BUSINESS SOLUTIONS ASSOCIATION

Product Images with Text (aka Infographic Images) Guidelines
BSA Guideline 12-14

Proposed Effective Date: January 1, 2015

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A. Purpose:

The purpose of the document is to establish a set of guidelines applying to images containing graphic elements (i.e. text, symbols) used as a part of product photography on e-commerce sites. These product images with text (aka Infographic Images) are used to enhance the shopping experience by communicating other important information to consumers to aid in the selection of products.

This document is further intended to clearly define a set of best practices as it relates to "attributes" of effective Infographic Images and identify a comprehensive set of considerations when designing them that enhance the overall experience of the site visitor.

Evidence from manufacturers already deploying Infographic Images suggests these images help the consumer make quicker, better informed buying decisions leading to enhanced sales.

B. Goals and Objectives:

Clear and detailed product photography is central to effective e-commerce. In today's visually oriented environments, it is crucial for images to tell an effective story that helps to differentiate between similar products. The use of text, graphics or iconography

within a product image can be an effective way to communicate key benefits and product attributes and can enhance results.

However, it is possible to overdo a good thing and product images can become cluttered, distracting and actually hinder the shopping experience.

The guidelines included in this document are intended to communicate areas of consideration when designing product images with text (Infographic Images) to assure behavior and experience on the site meets visitors' expectations.   The areas included are intended to provide industry wide best practices as they pertain to Infographic Images to enable the manufacturer to focus their efforts on the messages to enhance the sales of their products throughout the channel and to achieve their marketing goals.

Reseller and Manufacturers who adopt enhanced Infographic Images within the recommended guidelines on their e-comm websites are likely to observe an uplift in Online performance metrics, compared to standard images which do not leverage enhanced Infographic Images.

See below for an example of how Online performance metrics could be positively impacted through the correct use of enhanced Infographic Images:

- **CTR** (click-thru rate): Correct use of Infographic Images as the primary product image on product pages can help drive differentiation from other product page listings on site-search results pages. A broader positive impact may be observed in organic search results (Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc) depending on if the e-comm website is being indexed by 'public' search engines
- **Conversion rate:** Customer 'time to checkout' could be accelerated with prominent placement of key selling points (text or iconographic) within the primary product image, thus reducing the likelihood of the customer leaving the site or being distracted from transacting while looking for key pieces of product information which may be not be as prominently placed in the standard product page content
- **PRR (product return rate):** Well optimized enhanced Infographic Images should help reinforce 'what's in the box', to help set the expectation on what the customer is going to receive, thus reducing product return rates

C. Proposed Guidelines:

The proposed guidelines are intended to supplement and expand upon the best practices already adopted by the BSA regarding product images.

Infographic Images, product images including text or other graphic images, will be acceptable for use in all e-commerce applications. In some cases there may be

application for these images in print vehicles as well but this document is intended to focus primarily on the opportunities that exist in online channels.

The primary consideration when considering the use of Iconographic Images is to design them in such a way as to ensure effective communication. Manufacturers should begin with an assessment of what makes an item unique from its competition. What is the primary selling point? This examination will aid in the design effort of Iconographic Imagery. In most cases, prioritizing a single differentiating feature or benefit will yield the greatest result; however, in certain situations 2-3 elements may be used. Using a single differentiated image is most likely to have the greatest impact on sales and provides a superior consumer online experience.

In addition, care must be made in the use of Iconographic Imagery not to embellish an image to such an extent as to mislead an end consumer. For example, if an item is water resistant but not waterproof, showing it immersed in water would be considered misleading. Proper, honest and effective communication will increase customer satisfaction and sales while decreasing returns.
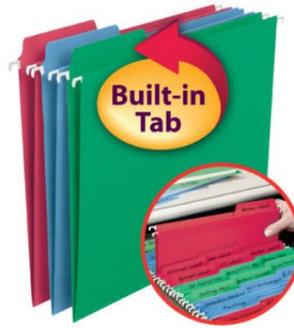
D. Technical Specifications and recommendations:

Best Practices and Elements of Consideration	
Number of communication points within an image	Best practice is to feature a single differentiating feature or benefit that will motivate purchase It is recommended that there be no more than 2-3 communication points in infographic images to ensure effective communication and to avoid visual clutter. Exceeding 2-3 bits of information can lead to ineffective communication and lower sales. *USP focused image*

Best Practices and Elements of Consideration	
Text size & legibility	Copy highlighting key selling information in infographic images should be of a size as to be legible when the image is reduced to thumbnail size. Keep in mind thumbnails can vary from as small as 65 x 65 to as large as 150 x 150 the text should be readable. For instance, for a thumbnail image that is 150 x 150, best practice would be to ensure text is at least 12 point in the final image *Good legibility* *Good legibility on key selling point*
Icon selection	When selecting icons to communicate core features or benefits, select images that clearly and quickly communicate the desired point. In addition, care must be used that any text within the image be legible at thumbnail (150x150) size. *Key benefit highlighted*

Best Practices and Elements of Consideration

Size & proportion of text to product image	It is recommended that no more than 25%-30% of the product image be covered or adorned with text or other infographic elements. *Well-proportioned*
Text coloration & visibility	All text or icons with text should be on a non-colored or simple, uncluttered background to aid legibility. Steps should be taken during design to ensure sufficient contrast to guarantee any text can be read easily. **Fan pattern adds an aesthetic appeal**

Best Practices and Elements of Consideration

Foreign language text (use of universal imagery)	Consideration should be made with respect to text and the syndication of images outside of English speaking countries. In most cases the best practice is to provide text in English only with additional images provided for application outside of the United States. Images with additional languages can be tagged separately in supplier information systems. If possible, eliminating text altogether in favor of iconography can address this challenge while making the images universal across geographies. *Universal image*
Use of packaging images	Use of packaging images will be considered a best practice, especially when retail style packaging contains additional communication details that aid the shopping experience. However, legibility concerns need to be taken into account when using packaging images at small sizes. *Packaging images*

Best Practices and Elements of Consideration	
Logos & trademarks in images	Use of manufacturer or brand logos as a part of product images is acceptable on secondary images and with some resellers as primary images. Manufacturers must own or have permission to any logos or trademarks that are being used to avoid legal entanglements and consumer confusion. *Logo in product image*
Use of logo/trademarks belonging to others	Use of logos, trademarks, service marks or other identifying marks owned by *other* companies shall be avoided when designing Infographic Images in order to prevent shopper confusion.

Metrics and Measurement	
Recommendations for Metrics to track/monitor success on Infographic Images	The ultimate measure of success is product sales. Experience from individual BSA members is that Infographic Images can increase the click through rate on images, speed the selection process, reduce returns, increase customer satisfaction and potentially increase sales of products.

E. Implementation

Implementation of the guidelines for Infographic Images will commence on January 1, 2015, or sooner, with any new product images being introduced to the marketplace with all users becoming fully versed and engaged in the implications and specifications of the new standard.