

Packaging – The Face of Your Brand!

Consumer decision making is often influenced by visual elements of packaging, including colors, pictures, and fonts. Informational elements of packaging appeal to the cognitive side of a consumer's mind; these include the information provided and materials used in the packaging process. Being one of the 5 P's of marketing, packaging is currently used for more than just protecting products till they reach the consumers.

In today's competitive world, it is important for sellers to distinguish their products from those of their competitors. This is where 'Brand Building' comes into play.



"Good packaging protects the product. Great packaging protects the brand."

Packaging, as a brand's primary touch point, plays an important role in brand building. It offers an opportunity to influence a brand's image and identity in the market.

Customers are bombarded with choices when they visit a store. Accordingly, businesses need to be innovative with their packaging methods to attract immediate attention. Effective packaging serves a myriad of purposes for the product owner.

Packaging is one of the key pillars in brand building strategies, and can be used for one or many of the following purposes...



'Brand Differentiation'



'Build Relationships'



'Build Brand Persona'



'Sustainability'



'Innovation & Technology'



'Convenience Cravers'





'Brand Differentiation'

Amorepacific, a South Korea-based international beauty brand, entered the Middle East market by opening its first store in Dubai in 2017. The company had an ambitious plan to spread the essence of 'Asian Beauty' to customers across the Middle East. For this, as a branding strategy, the company decided to focus on eco-friendly and playful packaging.

In line with Amorepacific's 'Less Plastic' campaign, the company explored various sustainable packaging options. It started using smaller boxes to minimize overpackaging and replaced plastic cushioning materials with more sustainable FSC-certified paper. Amorepacific also swapped plastic tape with paper packing tape and laminated boxes with recycled kraft boxes.



Etude House, an Amorepacific brand, introduced unique colorful packaging, which included face masks packaged as 'cups' of bubble tea and lip gloss that look like colorful popsicles. Etude House's playful packaging received immense positive reviews from consumers in the Middle East due to its unique packaging strategies.

As a result, the company could aggressively expand its business across the region by opening stores in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, etc. Playful packaging, by creating a differentiation, sparked a connection between the customer and the product and encouraged user loyalty toward the brand.



‘Build Relationships’

Textures, fonts, colors, and compositions on a product can change how consumers feel and experience a brand. High-quality printing and distinctive design that support brand strategy can engage buyers and help in building relations. This is mainly observed in the Food & Beverage sector, where a message of freshness and fun needs to be aesthetically conveyed.



In 2018, Coca-Cola Turkey utilized thermochromic ink technology as a decorative tool to make it a vital part of the look of the can. Four separate colored inks were used to create bright designs that stood out to the consumers each time the cans were chilled. Designs with summer themes, such as ice cubes, palm trees, sandals, and sailing boats, were featured on beverage cans of Coke Red and Coke Zero. Images on the can, which are colorless at ambient temperatures, change into colorful patterns when the drink is chilled.



‘Build Brand Persona’

Package design not only acts as a medium to deliver the products, but also conveys brand identity. Companies often think of the product as a person and try to create packaging that reflects the brand's personality and resonates with the target audience. This makes the brand look authentic, thus drawing the attention of consumers toward the product each time. Corinne Pant, a Creative Director and Illustrator based in Montreal focuses on branding, typography, illustration, motion graphics and web. Choosing plastic wrap for non-perishable is often a choice that is unjustifiable for the real needs of the product. To address this problem, Corinne Pant looked at the real needs of electronic parts packaging. In a poetic and very functional gesture when she did the packaging for the “Note earbuds”, it showed us once again that “less is more”.

At present, the importance of packaging in brand building is (to some extent) a proven fact, especially in the B2C domain. However, sometimes, B2B companies tend to undermine the importance of packaging, as their customers place their orders via catalogues rather than buying from retail shelves.





'Sustainability'



Every business is trying to reduce its carbon footprint, and packaging provides a potential avenue. Sustainable packaging covers packaging designs that have minimum impact on the environment. They limit the packaging waste and maximize sustainable materials and the use of renewable energy during production.

Sustainable packaging design is not only good for the planet, but also a great selling point for a company's brand. In the current times, consumers have become increasingly conscious regarding the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions. As per a 2019 consumer study by Dotcom Distribution, 62% of shoppers will likely buy products from brands that utilize sustainable packaging. This number rises to 74% among the 18–29-year-old population.

Metal packaging is tagged as sustainable, as it can be recycled multiple times without compromising performance.

In 2019, the UK's Life Water brand introduced a sparkling version of its natural spring water in matte black aluminum cans with a black colored shell and tab. This recyclable packaging tapped into the demand from an increasing number of environmentally conscious consumers looking to reduce plastic waste. As aluminum can be infinitely recycled, Life Water's packaging clearly and boldly highlighted "Cans Recycle Forever" and stated that "There's No Planet B."





'Innovation & Technology'

Packaging gives brands the opportunity to showcase their creativity and innovation. This makes brands memorable and stand out on the supermarket shelves amid numerous competitors.



An interesting example in packaging innovation is a self-chilling can in the UK, called 'ChillCan'. Once the buyer hits a button at the bottom of a ChillCan, it releases pressurized carbon dioxide from a capsule, which chills the whole can by 15°C within two minutes.

As technology seeps into every industry, packaging is also looking to reap its benefits to deliver innovative designs to consumers. Every day, the world is getting increasingly connected, and more people are getting access to smartphones. These people expect more from their product packaging; in particular, they expect it to be interactive. Connected packaging, which is an interesting application of the Internet of Things (IoT), is a great way for companies to create an immersive experience for its customers. Technologies in this space mainly include barcodes, image codes, quick response (QR) codes, radio frequency identification (RFID) tags, and near field communication (NFC) tags.

In Spain, beverage giant Coca-Cola started placing QR codes in its packaging to connect with customers and create an interactive experience. It partnered with 'ScanLife' to place mobile bar codes on products. On scanning these codes, consumers can access content such as UEFA Euro videos and the brand's online community, Coca-Cola Smile World.





'Innovation & Technology'



We've all come across Augmented Reality at some point or the other in our lives. Like how we amuse ourselves by clicking selfies trying out those wild Snapchat filters. Following the new innovations in technology, SAPIN has made the Augmented Reality sample that you can view with a specific APP.

Try scanning the QR code below and download it (android only) to check out the shown image through the APP!





Packaging Offerings for ‘Convenience Cravers’

Portable and convenience packaging are trending areas for innovations, especially for consumer-packaged goods (CPG) brands. This is because the modern consumer is on the move constantly and seeks convenience. CPG brands (especially food & beverage) in response are constantly looking to innovate and communicate to consumers the convenience they bring in through packaging in form of handling and operating their products.

For instance, packaging supplier Shieltronics created a multi-compartment tray for Qizini, a ready meal brand of Dutch company Conveni. This package allows vastly different foods to be microwaved at the same time, with no time-outs to stir the contents. This packaging solution lets the busy consumer heat food in a single convenient cooking cycle.



“Even though packaging as a brand messenger is still underestimated by few companies, it has become a necessary tool to get customers to pick their brand over others”

A company investing heavily into product development but not being able to correctly brand it could sometimes face difficulties in selling the product. This does not mean that packaging and branding need to be over engineered. Instead, companies could try to keep it simple, clean, and distinctive. The right choice of packaging in marketing can make a product memorable, easy to identify, and enticing to new and repeat customers. Moreover, branding and packaging need to be consistent, so that consumers can easily find the same product repeatedly.

While packaging decisions of a firm need to be aligned to the company’s broader vision, mission, and purpose to convey its brand identity, it is equally critical to consider the evolving consumer sentiments and trends while making these decisions. In the current context, consumers are looking for products that offer convenience as well as are sustainable / environment-friendly, and trends such as these, if kept in consideration, can help in developing successful brand building strategies.



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