“DOES ATTRACTIVE PACKAGING OR EFFECTIVE BRANDING DETERMINE SALES?”

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Abstract

With more and more brands now competing in the same markets, it has become difficult for customers to choose and remain loyal to a particular brand. When presented with a variety of brands, each with similar brand values, what determines the consumers’ choice? Is it the brand they prefer or are they drawn to the packaging and its print? Should companies divert more funding on packaging or on their branding? Both are a key part of communication design, yet they achieve sales through a very different approach.

The aim of this study is to find concrete answers and to judge how much of an impact packaging has on consumer buying. Relevant research has produced varying studies and theories regarding consumer behaviour, product perception, and the nexus between product packaging and product sales. Three products have been chosen namely, Prince Biscuits, Tibet Snow Cream and Pantene shampoo. After interviewing the key people in their respective companies, and after conducting research in supermarkets (through questionnaires), this study has come up with some conclusive evidence, indicative of the emerging power of packaging and interestingly, some other factors regarding consumer behaviour and their perceptions, especially regarding product quality assessment.
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**Introduction & Literature Review**

With more and more brands now competing in the same markets, it has become difficult for customers to choose and remain loyal to a particular brand. When presented with a variety of brands, each with similar brand values, what determines the consumers’ choice? Is it the brand they prefer or are they drawn to the packaging and its print? Should companies divert more funding on packaging or on their branding? Has the effectiveness of branding diminished, because for every product there is an equal available, with an equally well known brand and with very similar product features. Does packaging now determine customer choice? If so there is a greater need for companies to concentrate more on their packaging and to make it as appealing as possible, for which they will have to research what good packaging actually means.

The emergence of the ‘brand’ has a strong nexus with the Industrial Revolution because it was since then that mass production became possible. Before the Industrial Revolution most manufacturing was done by small family owned businesses. There was little by way of choice for certain products because the supply was so limited. All of this changed with industrialization. The industrialization resulted in mass production and soon, there was a plethora of products available in the market. Its profitability resulted in more people setting up manufacturing plants. This resulted not only in competing products, but mainly, competing companies.

As the manufacturing process was very expensive the few companies which were operating on a large scale became famous. Their names and their logos became synonymous with their products and their attributes. This was the emergence of the brand, and arguably, the first quality associated with a brand was reliability.
The American Marketing Association defines a brand as a "Name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers."¹ The word branding began simply as a way to tell one person's cattle from another by means of a hot iron stamp but has continued to evolve to encompass identity. Nowadays is has become quintessential to a successful business.

With so many brands now operating in similar markets, their effectiveness has become questionable. Supermarket shelf space is at a premium and usually contains a variety of brands and products indistinguishable only by their packaging.

The definitions of ‘packaging’ vary and range from being simple and functionally focused to more extensive interpretations. Packaging can be defined quite simply as an extrinsic element of the product (Olson and Jacoby (1972)² or an attribute that is related to the product but does not form part of the physical product itself. “Packaging is the container for a product, encompassing the physical appearance of the container and including the design, colour, shape, labelling and materials used” (Arens, 1996)³. While the main use for packaging can be considered to be protection of the goods inside, packaging also fulfils a key role in that it provides us with a recognisable logo, or packaging, so that we instantly know what the goods are inside. From the consumer perspective, packaging plays a major role when products are purchased as both a cue and as a source of information. Packaging is crucial, given that it is the

² J. Jacoby & J. Olson (Eds.), Perceived quality (pp. 269–294). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books
first thing that the public sees before making the final decision to buy (Vidales Giovannetti, 1995).  

Packaging has several objectives:

- Protection of the objects in the package.

- A barrier from oxygen, water vapour, dust, etc to insure that the goods do not perish, rot or degrade.

- Small objects are typically grouped together in one package for transport and handling efficiency. Alternatively, products such as tea can be divided into packages that are a more suitable size for individual households.

- Information on how to use, transport, recycle, or dispose off the product is often written on the package.

- Packaging that cannot be re-sealed or gets physically damaged (in order to open the package has to be ‘torn’) is helpful in the prevention of theft and to help identify if it has been tampered with. Packages also provide opportunities to include anti-theft devices.

- The packaging and labels can be used by marketers to encourage potential buyers to purchase the product.

“Never underestimate the importance of packaging. Marketers often measure consumer brand perceptions and ignore the pack. Yet we know from the way that consumers react to

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unbranded products that packaging plays a huge role in reinforcing consumer perceptions. Packaging helps to drive the way consumers experience a product. Yet, we spend little time researching the connections between packaging and the direct experience of the product” (Rice and Hofmeyr, 2000). In recent years the marketing environment has become increasingly complex and competitive. Although advertising can be a highly effective means of communication for those consumers who are exposed to it, reaching the entire target market for most products is generally not a feasible prospect. Media fragmentation has meant that it is becoming increasingly difficult (and expensive) to reach and communicate with customers and potential customers, forcing marketers to adopt more innovative means of reaching their target market (Hill and Tilley, 2002). Not everyone is exposed to the television or billboard advertising. This could be due to the choice of television channels, their availability, timing, and a number of other variables. Many people are oblivious to a certain advert because they have simply never seen it. However when they go to a supermarket to buy a product, the alternatives are lined alongside each other, differentiated by their package. At that moment, the package itself becomes the advertisement. A product’s packaging is something which all buyers experience. “In most cases, our experience has been that pack designs are more likely to influence the consumer perception of the brand than advertising” (Hofmeyr and Rice, 2000). For products with low

5 Rice and Hofmeyr (2000), Commitment-led Marketing, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, pg 216


7 Rice and Hofmeyr (2000), Commitment-led Marketing, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, pg 282
advertising support, packaging takes on an even more significant role as the key vehicle for communicating the brand positioning (Rundh, 2005).8

“The packaging has to provide consumers with the right cues and clues – both at the point of purchase and during usage. The first moment of truth is about obtaining customers attention and communicating the benefits of the offer. The second moment of truth is about providing the tools the customer needs to experience the benefits when using the product” (Löfgren, 2005).9

There has been more emphasis on the roles of packaging in recent times. It has progressed from just being a container for goods or to make them resistant to dust or the environment. Nowadays, a package must induce the consumers, display certain information about the product as required by law, nutritional information, instruction on how to use the product, how to dispose the product, and in relation to high end products, give an exclusive ‘feel’. The package is part of the product experience. High end products are packaged in very high end materials to make them look and feel even more exclusive or expensive. If the package feels cheap, the brand image will be associated with cheaper goods possibly of inferior quality.

Since advertisers are looking for more innovative ways to advertise, they have exploited the package to the extent of even exploiting the legal information. Low fat foods will boldly display their fat content or calories and transform it into a marketing ploy whereas products which contain a lot of fat or calories will try and make that information more inconspicuous.


The importance of making an impact at the point of sale cannot be underestimated. “A recent Point of Purchase Advertising Institute (POPAI) survey in the UK found that over 70% of all purchasing decisions are made in-store at the point of purchase. “Brand purchases are being made or broken in the ‘final five seconds’.” (Jugger, 1999)\(^\text{10}\). In a standard supermarket the typical shopper passes about 300 brands per minute (Rundh, 2005)\(^\text{11}\). This translates into less than one-tenth of a second for a single product to get the attention of the customer and spark purchase (Gelperowic and Beharrell, 1994)\(^\text{12}\). “Even when consumers are actively shopping a product category, most actively view only about a third of the brands displayed. So how does one actually cut through the clutter and get the attention of the consumer? Most would agree that “it does not pay to be subtle” (Young, 2005)\(^\text{13}\).

Working amidst the legal requirements and the requirements of the product itself, its transportation, and its size, companies have to come up with a design which instantly attracts the consumer to their product. Among the endless sea of similar products, there is a need to stand out. An innovative pack design can help to set a brand apart from its competitors. The marketing world is full of examples of brands that have used packaging to carve a unique position in the marketplace. The Pringles potato crisps cylinder and Ferrero Rocher Chocolates are prime examples. Ferrero Rocher in particular is an interesting package. The unique plastic enclosure,


\(^{13}\)Young, S. (2003), *Winning at Retail: Research insights to improve the packaging of children’s products*, Young Consumers, Vol. 5, Issue 1, 2003, page 1
the arrangement of the bite sized chocolates on a golden platter, covered in golden foil exudes all the characteristics of something truly regal, and upmarket when in reality, the chocolate itself is priced reasonably and on par with competitors. Yet the experience of the package and the way it looks has resulted in people opting for Ferrero Rocher when it comes to gifts/presents because they look good and look pricey. Kit-Kat chocolates is another example of a package that has helped seal the position of a product. The unique Kit-Kat package, the aluminium foil wrapped around the chocolate covered in a paper band has resulted in a unique method for opening the package with most people breaking the foil down the middle of the bar where the chocolate fingers are joined and breaking off a finger to consume. Although this seems to be cumbersome, consumers have taken such a liking to it that they have associated such a package with the unique taste of the chocolate itself. A strong, sturdy mineral water bottle might be chosen over its competitors, not for its content, but rather for its ability to be reused on future occasions.

The term ‘sensation transference’ was coined by Louis Cheskin in the 1930’s, discussed in the book, Blink, by Malcolm Gladwell. Cheskin\textsuperscript{14} was one of the first marketers to notice that people’s perceptions of a product or service were directly related to the aesthetic elements of their package and design. He believed that people didn’t make a distinction between the product and the package. One of the most well known examples of his work is the case of Imperial Margarine. It was previously called Jelke’s Good Luck margarine. During the 1940’s, margarine was very unpopular amongst consumers in the USA and Cheskin was hired to uncover the reason. Instead of simply handing out questionnaires asking for reasons for disliking margarine, he carried out a more indirect investigation. He threw luncheons for housewives and as part of the meal served some of them bread with margarine which was coloured yellow to make it look

like butter. The meal also included bread with normal butter. He then asked the women to fill out questionnaires about the speaker, which also asked them to rate the food. Despite the negative opinions about the taste of margarine, there were no complaints among those who were given the margarine instead of butter. This clearly showed that the problem was not the margarine itself, but its image. Cheskin suggested changing the colour of Jelke’s Good Luck margarine from the traditional white to yellow, changing the packaging material to foil, and the name to Imperial Margarine to give a perception of quality. The result was that product sales shot up and subsequently other brands of margarine followed suit.

In a study carried out by Siloyai and Speece (2004)\textsuperscript{15}, mothers were shown two children’s yoghurt pots: one plain pot and one bright/cheerful looking pot. The mothers were told that both pots contained the same healthy ingredients, but that the bright pot was slightly more expensive. Despite the price premium, 88% of the mothers said they would choose the bright pot because their children would be more likely to eat it (Gelperowic and Beharrell)\textsuperscript{16}. Disney co-branded products, from breakfast cereals to plasters to toothbrushes to baking products sell at a premium due to the pulling power the Disney characters have among children and often their insistence on consuming certain products. Mothers are well aware that it is easier to get their young to eat foods packaged with characters they can be distracted with.


Ampeuero and Vila (2006)\textsuperscript{17} conducted research in Spain using packaging prototypes and found that the following aspects of packaging influence customer perceptions:

- **Colour**: Elite products require dark coloured packaging which is usually black in contrast to cheaper products which require light coloured packaging which is usually white.

- **Typography**: Elegant products usually use bold, large, roman, upper case letters with expanded characters whereas in contrast, products of reasonable price are often associated with serif and sans serif typographies.

- **Graphic forms**: Elite products appear to be associated with vertical straight lines, squares, straight outlines, and symmetrical composition with single elements. Reasonably priced products use horizontal and oblique straight lines, circles, curves, wavy outlines and asymmetrical compositions.

- **Illustrations**: Upper classes products are associated with pictures showing the product whereas in contrast, reasonably priced products associated with illustrations showing people.

Using colour as a cue on packaging can be a potentially strong association, especially when it is unique to a particular brand. However, people in different cultures are exposed to different colour associations and develop colour preferences based on their own culture’s associations (Rettie and Brewer, 2000)\textsuperscript{18}. This does not necessarily have a strong link with


the brand. Although certain brands have certain colours associated with them, such as the colours red blue and white for Pepsi or Red and white for Coca-Cola, certain products become known for their package colours. Cigarettes are a prime example. Gold packages are associated with Benson & Hedges, red and white with Marlboro, etc.

As the market becomes more competitive and shelf space is at a premium, products need to be able to stand out from the crowd and packaging needs to provide more than just functional benefits and information. Supermarkets and hypermarkets are more powerful than ever because consumers do not buy directly from the manufacturers but rather from the retailers. The retailers provide the consumer with the benefit of finding all the products under one roof and a ‘one stop shop’ experience. Inevitably, all the items in a supermarket or hypermarket are branded and so, it is not longer a variable. If all the products are from brands with very similar brand values, the only variables left are the products themselves and their packaging. Apart from their slogans and paraphernalia, all brand manifestos are virtually indistinguishable from other brands in the same markets. They all talk about innovation, and customer needs, efficiency, quality, being environmentally friendly, economical etc. In the past a product could be distinguished by its brand but now that power has diminished. The objective of this research paper is to prove that packaging plays a more vital role in product selection than the brand image.
Research Methodology

In order to determine the exact role of packaging in relation to the brand from the perspective of the consumer, it must be determined how the manufacturer or designer of the product views the market, and what compels them to use certain design cues and so on.

Sample

- Age: 20-50 years old
- Gender: male/female
- Sample size: 40

The Products:

Everyday items were chosen, which are sold in most supermarkets.

The products were chosen from the following categories:

- Shampoos
- Biscuits
- Creams

E.g.: Questionnaires were handed out containing questions designed to gauge how much of an impact the brand has on consumer purchases versus how much of an impact the packaging has.

The statements range from functional attributes (e.g. easy to drink from, right size) to
more emotive, non-functional attributes (e.g. I like the colours, high quality).

The Manufacturer:

Interviews were conducted with the brand managers of leading brands in order to understand how they perceive the market and how much emphasis they place on the package as opposed to the brand. Mr. Hassan Sherwani head of sales at Prince Biscuits and Mr. Adil Noman, owner of Tibet Cream and Mohtashim Abbasi, Head of CMI at Unilever Pakistan Limited were all interviewed.

According to Nacarrow, Wright and Brace (1998) there are typically seven reasons/occasions when research agencies are asked to get consumer response on packaging design:

1. New product development (NPD)
2. Revitalizing a dated/tired pack
3. Repositioning a product (changing what it competes with and/or its functional or symbolic benefits)
4. Changing a product’s target market
5. When cost reductions in packaging are required
6. When legal or regulation requirements demand it
7. When new packaging technology becomes available

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Each of these circumstances may require different methodologies to determine the impact / preference for different pack designs. The manufactures will be asked how they conduct their own research when updating or creating a package and whether the above points are within their scope at the time of design.

The Consumer:

Questionnaires were handed out in supermarkets asking consumers simple questions relating to why they choose the products that they have in their basket. A quantitative method has been chosen so that numerical (percentage) results can be obtained in order to ascertain what percentage of consumers look for certain attributes or what influences their buying.

Books:


FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS:

Initially it was not quite clear if effective branding and attractive packaging were viewed as one of the same, from the perspective of the manufacturer. In the Interview\textsuperscript{20} with Hassan Sherwani\textsuperscript{21}, Senior Brand Manager at Kraft Foods (Continental Biscuits), it became obvious that the product life-cycle also had a huge impact on the brand, and the packaging. Prince Biscuits\textsuperscript{22} initially started out as another generic biscuit, but it soon became apparent to the company that kids were more interested in their product and so they adjusted their strategy accordingly. He said that “Our primary market has been identified as children; especially school going children (or that age bracket). Even though many adults also include Prince Biscuits when they offer assortments to their guests, the children enjoy the product the most”. When asked as to why the packaging of Prince Biscuits has transformed so drastically over the years, his response was “Initially as I said before, Prince Biscuits were manufactured to be a generic type of biscuits but we soon realised that the unique taste of Prince Biscuits was more enjoyable to children. The packaging now reflects that, and the Prince character, a cartoonish character, appeals to them and draws their attention”.

Although initially the target market for Prince Biscuits was not very clear, the company adapted quickly when they realised that their product was preferred by children, or was bought for children. When asked if the packaging of Prince Biscuits had a greater impact than the brand,

\textsuperscript{20} Interview with Hassan Sherwani, Senior Brand Manager at Kraft Foods (Continental Biscuits)  
Dated: 06-05-2012, 3 PM  

\textsuperscript{21} Hassan Sherwani, Senior Brand Manager at Kraft Foods (Continental Biscuits)  

\textsuperscript{22} chocolate filled biscuit
Mr. Hassan Sherwani’s answers was “I think to a certain extent. The packaging certainly succeeds in drawing the attention of children. The emphasis on chocolate and the cartoonish character are great for grabbing their attention. In the end though, through the packaging, we have made a brand out of the “Prince” character so either way, the brand also has a big role in the success of this product”. This seems to prove the theory of Siloyai and Speece (2004)\(^\text{23}\), and explains how Disney is able to demand a premium on their products. It seems then, that the packaging plays an effective role in generating sales, especially where the target market is children. There is a contradiction though, which was aptly pointed out by Mr. Hassan Sherwani, that the “Prince” character is also the manifestation of a brand. This seems to blur the distinction between the brand and the packaging. The Prince package seems to support the theory\(^\text{24}\) that the package is part of the experience of the product. For the children, Prince Biscuits are not just edibles, they are part of an experience, in which they connect with the “Prince” character, and are a part of the imagery on the package, which eventually has an impact on their desire to have more.

Do you experiment with other brands?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiment Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If something catches my eye</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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\(^{24}\) Rice and Hofmeyr (2000), Commitment-led Marketing, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, pg 216
The above pie-chart shows that 32% of people said, when asked, that they would buy a competing product if it catches their eye. This not only affirms the theory of Siloyai and Speece (2004)\textsuperscript{25}, but also explains why Prince Biscuits have been constantly adapting, in order to remain ‘eye catching’.

In the interview\textsuperscript{26} with Adil Noman\textsuperscript{27}, Tibet Snow Cream (Kohinoor Industries), a completely different picture was depicted. He unequivocally stated, when asked about the reason behind the success of Tibet Snow Cream\textsuperscript{28}, that the reason was “The brand. Over the years Tibet has created a reputation for excellent beauty products, and at affordable prices. It is this reputation that brings us success”. He was also adamant that “The brand drives the success of the cream. The brand is so well renowned, it stands for something, and because of its history, people know its effective. People recommend it, and furthermore, it’s famous for being a ‘Tibet’ Cream”. This seems to affirm the age old assertion that the brand is the key to the success of a product, and this is accentuated by Tibet Snow Cream, a product that has seen hardly any change in terms of its overall visage.

Jelke’s margarine could explain why the packaging of Tibet Snow Cream has remained relatively unchanged over years. Mr Adil Noman said “Because our sales are driven because of the brand, we have always tried to cash in on the ‘tried and tested’ theme. I mean people buy Tibet Snow Cream because it is a tried and tested cream, one that has been around for many


\textsuperscript{26} Interview with Adil Noman, Tibet Snow Cream (Kohinoor Industries) Date: 05-03-2012, 2:30 PM

\textsuperscript{27} Adil Noman, Tibet Snow Cream (Kohinoor Industries)

\textsuperscript{28} all weather skin care cream for delicate skin
many years and hasn’t changed. Therefore, a drastic change in the packaging will make people think we have changed the cream, or the ethos of the company. We are after stability, brand stability”. Perhaps then, the image of Tibet Snow Cream is what drives its sales. This explains the reluctance of Tibet to change the packaging of Tibet Snow Cream, because this would, essentially, change the image of the cream and therefore the perception attached to it would change. Although it initially appears as if the package plays little or no role in the success of Tibet Snow Cream, it has to be appreciated that the continuity of the package design is paramount. If the package was completely irrelevant, changing it would make no difference, but in the case of Tibet Snow Cream, the package and the brand collectively have formed an impression in the minds of its consumers.

The above pie-chart shows that a majority 60% of people said, when asked, that they buy specific brands for specific items on their shopping list. The brand then, plays a huge role in continued sales.
Would you continue buying a product you have been regularly buying, if the package is changed to something very simple and minimalistic?

The above pie-chart shows that 48% of people said, when asked, that they would continue buying a regularly purchased product if the package design was changed to something very minimalistic and simple. If Tibet Snow Cream was to be re-designed into something simplistic, they possibly stand to lost 16% of their consumers and potentially, another 36%, who are unsure of their reaction.

In the Interview\(^\text{29}\) with Mohtashim Abbasi, Head of CMI at Unilever Pakistan Limited, we established a concrete nexus between good packaging and the brand. There has been more emphasis on the roles of packaging in recent times. When asked about the regular changes to the Pantene\(^\text{30}\) package, Mr Mohtashim Abbasi said “Hair products are constantly evolving and there are new discoveries in terms of combinations and formulae, in a competitive market. This means that new innovative products are always being introduced into the market. We have to make sure the public knows that we are also constantly evolving, and bringing new innovations. This can’t be shown with the same package”. The package for Pantene signifies the perfect ménage

\(^{29}\) Interview with Mohtashim Abbasi, Head of CMI at Unilever Pakistan Limited Date: 27-02-2012, 4:45 PM

\(^{30}\) brand of hair care products owned by Procter & Gamble
between effective branding and effective packaging. As Mr. Mohtashim Abbasi put it, “*The package is essential to ensuring that it shows innovation. The same old package means the same old shampoo so where the competitors have moved forwards the old package signifies a stale and obsolete formula. So in this respect, the package is essential. Plus, an attractive package makes people look, take in interest, what has Pantene come up with kind of thing*”. When asked about if packaging determined or rather yielded sales, he said “*Definitely. The package has to grab the customer’s attention; it has to be different enough to show innovation but familiar enough to ensure that the brand is recognisable. This is a tricky thing to achieve. Too drastic, and the essence of the brand is lost*”. What this means then is that the package is effective within the constraints of the brand.

Pantene is the perfect example for elucidating the link between the brand and the package. The product is constantly evolving, and this is shown by the constant evolution of the package. If they evolve the shampoo without changing the package people will relate the old package with the old shampoo formula. However, Pantene makes sure that the package, while it is constantly evolving, still manages to convincingly display its brand. This means that the package design cannot deviate from its predecessor too drastically.

*Can you tell the quality / effectiveness of the product by its packaging?*

![Circle chart showing percentages]

- Yes: 72%
- No: 12%
- Sometimes: 16%
The above pie-chart shows that an overwhelming 72% of people said that they can adduce the quality/effectiveness of a product by observing its packaging. Since 32% of consumers when asked if they experimented with other brands, said that if it catches their eye, and 60% said that they buy specific brands for specific items on their list, the benefits of Pantene’s strategy is accentuated. The package is changed enough to attract new customers, and is familiar enough to retain the existing customers.

Although certain brands have certain colours associated with them, such as the colours red blue and white for Pepsi or Red and white for Coca-Cola, certain products become known for their package colours. Cigarettes are a prime example. Gold packages are associated with Benson & Hedges, red and white with Marlboro, etc. It is interesting to note that all the brands mentioned above are constantly updating their logos, their product packaging, and their promotional material, but are weary about deviating too far from their previous packages. The package will be updated just enough to show it is different from its predecessor, but not enough to divorce it from its brand.

An interesting point that came out of the interviews was that the manufacture places great value on the positioning of the product within the supermarket or shop floor. Mr. Hassan Sherwani said that placement “makes a huge difference, especially when we are trying to introduce a new product but also for existing products which the customer needs reminding of. A prominent display, somewhere where the customer catches a glimpse of our product is great for marketing a new product or even for impulse purchases”. He went on say that “children will see the box and want it. They will then ask their parents to buy them”. Even Mr. Adil Noman conceded that a prominent display “makes a difference. With our product we try and make sure they are placed so that people know they are available, so that they are reminded”. Mr.
Mohtashim Abbasi also said that “A well placed product which ensure that people will take a look, and that they will know it’s successful, and that it has recently been improved”. This means that the manufactures sees the positioning of the product as paramount.

The importance of making an impact at the point of sale cannot be underestimated. So how does one actually cut through the clutter and get the attention of the consumer? Most would agree that “it does not pay to be subtle” (Young, 2005)\(^3\). This means that the prominence of the package is vital to the manufacturer. It begs the question though, how can a product be prominent, being shelved with hundreds of competing products, without having a striking package design which sets it apart? This would seem to suggest that the manufacturer is constantly weary of prominence, and that the product or brand has no impact without effective packaging. Even the package design of Tibet Snow Cream, which has remained relatively unchanged, embodies the importance of package design because it gives a certain meaning to the product.

What is the most important factor when buying a particular product?

![Chart showing the most important factors when buying a particular product]

- Quality: 48%
- Price: 32%
- Brand name: 16%
- Packaging: 4%

\(^3\) Young, S. (2003), Winning at Retail: Research insights to improve the packaging of children’s products, Young Consumers, Vol. 5, Issue 1, 2003, page 1
The above pie-chart shows that 48% of consumers’ choice is determined by the quality of a product. Only 4% said they were swayed by the packaging. The biggest selling point then, for any product it seems is the quality. It is however, interesting to note that while only 4% of consumers’ choice is determined by packaging, 48% is due to quality. 72% of consumers said they could determine the quality of a product by its packaging. What this means is, that the quality is main catalyst for purchasing, and the quality is adduced from the packaging, making the packaging the main indicator of quality and therefore, one of the biggest factors which determines sales.

The questionnaires handed out to supermarket customers’ also revealed results which seem to corroborate the findings from the interviews with the manufacturers. Most customers agreed that they could tell the quality of a product simply by observing its packaging. This seems to assert the theory that the quality of the product is assessed through its packaging. Therefore, a company trying to portray its product as being of high quality must ensure that the packaging also reflects the same quality.

Although most people said that the appearance of the package did not matter to them, only the quality, they also said that the quality would be adjudged by the package, meaning essentially that the package is the definitive factor. Most people have also said that they do experiment with difference products. This means that although they their preferences, they are open to new products, the quality of which they will judge according to their package. The result then is that the preference of the consumer may be swayed by an effective package.

60% of shoppers said that they chose specific brands for items on their shopping lists and 28% said that they were flexible. This shows that the brand still plays a vital role in the minds of
the consumer, and that consumers’ look for certain brands for certain products. It is interesting to note though that only 16% of consumers denied every experimenting with other brands, whereas the remaining 84% either regularly experiment, or are prone to experiment if something catches their eye. This means that consumers can easily be swayed away from their regular purchases. 48% of consumers said that quality was the most important factor in a product, and 32% said it was the price. Interestingly though, an overwhelming 72% stated that they could tell the quality of a product simply by looking at its packaging.
**Conclusion:**

The information obtained from the interview as well from the questionnaires have identified that packaging is a vital part of a product’s success, and usually embody the companies’ strategy/ethos, in relation to that product and its marketing.

The brands assertion has been reasserted as a key factor in determining the sales of any products, however, the effectiveness of the brand has now become dependent on the package because consumers are now more prone to experiment, or buy products if the products catch their attention. The questionnaires revealed that 60% of shoppers choose specific brands for items on their shopping lists and 28% said that they were flexible. This shows that the brand still plays a vital role in the minds of the consumer, and that consumers’ look for certain brands for certain products. It is interesting to note though that only 16% of consumers denied ever experimenting with other brands, whereas the remaining 84% either regularly experiment, or are prone to experiment if something catches their eye. This means that consumers can easily be swayed away from their regular purchases. Perhaps then, the brands effectiveness has diminished and now is dependent on the packing.

The adjudication of quality is based on the package. 48% of consumers said that quality was the most important factor in a product, and 32% said it was the price. Interestingly though, an overwhelming 72% stated that they could tell the quality of a product simply by looking at its packaging. Although most people said that the appearance of the package did not matter to them, only the quality, they also said that the quality would be adjudged by the package, meaning essentially that the package is the definitive factor.
Making a product stand-out is due to the effectiveness of a package. Most people have also said that they do experiment with difference products. 32% of people said, when asked, that they would buy a competing product if it catches their eye.

Hirchman (1980a)\textsuperscript{32} states that the meaning of a product is becoming increasingly intangible and subjective. That is to say, consumers make their product assessment more and more intuitively, placing greater importance on product attributes of which the superiority over competing products cannot be measured by any objective means. Hence the way a package, including all its extrinsic attributes, makes a consumer feel might be a better predictor of product quality assessment than would be actual ingredient quality. In the present study it was found that consumers were very confident in making quality judgments and expressing product associations based on the products’ packages alone.

The end result of the present study is that the quality of a product is now judged based on the packaging whereas historically, it was based on the perception of the brand. Nowadays the quality is judged by the consumer based on the packaging of the product. Does attractive packaging or effective branding determine sales? The present study has proven that attractive packaging has a bigger influence on sales than perhaps just the brand alone.

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Appendix 1: Interviews

Interview with Hassan Sherwani, Senior Brand Manager at Kraft Foods (Continental Biscuits), dated: 06-05-2012, 3 PM, conducted via telephone.

Q) Prince Biscuits is one of the most famous biscuits and well renowned biscuits in Pakistan. Do you attribute this success to the brand or the biscuit?

A) Prince Biscuits started out as another type of biscuit in amongst our other products and its phenomenal success is a mixture of its taste and the association of a unique taste with the brand.

Q) What is your target market?

A) Our primary market has been identified as children; especially school going children (or that age bracket). Even though many adults also include Prince Biscuits when they offer assortments to their guests, the children enjoy the product the most.

Q) Is that because of the taste of the biscuits or the brand?

A) I think it is a combination of both. The “Prince” brand is now a huge factor in getting kids interested in the biscuits, or grabbing their attention. With any edible product, the product has to taste good otherwise there will never be repeat sales.

Q) The packaging of Prince has undergone several changes, from being a plain box to one that now incorporates colours and the “Prince” character. Has there been a change in strategy?
A) Initially as I said before, Prince Biscuits were manufactured to be a generic type of
biscuits but we soon realised that the unique taste of Prince Biscuits was more enjoyable
to children. The packaging now reflects that, and the Prince character, a cartoonish
color character, appeals to them and draws their attention.

Q) Would it be fair to say then that the packaging of Prince Biscuits has a greater impact
than the brand?

A) I think to a certain extent. The packaging certainly succeeds in drawing the attention of
children. The emphasis on chocolate and the cartoon character are great for grabbing
their attention. In the end though, through the packaging, we have made a brand out of
the “Prince” character so either way, the brand also has a big role in the success of this
product.

Q) Product placement, in supermarkets for example, where the product is placed etc. How
much of a difference does that make?

A) It makes a huge difference, especially when we are trying to introduce a new product but
also for existing products which the customer needs reminding of. A prominent display,
somewhere where the customer catches a glimpse of our product is great for marketing a
new product or even for impulse purchases.

Q) Does an attractive package yield sales?

A) Most definitely, especially with a product such as Prince Biscuits because children will
see the box and want it. They will then ask their parents to buy them.
Interview with Adil Noman, Tibet Snow Cream (Kohinoor Industries), dated: 05-03-2012, 2:30 PM, via telephone

Q) Tibet Snow Cream is one of the most famous and well renowned beauty creams in Pakistan. Do you attribute this success to the brand or the cream?

A) The brand. Over the years Tibet has created a reputation for excellent beauty products, and at affordable prices. It is this reputation that brings us success.

Q) What is your target market?

A) Our primary market has been identified women, between the ages of 16 to 40-45.

Q) Is the success of Tibet Snow Cream because of the effectiveness of the cream or the brand?

A) It has to do with both. The brand drives the success of the cream. The brand is so well renowned, it stands for something, and because of its history, people know its effective. People recommend it, and furthermore, its famous for being a ‘Tibet’ Cream.

Q) The packaging of Tibet Snow Cream has been more or less the same over the years with only minor changes, why?

A) Because our sales are driven because of the brand, we have always tried to cash in on the ‘tried and tested’ theme. I mean people buy Tibet Snow Cream because it is a tried and tested cream, one that has been around for many many years and hasn’t changed.
Therefore, a drastic change in the packaging will make people think we have changed the cream, or the ethos of the company. We are after stability, brand stability.

Q) Would it be fair to say then that the branding of Tibet Snow Cream has a much greater impact than the packaging?

A) Definitely, without the brand our product is just another cream on the shelf. It the Tibet name, and the Tibet Snow Cream, the tried and tested reliable cream that people look for. We want to make sure that people stay familiar with its image.

Q) Product placement, in supermarkets for example, where the product is placed etc. How much of a difference does that make?

A) It makes a difference. With our product we try and make sure they are placed so that people know they are available, so that they are reminded.

Q) Does an attractive package yield sales?

A) It depends. Some products attract new customers but others are recommended. Our product is recommended; people hand them down or buy them for others. Then, people will look for the same cream, and ask for it by name.

Interview with Mohtashim Abbasi, Head of CMI at Unilever Pakistan Limited, dated: 27-02-2012, 4:45 PM, via telephone.

Q) Pantene is one of the most famous shampoos and well renowned shampoos in Pakistan. Do you attribute this success to the brand or the shampoo?
A) It’s a combination of both. The brand plays a huge role though, especially the way it is marketed.

Q) What is your target market?

A) Our target market is primarily women, from teenagers to women in their 50’s.

Q) Is the success of Pantene because of the effectiveness of the shampoo or the brand?

A) It has to be both I would say. The brand plays huge role, but the shampoo has to work, it has to do what it says it does.

Q) The packaging of Pantene has undergone several changes, has there been a change in strategy?

A) Hair products are constantly evolving and there are new discoveries in terms of combinations and formulae, in a competitive market. This means that new innovative products are always being introduced into the market. We have to make sure the public knows that we are also constantly evolving, and bringing new innovations. This cant be shown with the same package.

Q) Would it be fair to say then that the packaging of Pantene has a greater impact than the brand?

A) The package is essential to ensuring that it shows innovation. The same old package means the same old shampoo so where the competitors have moved forwards the old package signifies a stale and obsolete formula. So in this respect, the package is essential. Plus, an attractive package makes people look, take in interest, what has Pantene come up with kind of thing.
Q) Product placement, in supermarkets for example, where the product is placed etc. How much of a difference does that make?

A) Huge difference. A well placed product which ensure that people will take a look, and that they will know its successful, and that it has recently been improved.

Q) Does an attractive package yield sales?

A) Definitely. The package has to grab the customers attention, it has to be different enough to show innovation but familiar enough to ensure that the brand is recognisable. This is a tricky thing to achieve. Too drastic, and the essence of the brand is lost.
Appendix 2: Quantitative Data

1. Do you buy specific brands for specific items on your shopping list?

- Yes 15 (60%)
- No 3 (12%)
- I’m flexible 7 (28%)

2. Do you experiment with other brands?

- Never 4 16%
- Sometimes 11 44%
- If something catches my eye 8 32%
- Always 2 8%
3. What is the most important factor when buying a particular product?

- Quality 12 48%
- Price 8 32%
- Brand name 4 16%
- Packaging 1 4%

4. Can you tell the quality / effectiveness of the product by its packaging?

- Yes 18 72%
- No 3 12%
- Sometimes 4 16%
5. Would you continue buying a product you have been regularly buying, if the package is changed to something very simple and minimalistic?

- Yes: 12 (48%)
- No: 4 (16%)
- Maybe: 9 (36%)
Appendix 3: Questionnaire

1. Do you buy specific brands for specific items on your shopping list?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I’m flexible

2. Do you experiment with other brands?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - If something catches my eye
   - Always

3. What is the most important factor when buying a particular product?
   - Quality
   - Price
   - Brand name
   - Packaging

4. Can you tell the quality / effectiveness of the product by its packaging?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Sometimes
5. Would you continue buying a product you have been regularly buying, if the package is changed to something very simple and minimalistic?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe