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**BEST
 OF
 CATEGORY
 JOHNSON
 &
 JOHNSON
 FIRST
 AID KIT**

HARRY ALLEN'S FIRST AID KIT for Johnson & Johnson is a home safety product with such satisfying, clean design that leaving it unused feels like gross negligence, even when negligence is the reason for its use.

With a siren blaring outside, Harris snatched the kit at its subtly concave, integrated handle, tucked it under his arm, and made for the doors. "It's just got so much confidence and singularity, plus it looks like a Joseph Beuys character," he said. "You want to grip it there at that grab point and go!"

For Isley, the kit was indicative of a broader return to form at Johnson & Johnson. "A design like this shows they're reinvesting themselves a bit, putting new care into their products and thinking hard about the product lifecycle." The jurors also respected the kit for what it wasn't: an idea spawned by committee. "The design," said Isley, "goes far beyond

slapping on some spiffy graphics for the sake of showing the kids you're with it."

In conversation, Allen said his team strove to create something iconic. That goal was faithfully served by minimal, yet instantly recognizable graphics: Johnson & Johnson's name running up the kit's red profile and a bright red cross just below the grab point. "You knew what this meant before you could read," Brebner said, pointing to the cross. "It's innate; it's universal." If the panel's admiration had one caveat, it was a lightweight cardboard belly belt that provided a pictographic inventory of the Johnson & Johnson products within, but that disserved design purity.

Some packaging entries were not honored because they lacked conventional competition—for example, a MacBook customer likely decided on a MacBook before setting foot inside the Apple Store, so its cardboard box probably performed little salesmanship. With this kit, Johnson & Johnson, now elevates itself to Apple territory. Johnson & Johnson's Band-Aids entered the lexicon as a proprietary eponym; this kit has the same possibility of success. Soon, drugstore shoppers won't be looking for a first aid kit; they'll be looking for the First Aid Kit.

Design Harry Allen Design (New York)
Client Johnson & Johnson, Inc.

Q+A: Harry Allen,
*principal at Harry Allen
 Design*

The jurors were amazed that your client didn't stipulate that "First Aid Kit" be written across the box. How did you sell such a huge organization on such a minimal design?

The truth is, you need an excellent art director like [Johnson & Johnson chief design officer] Chris Hacker to make it happen. He's championed my work for a very long time, but I couldn't go in with just one design. It's a matter of doing enough work around an idea so the client has a choice. Not all the models were as modern as the one they ultimately accepted. We actually had one that looked like a small doctor's bag with the two hinges on the top.

About that belly belt . . .

That was out of my immediate control, but to Johnson & Johnson's credit they made that secondary packaging as minimal as possible. I would rather not have any of it, but you just can't have a Johnson & Johnson product without some accounting of everything included.

With such an attractive design, did you intend for the kit to live on a countertop?

A huge consideration for us, aside from making it look beautiful, was giving it a small footprint, which is why it stands on end. And even though most people will put it in a medicine cabinet or under the sink, I wanted it to have that grab and go immediacy regardless of where it lives. Other products on the market have those impossible handles on them that mangle your fingers. That's why we gave it that prominent grab point. As it got modeled up and we saw the form looking both appropriate to the brief and sexy, we got really excited. We knew we had something.

