

# Packaging Functions

The three most important functions of packaging are to contain and protect, promote and facilitate the storage, use and convenience of products. A fourth function that has become increasingly important is to facilitate recycling and reduce environmental damage.

- **Containing and protecting products.** The most obvious function of packaging is to contain liquid, granulated or otherwise divisible products. The packaging also allows manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers to market the products in specific quantities, such as ounces, grams, kilograms.

Physical protection is another function of packaging. Most products are handled several times between the time of manufacture, harvest or production of any other type and the time at which they are consumed or used. Numerous products are shipped, stored and inspected several times between production and consumption. Some, such as milk, must be refrigerated. Others, such as beer, are sensitive to light. Others, such as medicines and bandages, should be kept sterilized.

The packaging protects products from breaking, evaporating, spilling, staining, damaging with light, warming, cooling, infesting and many other conditions.

- **Promoting products.** Packaging does more than identify the brand, display ingredients, specify features and point out instructions. A package distinguishes a product from its competitors and can associate a new product with a family of others from the same manufacturer. Welch's changed the packaging of its jam line, jellies and juices prepared with grape juice to unify the line and have a greater impact on the shelves.

# Packaging Functions

Packaging uses designs, colors, shapes, and materials to influence consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior. For example, market research shows that health-conscious consumers are likely to think that any food is beneficial to them if it comes in a green packaging.

Two major low-fat food brands, SnackWell's and Healthy Choice, use green packaging. Packaging can also influence consumers' perception of quality and prestige. Pennzoil redesigned its easy-to-recognize, yet outdated packaging, using a different color and a part of an engine to convey the idea of a clean engine. The data from their focus group indicated that the only part that could be descriptive was the piston, with a white spot and white light beams coming out of the part to represent the cleanliness.

Packaging has a measurable effect on sales. Quaker Oats modified the Rice-A-Roni package without making further changes to the marketing strategy and experienced a 44% increase in sales in a year.

- **Facilitate storage, use and convenience.** Wholesalers and retailers prefer easy-to-ship, store and accommodate packaging. They also want packaging that protects products, prevents them from staining or breaking, and enhances the life of the product on shelves.

Storage, use and convenience requirements for consumers meet multiple dimensions. Consumers often look for items that are easy to handle, open and re-close; others want packaging that is shock-proof or child-proof. Research indicates that hard-to-open packaging is among the main consumer complaints.

# Packaging Functions

Surveys conducted by Sales & Marketing Management revealed that consumers dislike, and avoid buying, slipping ice cream cans, too heavy or wide vinegar bottles, pressure caps on glass bottles, glass bottles, cans of sardines that have a key to open them and the boxes that make it difficult to serve the cereal. Innovations in packaging such as closure tapes, hinged lids, screw caps and serving nozzles were created to solve these and other problems. Nestlé tries to improve all its packaging so that people open bags and lids more easily and so that they can reseal their products.

Easy-to-open packaging is very important, especially for children and aging baby boomers. The company's packaging designers spent nine months developing a plastic ice cream cap, which is easily pulled upwards when the ice cream is frozen and reinforced corners for cardboard packaging that are easier to take while ice cream is served with a spoon.

- **Facilitating Recycling and Reducing Environmental Damage.** One of the most important aspects of packaging today is environmental compatibility. In a recent consumer study, a majority said they would forgo the following conveniences if that would benefit the environment: a package designed for easy storage, packaging that can be used for cooking and packaging designed for easy transport.
- **Labelling.** An integral part of any packaging is its label. In general, labelling takes one of two forms: persuasive or informative. Persuasive tagging focuses on a promotional theme or logo, and consumer information is secondary. Procter & Gamble includes a real photograph on the labels of its new Downy fabric softener to establish a more personal connection with consumers. It should be noted that standard promotional claims, such as "new", "enhanced" and "super", are no longer very

# Packaging Functions

persuasive. Consumers are saturated with "news" and generally ignore these claims.

In contrast, information labeling is designed to help consumers select the right product and reduce cognitive dissonance after purchase. Sears places a "trusted label" on all of its carpets, which provides product information such as durability, color, features, cleaning indications, care instructions, and manufacturing standards.

## REFERENCE:

Lamb, C., Hair, J. and McDaniel, C. (2011). Marketing. Ohio: Cengage Learning.