

Design Thinking: A Tool for Creative Package Design

IIFT International Business and
Management Review Journal
2024, 2(1) 8–18
© The Author(s) 2024
DOI: 10.1177/jiift.241273716
ift.spectrumjps.com



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Abstract

The primary function of packaging is protection; however, the conscience of consumers has increased with time and it now encompasses many important aspects like marketing and sustainability. Package design has thus become an extremely complicated topic. Traditional package designing methods involve mainly theoretical aspects and then hands-on practice methodology. However, design thinking has become a recent trend and today, from design students to package designers, all are using it as a tool for successful and innovative package design. Design thinking has a human-centred approach, follows a gradual and interactive prototyping process, and delivers solutions to many complex problems by collaborative and multidisciplinary approach.

Keywords

Design thinking, package design, brand image, prototype, creative design, creativity and innovation, package design

Introduction

In today's market, almost all products are available in packaged form. Primarily, the function of any package is to protect the product it contains till it is consumed. However, the packaging also helps to market the product. Today, the functions of any package may be as simple as protecting the product to complexities like its recyclability and sustainability. The success of any product in the market depends mainly on the package design and its functionality to satisfy the consumers. With the innovations in technology and heavy competition in the market, now many companies have recognised the importance of package design as a tool for value addition, branding and marketing. For any package design to be effective, it should attract the attention of the customer and highlight the product (Elkhattat & Medhat, 2022; Kotler et al., 2008).

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A good package design provides functions like protection, preservation, attractiveness, easy transportation and identity of the product that results in convincing the consumers. The efforts of a package designer are extremely important while designing any package.

Innovation in Packaging

Innovation means visualisation and using non-existing ideas while implementing the process of realising new concepts. The new innovation might be used in its first form as an invention or to modify and improve it in another form. Therefore, as competition intensifies, new innovative changes in product packaging design and marketing become essential for gaining recognition and facing competitors (Jimenez et al., 2008).

A new innovative packaging solution appears and is called ‘hybrid packages’ that combine printed graphics and electronic elements to work together on the package. Creative packaging plays a main role when products are bought. It is the first thing that the consumer sees before making the final decision to buy. The importance of package design increases with the arrival and popularisation of self-service systems. The package design that attracts consumers at the point of sale assists them in making decisions quickly in the store. The eye-catching package has more opportunities to be noticed and chosen against the competitors and be purchased. The package with a strong decent identity with respect to the environment and human relations, with a unique appearance and a sufficiently different image assists the consumers’ decision-making and drives purchasing. High-quality packaging attracts consumers as compared to low-quality packaging. Innovative packaging may actually add value to the product if it meets a consumer need such as recyclability, tamper-proofing, child-proofing, easy to open, easy to store, easy to carry and product durability. Today’s manufacturers strive to have packaging that maintains the key equities of the brand, has standout appeal on the retailer’s shelf, and is sustainable but with lower production costs. The customer can adopt a product on the basis of its innovative packaging, which shows the relation between buying behaviour and innovation of packaging (Elkhattat & Medhat, 2022; Garg, 2017).

Package Design

The creative packaging design has evolved as a communication tool as well as a business marketing strategy. Creative packaging design plays an important role in attracting the attention, describing the product information to consumers, and finally making the sale. Packaging has been the most important point of purchase tool as it is used to communicate the brand’s message and values. The design of the package enables consumers to identify the nine symbolic signs to easily identify the product from competitors. Packaging design is one of the key elements in the marketing tool for a product and it will promote, be recognised and sought

from the consumer. Creative packaging design will ultimately be monitored to their brand conveys a message and personality (Ambrose & Harris, 2011; Capsule, 2008; Kotler et al., 2008; Meyers & Gerstman 2005; Nickels & Jolson, 1976).

Packaging design changes the appearance of goods and endows the same products with different tastes. A new trend in packaging design has been increasingly emphasised and has gradually become an important means to convey information and build brands, playing an important role in brand competition. Modern trends in food and beverage packaging include personalised packaging, communication with environmentalists, packaging for urban people, digital design and simplified living, as mentioned in a related report on the food and beverage industry. It can be seen from the five points that consumer needs are taken seriously in packaging design. Consumers of different ages, social statuses and lifestyles have distinct demands on product packaging design.

In creative packaging design, redefine nature-based design according to graphical, colouring and textual elements on packaging applications. There are many factors to consider in designing a product package, such as consumers increasing attention to the environment, and consumers are also getting shrewder to choose eco-friendly packaging (Milana et al., 2021).

The interactive concept of packaging design is mainly for interaction between consumers and commodity packaging. An excellent product packaging design can correctly convey the information of the goods. In this process, consumers can better understand the thoughts and feelings of the products. So, designers can constantly update and improve the commodity packaging according to the consumers' reaction and the description of their own consumption demand and enhance the individuation of commodity packaging. Designers should give their own motivation and consistently supplement their own knowledge to design innovative interactive packaging design.

Packaging design has three forms of interaction concept. The first is sensory packaging, which uses the consumer's sensory feeling to directly transmit the design concept to the consumer, creating a real feeling with the help of bright colour appearance and design with the sensory experience, to strengthen the information exchange between the customers and the packaging and increase emotional interaction. The original intention of the design can be reflected by the interaction of 'picking', which makes the packaging interesting and integrates interactivity into it.

According to Yang (2016), practical necessities of interactive concept in packaging design. The interactive concept in packaging design is indeed influenced by practical requirements determined by economic development and consumer demand. In the current market situation, packaging serves as just a container; it is a means of communication between brands and consumers. Moreover, in a competitive, packaging design plays a vital role in determining consumer observations and influencing purchasing decisions. The initial impression of commodities is largely influenced by packaging design only. Package design has gradually become a main conveyor of commodity information and improved the economic efficiency of enterprises. Package designing not only

attracts attention but also conveys the needful information about the product, features brand identity and benefits. This not only enhances customer satisfaction but also contributes to economic efficiency.

The consumers' consumption concept has been changed because of communication and interaction between packaging designs and customers, which just supplies to the changing concepts of consumers. Analysis of the necessity of interaction concept in packaging design with the continuous progress in the economy, and more enterprise attaches importance to the packaging design of merchandise. However, few enterprises lack innovation and practicality. They usually implement the form of plagiarism and imitation in packaging design, which leads to similar packaging design of the same type of product in the market at present, which cannot duplicate the characteristics of enterprises and changes and benefits between commodities. Therefore, many enterprises cannot attract the attention of consumers to the product. The flexible application of interactive concepts in packaging design is to renovate the structure of product packaging design, add humanistic needs and spiritual evolution to the traditional design, and fully combine the packaging design concept with the actual requirements of consumers and humans. Thus, in the process of packaging design, we should pay attention to the form and structure, as well as to the humanistic spirit, to truly reach the goal of interface.

An Effective Packaging Design: A Need for Attracting the Consumers

A unique packaging design is bound to go deep into the hearts of the people to achieve visual impact and aesthetic feeling. With the continuous accumulation of material wealth, people are increasingly seeking spiritual satisfaction. Unique and creative packaging design contains a certain cultural content, allowing cultural products with the packaging design to show a unique emotional appeal and values of the product. The idea of creative packaging design of cultural and creative products should meet the needs of consumers by playing the role of urging consumers to consume rationally and by symbolising a vivid visual effect. The packaging designer of cultural and creative products should design the packaging design needed by consumers from the perspective of consumers. The creativity of packaging design is in line with the demand of cultural and creative products.

For cultural and hand-crafted products, the packaging design should also be unique in addition to its functionality to fulfil consumer needs. The uniqueness of any packaging design should also complete the aesthetic desires of the consumers. In addition, it should also meet the demand of consumers for such products. The package design of such products should also balance the consistency of image and develop creativity in the new generation (Dong, 2020).

The consumer market grows rapidly every year and competition increases day by day among different types of products and increases steadily. Day by day, increasing competition in industrial area among different types of products to stand out against competitors makes companies try to innovate something new

and get new products and designs to the end customers. It is one of the marketing tools that has become popular and important in packaging. Today there are different package designs in supermarkets. Customer preference and buying behaviour of the consumer are the important points that should be considered when designing any new package. Almost all product purchase decisions of goods are made by the consumers at the point of purchase (Polyakova, 2013).

Today, product packaging has become more and more complex and also plays a vital role in branding. The role of packaging mainly depends on the three functions with regards to the product which are often highlighted in various publications with respect to marketing, protection, identification and communication (Capsule, 2008).

New technology and technology development in laminates and coatings have been contributing to the entry of newer materials. This is one of the important considerations in the development process of creative packaging design (Jane, 2021; Yang, 2016).

Packaging design includes texture, colour, graphics, size, materials, shape, etc., and has importance in marketing various products, for grocery items and cosmetics. While designing any package, the package should be considered as a part of the product (George, 2005). The creative package and effective design will definitely have an impact on the final package.

Creative Packaging—A Marketing Tool

Creativity is a vital component of success. Packaging has the potential to make or break the future of any product, that is, how it stores and protects the product and how eye-catching it is on store shelves. Creative thinking packaging attracts consumers by doing free advertisement by enhancing the brand image.

Creative packaging includes the product design as well as the brand development. A package tells about the product's characteristics and communicates many things to the consumers. While purchasing the product, creative packaging helps the consumer to make quick decisions by changing their perception about the product and making them buy the product quickly. The creative packaging adds value to the product quality with improved packaging. Different design elements like texts, colours, graphics, font type and size play an important role on the shelf. The primary role of creative packaging is to catch the consumers' attention and to stand out among the competition in the store or at the supermarket. Hence, creative packaging is a major instrument in modern marketing activities for packaging of any consumer good.

People often spend longer time in the supermarket and grocery stores while buying the products. It makes a big difference when a product has uniqueness and attractiveness by its careful design in order to catch the customer's attention. How consumers experience packaging in everyday commodities and describe the role of packaging in perception of quality is very important. Creative packaging works as a strategic tool for companies to increase brand awareness, strengthen brand image and build up customer loyalty (Lu et al., 2007). Creative packaging is the

need of the hour for marketing consumer goods. In the recent scenario, the creative packaging should contain the preferences of consumers. Packaging should provide an attractive method to convey messages and information about the product attributes to its customers.

Design Thinking and Creative Packaging

Design thinking and creative packaging are being used by companies to showcase their products in the market differently from their competitors (Garg, 2017). Design thinking and creative packaging are secure and safe but have altogether different approach.

Packaging design should have visual impact. The product design should also involve a solution to brand visuals, structural needs and convenience in its functionality. Packaging designing course should include creativity and professionalism. Design thinking concept has taken momentum throughout the world to improve the product quality and demand of the product. Packaging design training should make students think and introduce creativity in their design. The issues of synchronisation among products and services and linking them with consumers' perceptions should be given importance while designing. Innovative designs can be developed using one's experience and available market resources. The three dimensions of creativity should be used to create an effective package design.

Packaging design embraces the requirements of protection required by the product and includes effective usage of branding needs. From a commercial perspective, for addressing comprehensive issues, the packaging design requires detailed planning.

The two types of packaging design, that is, consumer packaging and industrial packaging, different aspects like protection, storage, transportation, distribution, safety and convenience, should be fulfilled differently to fulfil respective needs. The model for cultivating packaging design talent cultivation model and the current era also entails its unique model for fostering design talent. Creative thinking packaging and design gain the knowledge of packaging and understanding of packaging concept on the basis of their knowledge. The creative packaging improves the design expressions and ability of communication from the perspective of the industry.

Package design is vital for big brands to sell their products in the trade market, and thus should be considered as advertising of the products. It should also ascertain its role to create and convey the product attributes to its customers (Elkhattat & Medhat, 2022).

Creativity and innovation are interdependent. The role of creativity is to generate new ideas which do not exist at that point of time, and innovation gives us the scope for implementation of the newly created ideas. Thus, with the growing competitive market, it is necessary to have creative changes in the package design of any product to achieve market acceptance and face the competition. In the recent world of creativity, the innovative packaging solutions for the so-called 'hybrid packages' include some electronic elements in addition to the printed graphics. There are many aspects of innovative packaging, for example, unique

shapes, different die-cuts, 3D printing including special features like sensory and smart indicators.

Design Thinking Process

Based on how the consumers behave, think or feel, design thinking brings new solutions to our life. It is an interactive process and focuses on the association between consumer and designer. As described in Figure 1, it normally consists of five stages, viz. understanding, defining, conceptualising, prototyping and testing.

The complete process focuses on user-specific research, wherein the designer visualises the consumer to gain a deeper understanding and experience about his perceptions. This allows the design thinkers to overlook their own assumptions about the product and packaging and try to gain insight into consumer needs.

Further, the design thinker defines the problem and conceptualises the probable solution to the problem. Further, they prototype the solution with proper care using their experience, and then the prototype is finalised after refining through different predefined test protocols.

Package design is always influenced by the business environment and further influences the innovative technology market and environment issues in marketing (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2007). The package design and packaging development process originates from different sources, business environment and various market aspects, which, in turn, originates from changes in consumer minds and their perceptions about convenience, functionality, environmental issues and safety (Packaging Federation, 2004).

Functions of Creative Packaging

Creative packaging should provide protection, convenience, labelling, identification, promotion, tamper evidence and economy to the product. Figure 2 highlights the functions of creative packaging.

1. Protection: Packaging keeps the product fresh, clean and moisture-proof. Creative packaging protects the product from leakage, spoilage, breakage, evaporation, insect contamination, dust, adulteration, etc.

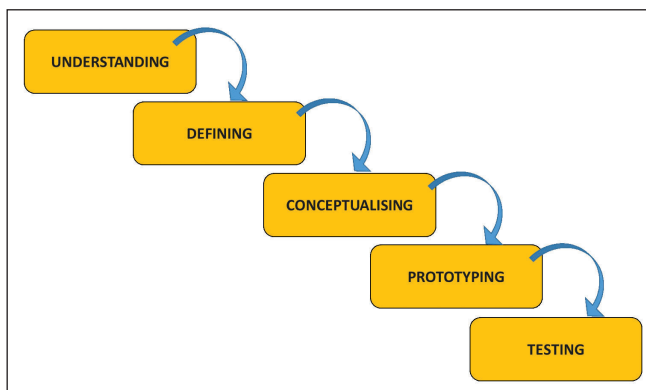


Figure 1. The Process of Design Thinking.

Source: Packaging Federation (2004).

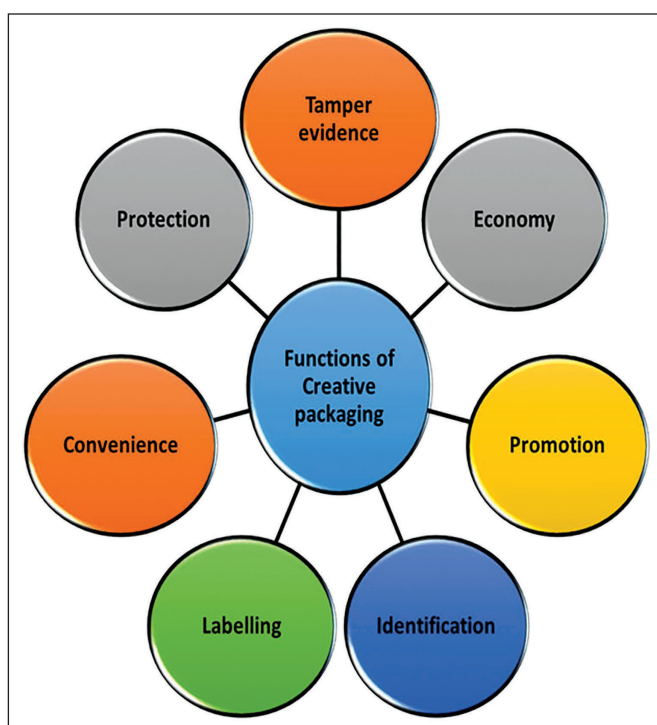


Figure 2. Functions of Creative Packaging.

Source: Robertson (2006).

2. Convenience in handling: The packaging facilitates handling, displaying storage, transportation, loading, unloading, etc. The packaging provides convenience to manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers and consumers in handling the product.
3. Labelling: Labelling is just not possible without packaging. Label is an informative tag/sticker attached to the package of the product. Label gives information about the product like its contents, price, brand name, manufacturing date, expiry date, methods of using the product, etc.
4. Identification: Product and commodity stored in storage area need to be identified as to their type, make and also need to be clearly distinguished brand. Product of one manufacturer can be easily identified from competitor's product with the help of creative packaging.
5. Promotion: Creative packaging is a silent salesman. Attractive packaging attracts retailers and consumers. At the initial stage, it is the package that attracts the consumers. The attractive colourful package, design, picture, printed informative matter, colour combination, etc., all these aspects of packaging help to attract customers and thereby promote sales.
6. Tamper evidence: There is a minimum possibility of adulteration of goods if these are properly sealed so the consumers get the original product.

7. Economy: The package should be economically feasible. The economical creative packaging increases the economic life of the product and sales of the product (Robertson, 2006).

Creative Packaging Elements

The elements of creative packaging design fall into two categories: visuals and informative. The visuals include graphics, size or shape of the package, and the informative aspect consists of information about the product or technology used.

The visual element in creative design provides detailed information about the product. Visual component includes colour combination, image layout typography, product photography graphics, etc. Selection of process colour and colour combination is an important point to create a new or attractive design package. Colour and colour combination are the main elements of design in packaging design because it is very easy to remember and has a visual appearance (Interaction Design Foundation, 2016).

Packaging size and shape are important factors in package designing. The packaging size varies depending on the product level involvement. The product price has smaller level involvement, which is determined by cost estimation and cost saving created by reduced packaging and promotional expenses. The effect of package size has a strong influence on the buyer when the quality of the product is difficult to determine. Therefore, the consumer decides the quality of the product from the product volume and its cost (Ahmed et al., 2014).

Information: Product information and communication are fundamental roles of any package. This helps customer to make the right decision when purchasing a product. The technology creates the packages according to new trends and customer qualities. So, the technology fulfils the consumers' needs and requirements.

The communication element in the new technology should be presented visually and hence it will be more attentive and convenient for the customers. Interaction with packaging can stimulate attention and engage in information processing (Zhao et al., 2021).

Conclusion

The present review article concludes that creative packaging design is necessary according to consumer needs. Packaging is a protection and easy to handle the product. Packaging is a vital tool in marketing. The creative package design grabs the attention of consumers and provides detailed information about the product, thus it works like a silent salesman. Creative packaging protects products from external threats, extends quality and extends their shelf life while providing protection during transportation and storage. Creative package design plays an important role in conveying detailed information to consumer about the product attributes. It promotes and reinforces the purchase decision not only at the point of purchase but every time the product is used. Thus today the process of design thinking has become an important trend for design students and professional

package designers and they are using it as an effective tool for successful and innovative package design.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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