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Moxxy takes Desbry avocados to new heights

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A strong marketing program can make the difference between stagnant sales and exceptional growth. [WP Produce](#) witnessed this first-hand as a result of its partnership with [Moxxy Marketing](#) on its Desbry tropical avocados program.



Karen Nardozza

WP Produce specializes in premium-quality tropical and exotic fruits and roots, such as tropical avocados, Haitian mangos, plantains, manzanos, yuca and malanga, which have been marketed since the company was formed in 1984 under its proprietary Desbry brand. As the Miami-based family business expanded to provide additional items, new labels and packaging were developed without much consideration for brand cohesion and consistency.

While the company was successful, brand awareness with retail and foodservice buyers, as well as consumer brand preference and loyalty, remained elusive. WP leadership wondered what could be done to ease the sales process and solidify Desbry's leadership position in the marketplace.

In 2018, Moxxy Marketing, an award-winning, full-service branding and marketing agency specializing in fresh food and agriculture-related businesses, was hired to promote awareness and grow sales of Desbry tropical avocados.



Christopher Gonzalez

Moxxy recommended an integrated marketing approach that included refreshing and unifying the Desbry brand across commodities to better position and reflect the quality of Desbry products, while developing consumer and buyer recognition and preference for the brand.

"Moxxy's approach of basing everything they do on strategy, with a focus on growing sales, was — and is — exactly what we needed," said Christopher Gonzalez, vice president of sales for Desbry and WP Produce. "We thought we just wanted a label and some sales materials for our tropical avocados, but once we began working more closely with Moxxy, we realized the benefits of expanding our marketing and sales efforts, staying consistent with our messaging, and focusing on brand consistency in-store, on our packaging, in our advertising, PR and trade show presence, and on our website and social media."

Moxxy began by redesigning the Desbry logo, while maintaining a familiarity with the previous look. "Desbry was already established as a leading supplier of tropical and exotic fruits and roots. While we wanted to upgrade Desbry with a fresh, modern image, and provide a logo and graphics files with economical and high-quality reproduction across packaging and sales materials, we didn't want to lose three decades of brand equity," said Karen Nardoza, president and CEO at Moxxy.

After Moxxy redesigned the Desbry logo, it focused on supporting retail and foodservice sales of tropical avocados, which remain green when ripe, are about three times larger than the more familiar Hass variety, have a sturdy texture, and stay fresh longer after being cut (slower to oxidize and turn brown) than the more common Haas variety. Because education would be a key component of the sales process, Moxxy started by first designing and crafting persuasive yet informational buyer presentations based on insightful consumer focus group research Moxxy conducted in California and Texas.

Next, Moxxy redesigned the Desbry tropical avocado packaging, starting with new PLU stickers, eye-catching two-count poly/mesh bags, and display-ready cartons. Display bins and other point-of-sale materials were soon added, resulting in new retailer trials with major retailers.

"The results have been phenomenal," said Gonzalez. "We have been able to develop successful programs with several large, North American retail customers, received inquiries with several major foodservice chains, and have maintained double-digit, year-over-year sales growth since we began working with Moxxy."

After initially focusing on tropical avocados, Moxxy used its strategic marketing approach to help Debry increase volumes for additional products, including manzanos, plantains, Haitian mangos, breadfruit and malanga.

"We leveraged the familiarity and trust of the Debry brand by developing cartons, PLUs and sales materials with individual identifying colors, but with a unified look and feel," said Nardozza. "This gives consumers who already enjoy Debry tropical avocados, the confidence to try something that might be unfamiliar to them. And it gives retailers and foodservice providers the assurance they will be dealing with a grower they already know provides quality products and high-level customer service."

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