

PROBLEMS OF RESEARCH IN CONSUMER PACKAGING DESIGN

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Abstract. *Consumer research can and should be an important part in creating the package. Even if the research can not guarantee final decisions, it is extremely useful in focusing on design objectives and their suitability to a specific marketing strategy. Consumer research to create a suitable package should examine a complex set of issues related to the proposed design concepts. This is essential especially when the subject of the research is to create a new design for an existing package or packaging line. The methodology most frequently used in research brand identity and packaging design concerns: consumer research predesign stage; feedback from consumers; postdesign consumer research stage. Choosing the right companies and research methodologies appropriate packaging design depends on the type of feedback required to make judgments about the design.*

Key words: *consumer, package, design, research*

INTRODUCTION

Consumer research in the field of packaging design was and still is a controversial topic: some experts totally agree with this, while others ignore it when making decisions about packaging design.

Many companies use brand management and design consultants who use consumer research differently: to help design their strategy, to suggest possible directions and design changes; to confirm the adequacy of the design selected to support marketing strategy; to discover any negative aspects perceived by the consumer.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Consumer research tested consumer behavior patterns, trying to answer several questions:

- Who are buying habits and purchasing behavior within a category?
- What matters pertaining to brand value (eg, logo, visuals, colors) appear in current packaging? Appears any of them?
 - The strengths and weaknesses of the product (s)?
 - What motivates consumers to buy or not to buy the product (s)?
 - What motivates some consumers to prefer one brand of competition?
 - As consumers recognize the product (s) and how is it?
 - In that way affect the choice of the consumer packaging, where the influences all?
 - The priorities of communication or information that guides consumers' purchasing decisions?
 - What they communicate about their products packaging competition?
 - What consumers like or dislike their products?
 - Current packages are easy to carry, to hold, throwing or closed?
 - What improvements would influence consumers' choice of packaging?

The methodology most frequently used in research brand identity and packaging

design is made in relation to:

- consumer research predesign stage;
- feedback from consumers;
- postdesign consumer research stage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Since many years, designers of packaging were even less inclined to recommend research consumer packaging design, vehemently opposing any kind of consumer research which may inhibit creativity, being of the opinion that the experience and ability their creative is all that matters. These designers believe that if their creative recommendations will be subject to mechanical and psychological tests made by researchers who might be more inclined to statistics than to creativity, then they will inhibit originality and will lead to design solutions unattractive.

Many companies research package design may be very experienced in consumer research for advertising or other purposes related to communication, but less familiar with the testing features and characteristics, brand identity and packaging design. Advertising is rather temporal character, changing frequently, while packaging should have durability.

The seller who is considering packaging design research must understand the difference between advertising research and research design. Advertising research examines primarily for the purpose of remembering, of evocation, as long as the design examines the degree to which the product is discovered and rapid communication.

Consumer research to create a suitable package should examine a complex set of issues related to the proposed design concepts. This is essential especially when the subject of the research is to create a new design for an existing package or packaging line - can be updated one that is on the market for a long time and that buyers and immediately remember to answer competitive pressure in that category of product or other market based incentives.

Thus, research should probe a variety of potential obstacles and opportunities in the following contexts:

- purchasing behavior within the category;
- consumer decision-making process;
- aesthetics.
- value package design;
- perceived values compared with competing products;
- priorities (eg, brand, variety, visual elements, color, features);
- perceived image on package design;

Consumer research predesign stage refers to research carried out before starting the actual design. This type of research is particularly valuable when no other forms of marketing research to help establish design objectives or when existing research is not current enough to be relevant.

When no information available that would help in establishing design criteria, such as buying behavior and purchasing habits within a category, research predesign phase is useful not only because it helps a design consultant to come suitable solutions, but also to improve the evaluation of the design position.

- Consumer feedback means research carried out within a certain time during the design creation process. His objective is to test the suitability of different design concepts in their relationship with strategic objectives. A design concept supports strategic brand image as efficiently as concepts B or C? Which design concept more effectively and quickly communicate your marketing strategy? Which design concept involves more consumer? What's easier to find

in the competition? Which concepts should be noted, to be deleted and which offers the best opportunity for improvement through further development?

- Postdesign consumer research stage is useful in confirming the final selection of the program of establishing brand identity and packaging design. This type of research can take various forms, from the interview with one person at full scale test markets. Often be enough to make "a test of disaster" with feedback from consumers, testing will confirm the effectiveness of the design selected and will reduce the negative aspects that are often part of the decision making process related to design.

- Firms that specialize in researching packaging design created productive ways such as to test the adequacy of the design of packaging in relation to marketing strategy and help retailers and designers to make wise decisions.

There are numerous research methodologies applied in brand identity and packaging design. The following will present the most widely used in packaging design.

- Tahitoscop - is a device that measures the degree of recognition and finding / locating the brand or product when the consumer is presented in very short time periods, individual packages or packages exposed compete. Starting at an interval of a fraction of a second which is gradually extended, this test method determines how quickly occurs or product brand recognition. Although tests are usually followed by interviews with respondents, they focus on speed of recognition of brand, products and product information, but often unable to provide further data on packaging design than on the degree impact and localization of the products.

- Tracking movements of the eyeballs, a test method related to the previous one, but more sophisticated, using laser technology to track the eye when the eye scans a package or arrangement on a shelf, so analyzing purchasing behavior. It provides a diagram showing the movement of the eyeball of the respondent, while he scans the following separate packaging design elements or text written on individual packages or packages exposed compete. The method provides information to prioritize visual purchaser, that he sees first, second and third time, and to reveal elements of the package than the buyer could switch eyes.

- Interviews from the focus groups / samples of the population - involving conversations with small groups of consumers controlled - usually accounting of used and unused products from a specific category - conducted by a moderator who knows how to stimulate respondents to express their views and to -and manifest attitudes of the class in general and to issues related to brand identity and packaging in particular. It is a popular method among vendors and designers, because it allows a lot of flexibility and is quite efficient in terms of cost. Its popularity results from the seller's ability to observe the reactions of consumers and to listen to comments from an adjoining room, behind a glass mirror. This provides additional opportunity to assess consumer reactions to packaging design before the moderator to submit the written report.

- Interviews One on One - Like interview with samples of the population, one on one interview method stimulates consumer opinions and attitudes towards products, categories of products or packaging design directions in individual interviews with respondents suitable, ie users and nonutilizatorii products . These interviews may be conducted in the buying or near his home, at the office of the respondent or elsewhere, depending on the type of products involved and the type of respondents asked. One on one interviews are especially useful when respondents are doctors or other professionals who have little time to participate in tests or individuals whose intimate relationship with the products reach or delicate issues, like the case of packaging drugs for Alzheimer's patients or AIDS.

- The test simulated store - This test requires simulation of a district in a shop or a whole category of products, packaging design candidates are exposed to competition among the

products or potential competitive products. Respondents are asked to "buy" the district simulated, and their behavior is watched and noted the researchers. The technique includes interviews with "buyers" who are required to say why they selected or not selected a product and why they made certain choices, paying special attention to course design concepts of the products displayed.

- Full scale test markets - is the most realistic method of consumer research by applying maximum scale test markets. It requires not only the production of a large number of packages filled with products to create realistic purchasing situations, but careful selection of the most suitable test environment and the agreement of one or more retailers to be used as a place to store test. Although it is a more realistic, it requires a huge effort from the seller, a research firm and consultant on issues of design to organize and direct procedure testare. Testul needs a long time - months, a year or more - to observe or monitor the movement of packages tested. Although this is the ideal way to confirm the effectiveness of a new program package design, market testing cost is certainly much higher than the above mentioned techniques. However, despite the high cost, this could be the most productive method research design pack it involves a major change to an amazingly well-known brands.

CONCLUSIONS

Consumer research prevents use of intuitive decision based solely on packaging and reducing the risk of possible failure. Since the total failure of a design program indicates often hidden below the surface issues of marketing strategy, the most important thing that helps consumers research strategy reassessment and reorientation, and therefore the criteria for packaging design, to ways that will corresponds better product.

Consumer research never requires final decision. Although consumer research is a valuable tool for navigation within the boundaries of a category, the final choice of the direction in which it will head a brand and its packaging, will be based on the vision of long-term marketing strategy.

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