--gee, he doesn't think I'm worth the good stuff?" She was wrong; he had bought the 'good stuff'--her favorite brand, Tropicana--but the juice's new packaging [0] was so bland and undistinguished it looked like the low rent made-from-concentrate stuff.



Melissa was not alone in her confusion. Outraged Tropicana

loyalists have been flooding the blogs for months to protest the brand's lackluster redesign, calling it everything from "ugly" to "stupid" to "generic." Now, Pepsi execs are finally conceding defeat. They announced late last week that they're bringing back the old look--the classic orange with the straw poking out--that consumers loved...or at least didn't find as offensive as the new look.

It's another embarrassment among several recently that can be traced back to the Arnell Group, the design and branding firm responsible for the Tropicana packaging, the new Pepsi logo, and the crazy brand manifesto, "Breathtaking [0]," that traces Pepsi's brand back to Da Vinci's Vitruvian man and compares the logo's gravitational pull to that of the sun.

That piece of work has been the talk of the chattering classes in New York for weeks, and the butt of a million blog postings online. Following the launch of the company's SuperBowl ads (during which Arnell famously compared himself to Thomas Edison for his brilliance in creating a 3-D ad for the game), I had a chance to sit down with Pepsi execs to talk a bit about their brand strategy.

Even then, they were chagrined about the failure of the Tropicana redesign. "Sometimes you land in a great place, and sometimes you don't. And when you don't, you need to find a better place. Fast," Pepsi's CMO, David Burwick conceded. At the end of the table, one of his lieutenants could barely conceal a snicker. "Words like 'tweak' are in order," he said. "Or beyond 'tweak.'"

To its credit, the larger, \$35M campaign, based on the idea of "Squeeze" has been more successful, and Arnell's clever little cap, shaped like half an orange, will still be used in Trop 50, the company's lower calorie juice.

But you have to wonder what's being said behind closed doors up in Purchase, and if the three strikes rule applies to branding consultants as well as major league batters and felons in California.
