

David Becker: Selling organic to the public



David Becker, 44, spends his days trying to convince you to buy organic. Most recently, Becker, president and co-principal of Philippe Becker Design Inc., helped brand and market Safeway O Organics.

“Organic is one of the fastest-growing markets,” Becker said. “It’s mainstream and people on all ends of the political and economic spectrum are buying in.”

According to Becker, sales from the O Organics label netted more than \$162 million in the first year after being marketed in all 1800 Safeway-owned stores. While organics typically demand a premium, privately labeled items can often be sold for less because the margins are higher. For O Organics, the end result is a private organic label that retails for close to the price of traditional groceries.

“Safeway sought to align themselves more with customer concerns regarding health and wellness,” Becker said. “They wanted to make themselves as relevant to consumers as possible, and they turned to us to articulate and package that.”

The deal struck between Philippe Becker Design Inc. and Safeway was to design a name, logo, and the first 150 different packages for a new

line of private label organics, as well as brand guideline books and internal communication videos for employee training.

More than 200 products are marketed under the O Organics label, and Becker said Safeway would soon introduce new infant and toddler products.

To create more customer engagement, Philippe Becker Design Inc. and Safeway held a national contest for customers to submit photos of their children to be used on the packaging.

Becker earned a bachelor’s degree in philosophy from the UC Berkeley, and an MBA from the HEC School of Management in Paris. Prior to coming to Philippe Becker Design, Becker worked for American Express, Franklin Templeton Investments, Intuit, and frog design.

Philippe Becker Design Inc. has a staff of 25 and runs approximately 25 projects concurrently.

Clients include Disney, Forbes, Foster Farms, Hewlett-Packard, Niman Ranch, T-Mobile, Whole Foods Market, Gap, Intel, Nestlé, VISA, and Williams-Sonoma Inc. The company grew 530 percent between 2002 and 2004.