



packaging: the silent sales pitch

A packaged product has to do more than sit on a shelf and look pretty. It has two seconds (yep, two seconds) to connect with a consumer. Somehow your package has to deliver a silent sales pitch that stands out amongst all of the other product clutter. It may sound daunting, but no need to panic. Here is a list of details that will get your product flying off the shelf.



command attention!

You have a great product. You know it, we know it, but now we have to get the busy consumer to know it too. Consumers should feel compelled to pick your product up and confidently buy it. You have seconds to make them a believer. So how do you do that?

- **be polished**
One way to get the most attention is to be the best looking and best designed. A package with a polished, professional appearance will not only grab the consumers attention, it instills a sense of confidence with the consumer.
- **be unique**
The packaging of your product has a tough job. It's not easy sitting on the shelf side-by-side with a sea of a similar item. Make yours different. Make the principal display panel memorable with something unexpected. If all the products in your category use opaque packaging, try a clear substrate and a bold label.
- **be memorable**
Choose a name for your product that is interesting and easy and/or fun to remember. Give it a sense of humor. No need to always be serious. Today's consumer is intrigued by unconventional marketing.
- **be consistent**
Make sure you think about your "family" of products. Each one can help reinforce the message of the other if they have a consistent look and feel. Consistency can help you create brand recognition, brand loyalty and possibly help you cross sell your other items. If a consumer has a good experience with one of your products, chances are they will try another.



colors have feelings too.

Color is powerful! It evokes feelings and helps to give your product personality. Choosing the right color palette can be incredibly effective when trying to connect with a consumer. Is your product one of few organic versions in your category? Tans and greens are earthy colors that are often used to show that something is natural or organic. This color combination signals organic shoppers that your product is what they want.

However, whether your product is organic or any other category, there may be good reason to choose a more vibrant color palette in order to stand out in the crowd. Same is true on the flip side. If your product is typically packaged in wild colors, tone it down a bit, and let the simple look of your packaging be what differentiates it.

Color can also be used as a communication tool to help differentiate within your product line. Through color, you can tell a good, better, best story. Or you can use it to differentiate sizes, flavors, interests, and audience. Is your target young or old, male or female? Color can help you appeal to those different audiences.



fonts create personality.

Just like color, typography also gives your product personality. A formal script font would be appropriate for an elegant product, while a loose handwritten script font could work well for something more casual. An extra bold font means business, but round off the hard edges and you have something that is more youthful. Fonts can add tremendous character to your product so choose your fonts wisely.



copy needs to change lives.

Your product caught their eye! Well done. Now get them to pick it up. That package better say something poignant or the busy consumer will pass it by.

Your package has to be both pretty and smart. Make sure to describe what the product does, but more importantly, explain how the product will help make the consumer's life better. The tone of the copy should be an important consideration too. If your product is a formal, serious, institutional product, then your copy should be more matter-of-fact. If your product is fun, casual, and lighthearted, then the tone of the copy should reflect that as well.

A little romance can go a long way. The consumer has picked up your product now flirt a little. Tell them why your product is better than all the others. Don't overdo it. A few choice words and reasons is all you need. This is your opportunity to make the consumer fall in love.

- **display panel**

Filling the principal display panel with an extensive amount of information will likely backfire. A busy consumer isn't going to read every word on the package, not when they have to pick the kids up in 15 minutes. Be creative, but also be helpful and put the most important information on the principal display panel. Make the information easy to read and absorb. Be sure to tell the consumer the features, as well as the benefits of your product. Make sure the name of your product tells what it is and is memorable. Sometimes it's good if the name has pizzazz, and sometimes it's best to keep it simple. Your target audience will usually dictate this. Remember retail space is at a premium, you not only have two seconds to impress, but you might only have 2 inches to do it in.

While it's important to stand out and be different, when it comes to information hierarchy on your package, there are some key elements that need to be included:

- Name of Product
- Product Descriptor—Flavor, variety, size, key information
- Callouts—Most important, differentiating, quick facts
- Brand—Logo, company name
- Romance Copy—Short copy that creatively tells the product story; what the product is, what it does, how they can use it
- Mandatory Information—disclaimers, country of origin

Be sure to prioritize the elements. You can't say everything on a package, so pick the three most important messages, or features and benefits. Use color, size of each element, and placement to effectively lead your prospective consumer through the package, and ultimately a buying decision.

- [call-outs](#)

Call-outs are shorter subheads that call attention to key product features and benefits. Does your audience like to buy “made in the USA” products? Then proudly display that fact on the principal display panel. Are they allergic to gluten? Don’t forget to highlight “gluten free” on the main panel. Know your audience and speak directly to them. Be advised that callouts like “certified organic” or “doctor approved” can only be used on properly vetted products. Also, don’t go crazy and cover the principal display panel with callouts. Pick the most important ones to your targeted consumer.

- [product first, brand second](#)

If a consumer is shopping for a specific product, the brand of that product should be secondary. Sure, the brand will help them make their choice, but ultimately they are on a mission for that one thing that’s going to quench a craving or make their life easier. What your product is should take center stage.

- [follow the rules](#)

The government and certain industries have set standards for packaging, in particular when it comes to font sizes. If your product is multinational, you need to make sure you follow the guidelines for each country that buys your product. You also need to make sure the claims you make in the copy are true and can be proved. For example, be sure to check when you can say “Made in America” vs. “Assembled in America.”



[a picture tells it all.](#)

Some packaging doesn’t require an image, or doesn’t have the space to include one. But when you can include a picture, it can be the most effective sales tool of all. Pictures are your opportunity to demonstrate your product in use, show how to put it together, or display the products key features and benefits. If you use pictures, make sure they are as big as possible on the packaging. The name of your product and the picture are the most important elements you have to communicate.

[getting it in the cart.](#)

While packaging is a critical component to the success of your product, there are other marketing elements that are equally as important. Your promotional efforts, POP displays, in-store signage, internet, social media, and other forms of advertising—all will help support product loyalty, awareness and preference. Its critical that you give these considerations the same attention and care that you give to your packaging design.