



Blekinge Tekniska Högskola

Managementhögskolan

Perspectives on the Elements of Packaging Design

A Qualitative Study on the Communication of Packaging

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Kandidatarbete i Företagsekonomi, 15 högskolepoäng

VT 2013

Acknowledgements

We would like to foremost thank all the designers and marketers who took their time to participate in our study. We truly appreciate your time and provision of insights.

We thank our supervisor, Urban Ljungquist, who guided us and kept us on course throughout the entire writing process.

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Abstract

Bachelor thesis in Business Administration at the Section for Management, Blekinge Institute of Technology, spring 2013

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Title: Perspectives on the Elements of Packaging Design: A Qualitative Study on the Communication of Packaging

Background: In today's markets almost all products we buy come packaged. We use packaging to protect, contain and identify products. Furthermore if this is executed in a skillful way consumers often choose products based on packaging. The work of a designer and marketer is therefore extremely valuable when it comes to the design of a package.

Problem: How are packages used to communicate marketing information?

Purpose: The focus of this thesis is to identify differences and similarities of a packaging's visual elements from the perspectives of designers and marketers.

Method: A qualitative approach is chosen and implemented through the method of interviews with designers and marketers. The theoretical knowledge has served as the basis for our empirical work and lead to a research model from which an interview guide was formed.

Conclusion: According to our respondents and theory, packaging is a big component in a brand's marketing strategy and to communicate the brand's message and values. Marketing information can be designed into visual elements that are used on the package to communicate a message that speaks to consumers' emotions. Our results showed that 'color' is the visual element the professionals use to catch the attention of consumers and most effectively influence their emotions. Designers and marketers can together achieve successful packaging as the designer combines design elements that tell the brand's story and the marketer knows how the package sells and maximizes profit today.

Sammanfattning

Kandidatuppsats i företagsekonomi vid Managementhögskolan, Blekinge Tekniska Högskola, VT 2013

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Titel: Perspektiv på Elementen i Förpackningsdesign: En kvalitativ studie om Förpackningars budskap

Bakgrund: I dagens samhälle köper vi nästan alla produkter förpackade. Vi använder förpackningar för att skydda innehållet samt till att identifiera produkter. Om detta utförs på ett skickligt sätt väljer konsumenten produkter baserade på förpacknings design. Arbetet som designern och marknadsföraren gör är därför mycket värdefullt, när det gäller utformningen av ett paket.

Problemformulering: Hur används förpackningar för att kommunicera marknadsföringinformation?

Syfte: Fokus i denna studie är att identifiera skillnader och likheter i en förpacknings visuella element från designers och marknadsförare perspektiv.

Metod: Vi har valt den kvalitativa metoden och använder oss utav intervjuer med designers och marknadsförare. Den teoretiska kunskapen har legat till grund för vårt empiriska arbete och i sin tur lett till en analysmodell där vår intervjuguide bildades.

Slutsats: Enligt respondenterna och teorin, är förpackningar en stor komponent i ett varumärkes marknadsföringsstrategi och kommunicerar varumärkets budskap och värderingar. Marknadsföringsinformation formas till visuella element som används på förpackningen för att kommunicera ett budskap som talar till konsumenters känslor. Resultatet visar att "färg" är det visuella elementet som används för att fånga konsumenters uppmärksamhet och effektivt påverka deras känslor. De kan tillsammans nå framgångsrika förpackningar då en designer kombinerar design element som berättar märkets berättelse och marknadsföraren vet hur förpackningen säljer och maximerar vinst idag.

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1. Introduction

Packaging can play a very interesting role in the success or failure of a product. Its success depends a lot on how it is designed by its creators. While some see it as a mere safeguard that has the sole purpose of protecting a product, others argue that the life and identity of the product lies within the package design. It has the power to influence your choices, and with its carefully thought-out aesthetics can affect your emotions. It can bring your memories to life with its colors and can shape culture with its form. It is this creation of a product's personality and influence on human emotion that has sparked our curiosity to explore the subject of this essay.

"[...] packaging is a very important element of the marketing mix. The pristine packaging, color-coded and designed by professionals to be the silent salesman of the brand undoubtedly has considerable impact on the purchase decision."

(Roper and Parker, 2010, p. 476)

1.1. Background

The first packages have been dated a few thousand years and were in the form of baskets and containers (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005). However, modern packaging as we know it slowly began to evolve in the 19th century when producers started to prepackage their goods (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005), and it eventually became a trend to do this. Ultimately, mass marketing was born in the United States which led to a 'profit through volume' revolution thanks to mass-produced packaging (Twede, 2012). The emergence of a packaging industry had started by 1927 (Twede, 2012) but it was by 1995 that package design (also called packaging design) had become an effective tool for promoting corporate brands (Stewart, 2004).

Today, packaging design has developed into a communication tool and is considered a big part of marketing. However there are many differences among authors on where packaging stands within the marketing mix, some authors do not even care to mention it while others emphasize its value. According to Meyers and Gerstman (2005) the sixth 'P' of the marketing mix stands for packaging. Since markets are getting ever more competitive (Mininni, 2008) and designers and marketers ever more skilled, packaging has become the most important point-of-purchase merchandising tool in the marketing mix. As it is used to communicate the brand's message and values, the design of the package enables the consumer to identify

certain symbolic cues that differentiate the product from competitors (Nickels and Jolson, 1977). The average time it takes for a product to be noticed on the supermarket shelf is about one-seventeenth of a second. Thus, it is least to say that a package must stand out quickly and be appealing enough for consumers to grab it (Kotler, 2008). A brand's personality actually comes to life as soon as a consumer picks up the product and analyzes it in the store. There must exist a strong connection between the brand and the package. It is not so much that the package has to portray the 'best' personality, but it needs to be designed in a certain way that ensures that it stays true to the brand's personality. The consumer will ultimately determine if the brand is continuing to convey their message and personality. Consistency is where strength is built (Capsule, 2008).

A great package design should attract attention, describe the product and finally make the sale (Kotler, 2008). The discipline of packaging design is one of the key elements in a marketing strategy for a product and will promote, be recognized and sought out by the consumer (Ambrose and Harris, 2011). It brings the physical elements of the product together and allows for a creative construction of how a product is presented. More often than not, packaging is used to promote a message, with the use of creative techniques that engage the consumer (Ambrose and Harris, 2011). A concise brand communication is essential in the marketing strategy, and should be incorporated in every product's packaging (Lane, 2010), as the brand is a company's most valuable asset. Consumers identify with brands that match their lifestyles and are motivated to select products that portray an appropriate image of their lives (Mininni, 2008).

It stands quite clear then that the skill and creativity of package design professionals, marketers and designers, is becoming increasingly important (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005). The package must be designed in such a way that sells the product while living up to, and is consistent with the brand's promise. When a product finally meets consumer expectations, buyers will not only be loyal but will also spread the word and create a buzz for the brand without any further marketing efforts (Mininni, 2008).

1.2. Problem Discussion

In this essay we want to understand how packaging design influences consumers through the perspective of marketers and designers. By narrowing into elements rather than any product in general, we can get a more comprehensive picture of the subject.

Today almost all products we buy come packaged, even apples are labeled. We use packaging to protect, contain, and identify products. Furthermore if this is executed in a skillful way consumers often choose products based on the packaging. Packaging has become more complex and plays a big part in the brand communication process in our society. Some believe the package is the first and almost always the last moment of truth before a purchase is made (Capsule, 2008).

It has been estimated that seventy three percent of purchase decisions are made at point of sale (Rettie and Brewer, 2000). Since, the packaging market today is highly competitive, companies use packaging as a tool of sales promotion that often can lead to impulsive buying behavior (Kuvykaite, Dovaliene, and Navickiene, 2009). Due to packaging's central task in marketing communications it can be considered one of the most important factors that influence a buyer's purchase decision.

Three key roles of packaging with regard to the product are often highlighted in marketing literature and these are: protection, containment and identification (Simms and Trott, 2010). We will focus on the latter. Stewart (2004) describes the development of identification as possibly the most important area of package design as it has gone from product differentiation to branding and the ability to communicate imagery with the consumer in influential ways.

The key to packaging is, according to Stewart (2004) for designers and retailers to understand consumer behavior, and that the relationship between market and design is stronger than ever, which means that design should be prioritized.

Two categories of packaging elements have been established in marketing literature that affect a consumer's purchase decision: visual elements and verbal (also sometimes called informational) elements (Silayoi and Speece, 2004).

Visual elements consist of color, form, size, material and graphics while verbal elements describe for example brand, producer and country-of-origin (Kuvykaite, Dovaliene, and Navickiene, 2009). Visual elements provide information that affects the consumer's emotions whereas verbal elements send out information that has an effect on the consumer's cognitive orientation (Silayoi and Speece, 2004).

Since package design is mainly directed towards consumers' emotions and hidden meanings (Stewart, 2004; Wu et al, 2009), we have chosen to focus on visual elements. It is particularly the visual elements (which speaks to emotions) that can influence a consumer's decision making process according to Stewart (2004). To illustrate how emotions can be delivered, here is how one author describes packaging design's role in the fragrance experience:

"Packaging plays an important role in the fragrance experience, drawing consumers to certain shapes, sizes, colors and logos that appeal to them on the shelf. Above all, they expect packaging to feel luxurious, yet it must also be functional. Brand owners select enchanting designs and materials for bottles, caps and cartons to attract the consumer and evoke a desired emotional response." (Gregory, 2013, p.48)

According to Harper and Miller Burns (2012) color seems to be one of the most powerful visual elements that can change people's moods quickly. For instance, perfumers know that an appropriate color is a quick way to establish an appealing fragrance. The authors describe that aligning fragrance and color is one of the most essential tools for a brand, because before the consumer has smelled the product, he/she has through the colors and appearance of the package formed rather clear ideas about how the perfume will eventually smell. In consequence, the design of the package has to be consistent with the scent of the perfume (Milotic, 2001). In view of that, it is important that the package does not overpromise the value of its content (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005).

Although the designs of packages are very important for creating a message, designers are often overlooked or called in too late in many companies (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005). They are frequently not incorporated in the marketing strategy of the packages where they can contribute a lot. Marketing practitioners, if they work in a service, retail or manufacturing,

spend a lot of time working with design (Bruce and Daly, 2007), and the expertise of the designer is not always given the credit it deserves (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005). The relationship between marketers and designers can sometimes be uneasy, as the general perception of designers is that their work is not really within the rational analysis of business disciplines (Beverland, 2005). But according to Meyers and Gerstman (2005), businesses will deprive themselves of the designer's experience if they fail to include designers when making significant strategic decisions. This makes us wonder how marketers and designers differ and are similar in their approach of communicating messages through visual elements. Also, which of the visual elements can capture consumers' attention most effectively according to the practitioners of packaging design?

1.3 Problem statement

With our research question we want to find out which visual elements package design professionals (designers and marketers) use the most and why, and eventually evaluate if these two professionals differ in experiences. Thus in this study, we do not take on the perspective of the consumer but devote instead our focus on the experience of the creators.

Problem statement:

How are packages used to communicate marketing information?

1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to identify differences and similarities of a packaging's visual elements from the perspectives of designers and marketers.

1.5 Delimitations

Customer research is very important for successful brands to ensure that their packages are consumer friendly and positively affects satisfaction levels (Simms and Trott, 2010). However, what we focus on in this essay, are common visual elements that designers and marketers can use to influence various kinds of target audiences. Thus the purpose of this study is not to focus merely on the treatment of consumer opinion, though we do understand its great importance, but to instead find principles that are used by package design professionals, which influence consumers to purchase their products.

Environmental issues have become a big component in the making of packaging, but considering the scope of this essay, we have chosen not to include it here. We might have touched on it as a way for packages to communicate with consumers, but we have not given much emphasis on how the packaging of products should be environmentally satisfactory, which often would include the choice of resources, pollution, energy consumption and waste.

1.6 Thesis outline

In this chapter we wanted to give the reader a picture of the problem area and hopefully create an interest in the subject. In chapter two, we present the theory we collected for this essay, which first go through the marketing mix and branding, and then moves on to packaging design and its visual elements. Chapter three is the methodology chapter where we describe the research design and method that was used as well as data collection, data analysis and scientific criterions. In chapter four we summarize the empirical data we collected through the conduct of interviews with designers and marketers. Chapter five deals with the analysis of all our collected data, both theoretical and empirical. Chapter six summarizes the study by presenting what insights our analysis gave us, and we conclude with referring to some limitations and providing propositions for future research.

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter we discuss relevant theories that we use as secondary data. We begin by introducing basic marketing information, from there we get into packaging as a discipline and then look into elements that make up package designs.

2.1 Various forms of marketing and information

Here we introduce how packaging is a part of the marketing mix, and branding.

Marketing is about satisfying customer needs, where the aim is to know and understand the customer so well that the product or service one is selling, is selling itself. Marketers have to create customer value and satisfaction (Kotler, 2008). In today's market, it is important for advertising and packaging to support each other (Lane, 2010). A clear and succinct brand communication is essential in the marketing strategy, and should be incorporated in every product's packaging (Lane, 2010). A company's marketing strategy is a plan that creates value on a continuous basis. Marketing strategy involves two main categories. The first is to determine a positioning of the product in the target audience's minds and the second is to specify a plan of activities that achieves the positioning (Silk, 2006). With positioning, the company/organization can arrange so that a product, in the minds of the target audience, takes over a clear, unique and attractive position in relation to competing products. To find an attractive positioning, the firm has to consider how it should approach serving the consumers and how it wants to be perceived by them. This is achieved by collecting marketing information, that is to say through a comprehensive understanding of the consumers, competition, the company culture and the conditions of its market (Russell and Lane, 2002; Silk, 2006).

2.1.1 The marketing mix

There are numerous approaches to the marketing mix, defined as “a collection of activities to maximize product awareness and sales” (Ambrose and Harris, 2011, p.16). One mix that marketers often speak about is the four 'Ps'. The number of 'Ps' sometimes differs as various authors add on to the list. Professor Philip Kotler has added a fifth 'P' that stands for Positioning (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005), and according to Russell and Lane (2002) the fifth 'P' is Prospect. But authors such as Meyers and Gerstman (2005) argue that a sixth 'P' exists, which stands for packaging. Though some might not agree that packaging should have a

specific place in the marketing mix, it is still perhaps one of the key elements in a marketing strategy for a product and will promote, be recognized and sought out by the customer (Ambrose and Harris, 2011).

But for now, let's go back to the traditional four 'Ps', these are; product, price, promotion and place. Product is the actual physical characteristics and service elements that are aimed to meet the customer's needs. When defining the product, three levels can be analyzed. The *core product* is the central problem-solver that the customer seeks. The *actual product* speaks to the essentials and contains the features, styling, design, quality level, brand name and packaging. The final level in analyzing the product is the *augmented product*, which is the product and the features that sometimes come with it, like warranty and installation (Russell and Lane, 2002; Kotler, 2008).

The second 'P' in the marketing mix is price. A price is set for the product to meet the overall goals of a company and generate profit. Generally, price is a major factor affecting the buyer's choice. More recently non-price factors have gained importance, such as brand loyalty decisions whereby a consumer may choose a higher priced flight because of their ability to earn points in a frequent flyer program. However, price is the only element in the marketing mix that will generate revenue, the other elements all represent costs. While price can be one of the most flexible marketing mix elements, it can also generate a lot of problems if it is not implemented and adjusted properly. Companies may lower prices to gain revenue, rather than trying to convince the buyer their product is worth the higher price (Kotler, 2008).

Promotion, the third 'P', explains all the efforts that a company makes to raise awareness of the product (Kotler, 2008). It is this third 'P' that communicates the features of the other three 'Ps' (Russell and Lane, 2002). It is important for companies to clearly and convincingly communicate the value of product and price to current and prospective customers; by blending advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing tools, with a well-designed and executed integrating marketing communications plan (Kotler, 2008).

The fourth 'P' is place (distribution) and represents the location in store for the product (Russell and Lane, 2002). Many companies implement a corporate strategy relating to the perfect position and location for their product. A local grocery store provides many examples

of how companies attempt to engage the consumer with the location of their products. The point of sale, or where a customer pays for their purchase, is a majorly competitive position. The sales of gum, candy, magazines, cigarettes, etcetera are often found right at the point of sale. Furthermore, it is interesting to note how companies “fight” for position on shelves in the grocery store and how important eye level height; space and width are for their brands. The ultimate goal to attract a consumer’s attention and to compel an immediate decision by the brand’s location can help improve sales and there are many studies on the benefit of choosing the right location (Kotler, 2008).

The fifth (or sixth) ‘P’, packaging, brings the physical elements of the product together and allows for a creative construction of how a product is presented to the consumer. Sometimes packaging is simply a way of protecting a product for shipping and handling. Other times, packaging also promotes or displays a message to the consumer, where the company use creative techniques that engage the consumer by for example using well thought out colors and bottle shapes (Ambrose and Harris, 2011).

As our marketing efforts get more and more focused on the consumer and while the use of ‘Ps’ is just one approach to the marketing mix, some marketers argue that the ‘four Ps’ should be dismissed and replaced with the ‘the four Cs’ (Ambrose and Harris, 2011). A product becomes a Customer’s needs and wants, the price becomes a Cost to the user, the promotion becomes Communication and place becomes Convenience.

By implementing both the ‘Ps’ and the ‘Cs’, package design connects various areas within the marketing mix. They may be used by designers to influence or determine the needs and wants of customers and later reflect on these understandings in their designs (Ambrose and Harris, 2011).

2.1.2 Brand and Branding

The brand is a company’s most valuable asset. Customers identify with brands that match their lifestyles. They are motivated to purchase products that portray the right image of their lives (Mininni, 2008). The product itself is manufactured while the brand is created (Lane, 2010). According to Silk (2006) branding and positioning are extremely linked. The author explains that brands can be seen as nouns that marketers have given to consumers so to make

the differentiation of a product tangible. The fundamental task that branding should achieve is to emphasize that the company's product is not similar to its competitors (Silk, 2006).

The brand communicates a universal reference point and can be accompanied by a certain logo and colors. The Nike swoosh, for example, is a logo consumers can recognize without the name (Clifton, 2010). While a product and the shape and size may change over time, the brand remains the same. A brand can only exist through communication, and in today's competitive market, marketers need to take a sharp look at their brand's promise and how to bring it to life (Adamson, 2009). When building a consumer's trust, every feature of the product needs to be consistent with the brand (Lane, 2010). A brand's personality needs to conform who it is, while the audience's perception and the intended reality must overlap each other. The better this is achieved, the more the brand stays strong and true to its message and values. Brands that do the opposite, create a distance between perception and reality, will automatically become weaker and the audience will discover the inconsistencies (Capsule, 2008).

Figure 1



(Capsule, 2008)

Some of the world's strongest brands have a few if not many things in common. Brands like Starbucks and Nike are both using a long-term approach towards their customers. Their products can travel worldwide and speak to multiple consumer segments at the same time. Great brands earn solid margins over a long period of time. To keep alive in our competitive society, brands always have to come up with fresh ideas that are unexpected but at the same time relates to its core position(Lane, 2010). A coffee house brand like Starbucks was able to create something that people did not know they needed. Same with Nike, people did not know they needed a high-end performance running shoe (Milliman, 2011). Brands like Starbucks and Nike are tapping into people's emotions, and since emotions drive most of our decisions, the emotional connection surpasses the product and the surpassing is the brand. Customers

will connect emotionally with a brand when the brand persistently provides something that the customer wants, desires, or needs (Milliman, 2011).

2.2 Package design

This part delves into what package design is, by first introducing some basic history and then moving on to how package design is used today. Finally, we briefly give theory on the elements of package design.

package (pak'ij) *verb*

to make into package; especially: to produce as an entertainment package
b: to present (as a product) in such way as to heighten its appeal to the public.

Origin. 1540, "the act of packing," from pack (n.) or from cognate Du. Pakkage "baggage." The main modern sense of "bundle, parcel" is first attested 1722. The verb is 1922, from the noun. (Capsule, 2008, p.6)

2.2.1 Background: History of packaging as a discipline

The first kind of packages have been dated a few thousand years ago and were in the form of containers and baskets:

"Initially, the ancient containers, ranging from simple woven baskets to elaborately structured and decorated bowls, jars, bottles and carafes, were created simply for the utilitarian purpose of holding and transporting food, beverages and condiments. Later, containers were created to store wine, jewelry, perfume and a wide variety of personal possessions. In time, many were decorated elaborately by their owners or artisans to please the eye."
(Meyers and Gerstman, 2005, p. 8)

These containers were often made out of clay, but there were also ancient societies that made packages using glass and paper. For example, 3000 years ago, in Egypt, glass was highly demanded amongst royalty. However, the actual commercialization of glass containers came about in the early seventeenth century in Europe and North America (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005).

Yet, modern packaging as we know it slowly started in 1870 when producers began prepackaging their goods (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005). Bit by bit more producers followed this trend, and from 1880 to 1900, mass marketing was born in America, which led to a 'profit through volume' revolution; this happened thanks to mass-produced packaging (Twede, 2012). The building blocks for markets were cans, bottles and cartons that were produced in masses:

The packaging companies of Gair, Norton and Owens capitalized on new methods of production and business integration (and collusion) to profit from the trend, and enabled emerging national brands like Nabisco, Campbell's Soup and Coca-Cola to successfully lead a revolution in mass marketing." (Twede, 2012, p.245)

According to Twede (2012) the emergence of a packaging industry had started by 1927. It was in the 1960s that the discipline of packaging came to Europe through American corporations, and by 1995, package design had become an effective tool for the promotion of corporate brands (Stewart, 2004).

Just over 100 years ago, packaging was only a delivery device to get a product from one place to another. The average product was packaged in bulk to be individually distributed to each consumer as they specified different needs. Today, we are living in a consumption-driven society. A number of research studies by psychologists show how consumption is an essential part of people's lives (Jansson-Boyd, 2010), and how package design affects the choices we make. With advanced technology and materials, the possibilities with how companies could package their products has dramatically improved from the early production-driven society. The manufacturing processes advanced from single laborers packaging each product to firms that could produce a much greater volume (Capsule, 2008).

2.2.2 Contemporary packaging

Packaging is the most important point-of-purchase merchandising tool in the marketing mix, it can also be used to communicate a brand's message and values. Not only can the product deploy countless cover messages, but the design of the package also enables the consumer to identify certain symbolic cues that differentiate the product from competitors. It is arguably

said that customers, “buy the package and use the product” (Nickels and Jolson, 1977, p.14). The average time it takes for a product to be noticed on the supermarket shelf is about one-seventeenth of a second. A package must stand out quickly and be interesting enough for the customer to grab it and put the product in their cart. A great package design should attract attention, describe the product and finally make the sale (Kotler, 2008). Therefore, it is easy to say, packaging is more than a container. The first two basic aspects of a package are that it must protect the product and it must be feasible cost-wise. After that, the package must be adaptable for the shelf space in the store. A package must be easy to handle, store and stack. Evaluating these steps, the design team can decide how to create the actual package, where practical and eye-catching solutions are ideal (Lane, 2010).

In our competitive customer driven society, the functions of package design must be able to sell the brand and product at the same time, while creating image and customer perception. The saying “you only get one chance to make a good first impression” fits well in to the package design market. The customer will analyze the package, pick it up, and purchase it, all while confirming in their minds that this lives up to the brand promise and then continue to buy it over again another time. When a product finally meets consumer expectations, buyers will not only be loyal, but they will also most likely spread the word and create a buzz for the brand without any additional marketing efforts. Word of mouth in today’s society means exposure in conversations, on blogs, and message boards, etcetera (Mininni, 2008).

As we discussed in our introduction, identification amongst containment and protection is one of the most important aspects of package design. Other marketers are also calling functionality, personality and navigation important aspects (Capsule, 2008).

Identification sets the foundation for good packaging. Another aspect, which is particularly significant, is the personality of the brand itself. The brand's personality actually comes to life as soon as a customer picks up the product and analyzes it in the store. The package might need to speak to millions of people, and there has to be a strong connection between the brand and the package. It is not so much about having the best personality, but staying true to your brand's personality. The consumer will ultimately determine if the brand is continuing to convey their message and personality. Consistency is where strength is built (Capsule, 2008).

Benefit's Cosmetics is an example of a strong personal brand and creative package. The unique packaging is lively and personal which adds some fun and lightheartedness to the beauty business, which sometimes can be filled with doubts and insecurities. The packaging creates a friendship kind of vibe and catches the customer with their personality. One of their mascara products is called "They're real". The package matches the name, with a film noir feel and gives the whole product a story (Karsh, 2011).

2.2.3 The package's elements

The package can be treated as a set of elements that communicate messages to consumers, and the kind of message that is communicated depends on either visual or verbal elements, where verbal elements send out information and visual elements affect emotions (Silayoi and Speece, 2004; Stewart; 2004). Visual elements is made up of color, shape (also called form), size, material and graphics while verbal elements include the name, brand, producer/country of origin, information about product, usage instructions and special offers (Silayoi and Speece, 2004; Kuvykaite, Dovaliene, and Navickiene, 2009). When the authors place 'brand' among verbal elements, this means the direct attention of the trademark and brand information rather than the entire experience of the brand, which can be built out of all elements.

It is the elements of a package that influence consumers' decision making process and can determine their choices. Thus a well designed packaging is evaluated as a competitive advantage (Kuvykaite, Dovaliene, and Navickiene, 2009). According to Stewart (2004), package design's ability to kick off an emotional dialogue with the consumer is what affects decision-making. It is the influence of emotions that make packaging very influential. Kuvykaite, Dovaliene, and Navickiene (2009) argue that verbal components of packages do not for instance have much impact on repeated purchase, that is it to say, these elements do not influence the consumer's behavior after the purchase.

It is because of visual elements' impact on decision making and emotions that this essay focuses primarily on them.

2.3 Design process for packaging

We will first go through the package designer's involvement in the design process and move onto describing the visual elements, which include some theory on package semantics.

2.3.1 Designer's involvement in the design process

The design process refers to the planning and managerial work that is needed to form a product or corporate communications such as packaging. But many companies manage their design expertise in different ways, which can affect the product's business potential (Bruce and Daly, 2007). The design process of packages is a very important part of creating a message for a product, but package designers are often overlooked or called in too late in many companies (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005). According to the authors, designers are frequently not incorporated in the marketing strategy where they could contribute a great deal:

"If you accept the premise that the package is a critical component of your marketing strategy, that the package is vital to the brand, it does not make much sense to treat the package designer like a handyman, to be called upon only when you need to fix a problem with your packaging." (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005, p.168)

Marketing practitioners, if they work in a service, retail or manufacturing, spend a lot of time working with design (Bruce and Daly, 2007). But, according to a research conducted by PackSmart at an event called the Emballage Packaging Exhibition, 90% of industry respondents felt that it is the designer who strengthens the integrity of all packaging functions (Adhesives & Sealants Industry, 2011).

The relationship between marketing and design can be described as an uneasy one, as the general perception of designers is that their work process is different from the rational analysis of business disciplines (Beverland, 2005). But according to Meyers and Gerstman (2005), businesses will deprive themselves of the designer's experience and visionary capacity, that can lead to unforeseen solutions, if they fail to include designers when making significant strategic decisions.

Marketing calls for design expertise, to meet user needs and communicate brand values. Design can be seen as a visual understanding of marketing, and it is especially valuable when expressing brand values to consumers (Bruce and Daly, 2007). So even if the values of the designer might be different from other business functions, design thinking is very helpful for companies because both designers and marketers agree that design must be incorporated with other business functions (Beverland, 2005). Thus, design management should identify underlying values leading to tension between marketers and designers and administer it.

Many designers, who work with packaging, complain about being undervalued participants in the marketing process (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005), and they are eager to show marketing executives how vital packaging is to the marketing mix. With time many marketers have started to understand the importance of design, though this understanding has not fully reached many companies (Mininni, 2008).

Even if design can sometimes be seen as a functional resource that helps marketing, this is a very traditional outlook and today design has evolved into an independent creative resource that can contribute to strategic decisions (Bruce and Daly, 2007). Especially in competitive markets, package design has become an increasingly important strategic marketing tool that serve the consumer's purchase decision process (Vazquez, Bruce and Studd, 2003). That said, design and marketing balance each other and their practitioners can together implement and develop innovative new products because they are both concerned with consumer needs (Bruce and Daly, 2007). The key implications for management according to Rundh (2005) is to appreciate and take advantage of packaging as a marketing tool and a strategic asset for the entire business.

2.3.2 Color

According to Harper and Miller Burns (2012), aligning fragrance and color is one of the most important tools a brand can wield in the perfume industry. It is important because product labels, packaging and colors have to be congruent with the odor of the product (Milotic, 2001). Same applies to food packaging, where the package cannot look better than the food tastes (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005). Colors and smells can nonetheless be learned if the color and odor are dissimilar (Milotic, 2001), though this is difficult to achieve because people have already strong associations with colors (Wu et al, 2009).

Colors should not be looked upon as mere decorative means when incorporated in package design because they bring with them strong symbolic significance. Consumers have a direct sense for a product's colors as it impacts their visual and psychological feelings (Wu et al, 2009).

The first color function is that of catching the attention of consumers, especially at the point of purchase, where it has been proven that particularly vibrant colors, such as red and yellow attract attention. According to Wu et al (2009), red makes people excited while blue calms people, and this is because each color has its own meaning. Warm colors suggests fire and sun (both very progressive) and cool colors imply air and water (giving a tranquil feeling).

The use of colors plays a big part in creating an aesthetic experience as they can reflect different characteristics, moods and temperaments (Wu et al, 2009). The moods associated with colors are advantageous if a brand needs a fresh beginning as a new package whose color is very different to a brand's original package color, will attract the customer's attention. This makes the product more probable for purchase than a package whose color is moderately different (Garber, Burke and Jones, 2000).

Package color as a communication function is used to evoke expectations about a product, telling the consumer beforehand what the experience will be; in addition to brand and product quality Kauppinen-Räsänen and Luomala's (2010) study spotted that package colors serve as cues of product-related information and consumption-related information (for instance, quality, trustworthiness, bodily imagery).

Finally it is important, as with all the design elements of packaging, to remember that package color semantics is also affected by social settings, cultural settings, and trends (Wu et al, 2009).

2.3.3 Shape and Size

The two visual elements shape and size have been written under one title here because they are particularly intertwined with each other.

"[...] a manufacturer of paper cups is facing competition from a company that makes larger cups. The manufacturer wants to design a larger paper cup that

maximizes perceived volume for the same amount of raw material. What shape cups should it make?" (Raghubir and Krishna, 1999, p. 314)

There is a common saying among designers, that form follows function, (Adhesives & Sealants Industry, 2011) though technological changes in materials such as plastics has lead to new approaches in packaging where various design paradigms are incorporated into the package shape. Though there does not seem to exist conventional understanding regarding package shapes, many shapes are today part of the brand image, one of the most famous examples being the Coca-Cola bottle. It is also important for producers to consider different dimensions of the package's shape when introducing new products (Raghubir and Krishna, 1999).

Designers need to appreciate how visual elements communicate and create abstract perceptions in the consumer's mind. So within the design process, designers should convey various feelings according to the shapes of different objects. For instance, square shapes give a sense of stability while circular shapes are perceived more as complete or perfect (Wu et al, 2009). Another thing to consider is that larger portions are often associated with higher social status and people may choose larger portions when they feel powerless and want to affirm themselves (Chandon, 2012).

With other things the same, packages that appear larger will be more likely to be purchased, that is if the consumer does not read the information provided on the package concerning volume. Both consumer perceptions and volume have many connotations for package shape decisions (Raghubir and Krishna, 1999). Especially, the height of a container is considered an important dimension that consumers commonly use as guidance to make volume judgment. Consumers cluster most existing standard packages into four shape categories, these are cylinders, kegs, bottles, and spatulates, and each of these shape-types present characteristic effects on volume appearance, according to Garber, Hyatt and Boya (2009). In their study, the authors found that tall bodies give a larger overall package volume appearance than short bodies do, and geometrically complex forms are perceived as smaller than simple forms. Also, for packages that have compound complex forms that are composed of noticeable joining of two or more parts (including necks, shoulders, bodies, and feet), consumers tend to look at the body of the package to determine the volume.

It is also important to note that cultural differences do effect preferences in package design elements (Adhesives & Sealants Industry, 2011),and so does practical limits on how large or how miniature a package can be (Garber Jr., Hyatt and Boya, 2009).

2.3.4 Graphics

It is common for retail brands to remain faithful to solid, bold colors and pictograms to spur consumer's interest in a product's package (Adhesives & Sealants Industry, 2011). Apart from illustrations and other pictograms, the use of especially photography is a great way of communicating a brand's message. The use of photography can also be an important feature that helps consumers understand complex regulations and safety concerns.

When graphic design is used for packages, Wu et al, (2009) explains that the designer solely uses visual symbols to express abstract aspirations. If photography, illustrations and/or decorative patterns are utilized on the package, they may stimulate people's associations:

"Decorative patterns are a visual graphics that do not require too much explanation if they are used properly in the design. A kind of cordial visual beauty will be produced. Also the same meanings are requested between the value of content and visual performance." (Wu et al, 2009, p. 317)

If the producer wants consumers to remember the package, then the elements that most likely will influence remembrance are font styles, sizes, and colors. Graphically, pictorial elements such as photography should be positioned on the left hand side of the package, while verbal elements should be placed on the right. This is because the "brain laterality results in an asymmetry in the perception of elements in package designs" (Rettie and Brewer, 2000; Silayoi and Speece, 2004, p. 611). That said, in a study made by Westerman et al (2013), the results indicated that participants favored label designs that had the graphics on the right-side of the text because these designs were referred to as more practical, pleasing and less annoying. However, it should be taken into account that this particular study was specifically related to the labels of beverages, namely water and vodka.

Westerman et al (2013) also found that upward oriented graphics are commonly preferred because they are perceived as more pleasing and appealing, and they lead to greater purchase intention.

2.3.5 Material

Material semantics of package design describes the communication of materials, texture and the fabric information of products (Wu et al, 2009), and as the packaging market is a highly competitive place, the actual packaging has become as significant to success as the product it is wrapped around (Daily Foods, 2001).

According to Daily Foods (2001) developing and selecting the "right" container that successfully markets a product, especially foods, requires an understanding of packaging materials. Packaging professionals need to understand the advantages and disadvantages of particular materials and how they can be used to differentiate the product.

The most used materials in packaging are today classified into plastic, paper, metal and glass (Hong and Suhua, 2011). Plastic started to be used for packaging in the beginning of the 20th century and has become the most economically popular packaging material. Paper packing is also a very fashionable choice because of its formability and low cost. Aesthetically it is also a great marketing choice as beautiful pictograms can be directly printed onto the package.

Metal packaging materials are known for being especially useful for protecting food during long periods of time, especially at war, during the 19th century. Today metal is still going strong due to its protecting character. But what has really made metal a favorite among packaging professionals is the ability to shape it into many different forms, and designers can get very creative with the shape and size of their containers with the use of metal (Hong and Suhua, 2011).

Finally, glass is another favorite among producers as it also can form into various shapes. It is hard, transparent, heat-resistant and can be easily cleaned. It is primarily used for oil, alcoholic drinks, beverages and cosmetics. What might be considered as a negative aspect of glass as a packaging material is that it is fragile, relatively heavy and the cost of transporting and storing the material is rather high (Hong and Suhua, 2011).

But going back to the semantics of materials; different materials can provide various feelings of quality and experience. Metal, for instance, gives a high-tech experience and can also be associated with pride. Also (referring to a material that we did not mention above) different

kinds of wood such as bamboo, rattan and other natural materials give consumers a nature sensation (Wu et al, 2009).

As technology evolves, more materials are created that not only give designers additional choices but leads to possibilities for new combinations and solutions that fit a certain experience that consumers are looking for. New material combinations also make it easier to differentiate products, and has become an important tool that helps expand design thinking (Hong and Suhua, 2011).

2.4 Theoretical basis of this essay

Below are key points that summarize the theoretical framework. To clarify the discussion below, we want to remind the reader of our essay's purpose which is to identify differences and similarities of a packaging's visual elements from the perspectives of designers and marketers. Our problem statement states: How are packages used to communicate marketing information?

According to Lane (2010), a clear and concise brand communication is essential in marketing strategy and this should be integrated in every product's packaging. The marketing strategy is a plan which creates value and involves two main categories. The first is to determine a desired positioning of the product in the target audience's minds and the second is to specify a plan of activities that achieves that positioning (Silk, 2006).

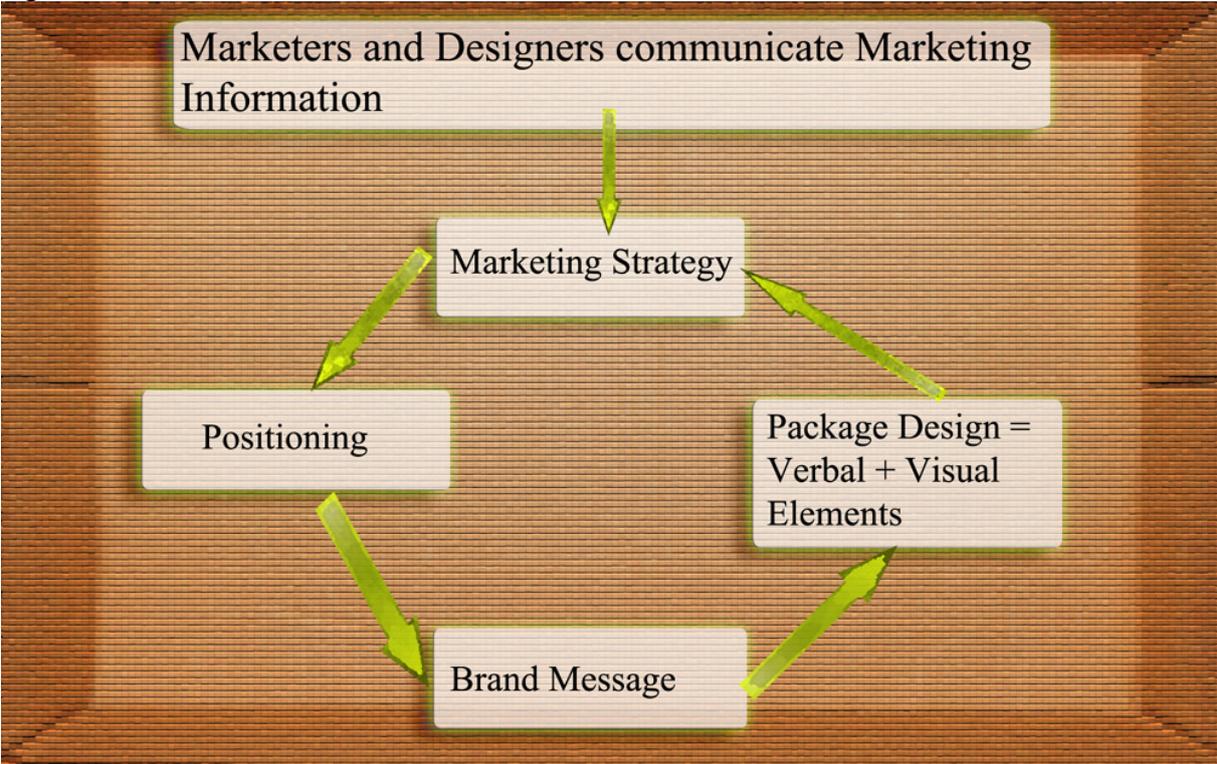
According to Silk (2006) branding and positioning are very connected, and the author explains that brands can be described as nouns that make product differentiation tangible for consumers. By using marketing information the brand can differentiate itself (Russell and Lane, 2002) and be used to form the market strategy, which leads to the positioning of the product (Silk, 2006). The primary task that branding should achieve is to emphasize that the company's product is not similar to its competitors (Silk, 2006). Consumers are drawn to products that are designed with an image that portrays their identity and lives (Mininni, 2008), and it is from this standpoint that packages are designed (Stewart, 2004).

A brand can only exist or deliver a message through communication (Adamson, 2009). The importance of packaging as a communication tool is emphasized in existing literature, and authors such as Silayoi and Speece (2004) and Stewart (2004) argue that it is through visual and verbal elements that the package delivers the message. As the visual elements (color, material, shape, size and graphics) are those that influence emotions, and it is the emotional dialogue between package design and consumers that affect decision-making (Stewart, 2004; Kuvykaite, Dovaliene, and Navickiene, 2009), we use visual elements as the foundation for this research.

Though the design process of packages is a very important part of creating a message for a product, sometimes designers are overlooked or called in too late (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005). According to the authors, designers are often not incorporated in the marketing

strategy where they could contribute a great deal since packaging is a vital component of marketing strategy and essential to the brand. The relationship between marketing and design professionals can be described as uneasy since the general perception of designers is that their work process is different from the rational analysis of business disciplines (Beverland, 2005). But according to Meyers and Gerstman (2005), businesses will deprive themselves of unforeseen solutions if they fail to include designers when making significant strategic decisions. Marketing calls for design expertise to meet user needs and communicate brand values (Meyers and Gerstman, 2005) that have been established from the company's marketing information (Silk, 2006). Design can be described as a visual understanding of marketing and it is especially valuable when expressing brand values to consumers (Bruce and Daly, 2007). The package design is very much intertwined with the market strategy, positioning and branding of the product and thus designers should be given more say in the marketing process of the product (Beverland, 2005; Meyers and Gerstman, 2005).

Figure 2



3. Method

In this chapter, we present the research design and method as well as data collection, data analysis and scientific criteria.

3.1 Choice of subject

The choice of subject came about as we both have a genuine interest in design and marketing. We wanted to analyze the relationship of the two fields and investigate how they are similar in some respects and also how they differ. We wanted to understand how differently the designer and marketer perceive design elements and if there are any differences in the order in which they value the five visual elements listed above in the theoretical framework.

3.2 Research design

The research design of this study was foremost a case study design, but we included aspects of comparative design as well, since we were investigating two groups and later compared them. That is to say, we used a multiple-case study design (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The reason why we chose a multiple-case study design was because the purpose of this essay was to compare the perspectives of designers and marketers. Multiple-case study designs are mainly undertaken for comparing the cases that are included and encourages researchers to reflect on what is common across cases (designers and marketers).

There are sometimes problems concerning whether the researchers should choose to use a multiple-case study design or a cross-sectional design (also referred to as a social survey design), as both are used to deal with several cases. The reason why we chose the first is that we focused on the individual cases rather than on a sample of cases where cross-sectional designs are appropriate (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

3.3 Research method and Data collection

According to Bryman and Bell (2011) qualitative research is known for emphasizing words, as opposed to quantitative research that use quantification, when collecting and analyzing data. This is one reason why we thought it would be more appropriate to use a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative. Another reason is that qualitative researches are also often linked with a more interpretative epistemology. This fitted our purposes well because we were

interested in the experiences of package design professionals that might think differently depending on their social circumstances. As Merriam (1995, p. 54) puts it: "the researcher offers his or her interpretation of someone else's interpretation of reality."

Within a qualitative research, there are different methods we could have chosen; interviews, focus groups or participant observation. We like to motivate why we chose to conduct interviews and why not the two other common choices. To begin with, participant observation would have meant that we would probably have chosen a particular company where we observed the work field during an extended period of time. However typically participant observers do more than observing, they also gather information through interviews and the method can in and of itself include many different forms of data collections (Bryman and Bell, 2011). We decided not to use this method because of lack of time and resources, also it is important to remember that we wanted to compare two groups and not one, the data collection process would have become a bit more complicated because of this.

The focus group method is a form of group interviewing (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The reason we did not chose focus groups as our method is because we did not want the answers of one respondent to influence another respondent's answers. Which is also a reason why we chose interviews as our method. Our primary data were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews, which can include both standardized and open type questions (Walliman, 2011). The chosen interview technique contains several key questions that help to define the areas that are to be explored, but also allow the interviewer or interviewee to depart from strict rules, in order to pursue more detailed answers (Britten,1999). This method allowed us to contact twenty-two respondents from around the world which would have been difficult to achieve with focus groups. The implementation and further description of the interview process will be discussed in section 3.4 Interviews.

Secondary data were collected, and been presented in this essay's Theoretical framework.

3.4 Interviews

3.4.1. Interview process

Our study was conducted via asynchronous online interviews.

Before the interviews were conducted, we distilled our subject areas into three parts that become our research model. Using this model as our foundation, an interview guide that included the main subject areas and related interview questions was prepared. The function of the interview guide was to gather relevant information so as to answer the research question and achieve our research purpose. The interview guide consisted of six basic questions, and from there further questions or clarifications were asked if necessary.

The interviews were set between May 12 and May 22 in 2013.

3.4.2. Interview respondents

Our representative group consisted of 22 respondents in which 15 were designers and 7 marketers.

Apart from interviewing designers and marketers who had positions in companies, we included another dimension; freelance designers, who go from project to project and has experience in how the design process can manifest itself in different corporate cultures.

Prior to the conduct of interviews we made it clear to the interviewees that their answers were to maintain anonymous and that no comments were to be presented with attribution to them if they did not approve. Three of the respondents said that they did not mind being attributed. But to achieve a consistent presentation of our data, we decided to keep all the participants anonymous.

3.5 Analysis of gathered data

Bryman and Bell (2011) describe that the analysis of qualitative researches can be a challenge since there are not yet many analysis models accomplished in this area that does not take a lot of time to accomplish. For our purposes, we firstly organized and prepared the results of the respondents and then moved on to analyzing this with the theory. However, the research process was not completely linear, but rather iterative as we went back to our theoretical framework a few times to make sure that we had not missed important references. We went forth between our research question, literature, empirical data and analysis as a verification strategy to ensure some kind of congruence in our research (Morse et al, 2008).

3.6 Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness

3.4.1 Validity

Kvale (1989) states that to validate equals to investigate, check, question, and theorize. Validity is concerned with the accuracy of scientific findings (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982), and qualitative researches are often criticized for lacking it, "empiricists argue that human science research is not valid because it is not objective" (Kvale, 1989, p. 47). The answer to this is often that qualitative studies habitually do not take on a positivistic epistemology, and that whether there exists a reality outside of the subjective researcher can be argued according to constructivists who often think that it is impossible for a researcher to be objective (Kuzmanić, 2009). All in all the discussion usually is vivid between the two extremes, but for our interviews, we simply did not intend to be completely objective but rather neutral.

Internal validity refers to the degree to which scientific observations and measurements are authentic representations "of some reality" (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982, p. 32). Internal validity is often argued to be strong in qualitative researches (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982; Bryman and Bell, 2011) because the researchers develop a good participation with, in our case, interviewees and can go back and forth between theory and empirical data.

We showed parts of our study to some of our peers because according to Merriam (1995) a way to increase internal validity in a qualitative research is by asking colleagues or peers to examine the collected data and then comment on how reasonable the outcomes are.

In terms of external validity (also called generalizability), Scandura and Williams (2000) suggest that researches should conduct a variety of research designs and methods to accomplish a high level of it. Usually a single case study (such as ours) are often criticized because specific cases, such as a particular population or event, cannot be a representative of all other cases (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The focus of case studies should in consequence be on particularization in preference to generalization.

3.4.2 Reliability

Reliability concerns the question of whether the outcomes of a study are repeatable (Bryman and Bell, 2011). According to Merriam (1995) the entire notion of reliability is problematic in the social sciences. The author continues to describe that researching about human behavior

and people is not the equivalent of studying non-living matters. Qualitative researchers are not trying to set up laws in which measurement and reliability of observation are vital. Instead, qualitative researchers seek to understand the world from the perspectives of those in it, since human behavior is never static.

External reliability can be difficult to achieve in our qualitative research because our research method is very much involved with people and social settings. So external reliability becomes a challenging criterion to meet, in our case mainly due to subject errors. According to Morse et al (2008, p. 17): "Research is only as good as the investigator." It is the researcher's flexibility, skill and sensibility in using a verification strategy that settles on the reliability and validity of the study. As shortly described above, we continually checked our data to maintain focus and monitor our research process. As suggested by Morse et al (2008), we tried to achieve a form of reliability as researchers by remaining as open as possible, and discuss with the respondents when their insights might have been a bit poorly explained or not in the field in which we were studying. In reference to Yin (1994), the role that reliability plays in a study is to minimize biases and errors. It was important for us to ensure the respondents that they would be anonymous so that their answers would not be biased by the protection of their identities.

3.4.3 Trustworthiness

The terms of validity and reliability have sparked a lot of discussions in academic writings, one reason being that they often are related to measurement (Bryman and Bell, 2011). There have been authors who have suggested that different criterion should be placed on qualitative works. The one that we have chosen to regard are proposed by the authors Guba and Lincoln, simplified in Bryman and Bell (2011).

The criterion that we will focus on is trustworthiness, and it is composed out of four smaller parts; credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

Credibility is used instead of internal validity because some researchers would argue that the environment that we study is not given and that there can be many different interpretations of a social reality. The way we have tried to establish credibility in our study is through respondent validation, which we did by double-checking with the interviewees about the information that they had provided.

We tried to reach transferability (comparable with external validity) by judging how our group of interviewees are atypical and being clear about that this, in our presentation of our representatives.

Dependability (comparable with reliability) have been the most challenging criterion to meet because it can be difficult to ensure that there have not been subject errors and subject biases. However to avoid the latter, we tried to be as neutral with our participants as possible, which leads us to the last component of trustworthiness, namely conformability (comparable with objectivity).

4. Empirical data and results

In this section we present the empirical data collected from interviewing packaging professionals. First we discuss the respondents' perspectives on packaging's relation with brand message and marketing strategy. Then we move on to the visual elements. The outcomes are presented through summaries and quotes from respondents' statements in interviews.

In this study we interviewed twenty-two respondents. Eighty-six percent of the respondents did not want to be identified, so their names and location are not introduced here, however to learn more about the interviewed individuals, we refer you to the Appendix where they are shortly described.

Fifteen of the respondents were designers and seven marketers. Since the freelance designers and the designers who worked in a company, did not differ in particular in their responses, we present their results as one group; designers. The majority of the designers were freelancers, which means that they have a lot of experience in dealing with different company cultures and brand identities. They are acquainted with a diverse range of audiences as they go from project to project. The rest of the designers and all the marketers have positions in companies. None of the respondents that we interviewed worked in the same company: they all were located in different areas and fields. Thus the sort of packaging that the professionals have worked with range from shoeboxes to food packaging. It is this diversity of experience in packaging that we think have focused the results on the principles of packaging rather than specific fields within in.

4.1 Designers

Here we present the designers' perspectives on how packaging communicates marketing information: on how the package design communicates the brand message and is a part of the marketing strategy. Also how designers use visual elements to create brand messages that speaks to consumers' emotions.

4.1.1. Brand message and marketing strategy

Understanding a brand's personality, who they really are, what they stand for and whom they are selling a product to is extremely important according to a majority of the respondents. When taking on a new client and any of their new products, it is important to have dialogue with the client. A designer uses communication with the client as an essential tool in the process of getting to know the client and trying to develop a sense of the story they wish to tell for a specific product. In the interviews of a designer's point of view regarding brand messaging, one explains: "Research. Learn the history behind the brand, see what their competitors are doing, know what their goals are and most importantly know the target audience." Another designer emphasizes understanding the target group, by first identifying the target or which group of people the product will go out to. This means the designer will try to understand the social status, age group, gender, etc. Is the product aimed for college students, working class or general society? The same designer would also analyze a customer's behavior and overall shopping environment when choosing products in the grocery store for example. Some other respondents would do store checks, where designers want to understand what makes the product stand out more than others, and what they can do to make the product more inviting to the customer so they will actually grab and purchase it.

After understanding the brand personality, target group, and customers' buying patterns in the store, a mood board can be created according to one designer. Trying to create an emotion to sell and a story to tell on the package.

One of our respondents expressed the importance of evaluating a client's prior marketing campaigns. Perhaps there are successful parts of the campaign that can be reintroduced that touch the consumer's nostalgic heartstrings. The same designer also looked at the competition the client faces before creating a message. What else is out there, what works for this specific product and what does not? Another designer also conveyed the importance of researching the competition while being sure not to make an exact copy of another package.

Some of the interviewed designers work closely with a "brand team" when developing a package design. The team obtains defined information of what the client really wants to communicate with the package and the hierarchy of information. The brand team will, for example, gather data from past sales from the account departments who are responsible of getting a product into retail and distribution.

A couple of the respondents conveyed the importance of testing the message. They prepare different proposals and present it to the client. The client selects the best idea and then the designer uses test focus groups to see if the message is communicating a successful package design. The focus groups could be family, friends or co-workers. This way the designers are able to test people's reaction and measure the level of information that is really required to communicate the brand's message and make adjustments as necessary. One respondent executed this step in their process if there is extra time.

One of our interviewed designers emphasizes how successful a package design can be if marketers and designers work together. "We design with objectives in mind, many disciplines of marketing and creative people work together to accomplish success of a brand and package design". According to the designer, "As designers we work with color, typestyles, & photography to create the brand's image and gain agreement among others that it is communicating as intended, however ultimately it is the consumer that determines if we and marketing people have been successful in what we have strived to accomplish".

Now moving on to how important the respondents thought the design was in terms of a brand's marketing strategy. To this question one respondent answered "the package is 'The Face' of any product".

Another respondent compared packaging to the similar situation of when meeting a person for the first time. We create an immediate representation of who they are and if we like them or not. According to the same designer, another metaphor of package design is how you can dress for success in an interview, family picnic, or even a rock concert. Some other designers interviewed, emphasized that good packaging will always create a first impression of the product. Therefore, the package design has to be very consistent with the message that all other marketing materials, such as TV, commercial, and printed advertisement. All of these communications must combine to match the overall look the brand wants to convey.

Customers may feel the worth of a product in terms of the quality of how the product is packaged. Good packaging can make it easier to find the product in the actual store and therefore allows the customer more ease in choosing that product over another. A respondent explains, these days 80 percent of purchasing decisions are made "in-store". The major competition with other brands, therefore takes place in-store. A great cost-effective way to

spend a client's marketing budget is on packaging design and in store displays. If supporting materials, such as store displays are missing, then the packaging has to do all the talking. Another designer pointed out that it all depends on how important the product is and how much of the company's presence is involved with the packaging. "It is extremely important when it comes to brands like Dove or Crest. The purpose of their packaging needs to grab the consumer and connect with them in a way that encourages the consumer to buy it. Acer or Samsung, on the other hand, relies more on its packaging for protection of their electronic goods, than the marketing."

Package design is therefore extremely important for a brand's marketing strategy, which almost all respondents pointed out. It is the ultimate touch point of a brand. One of the respondents believes it is what the marketing people are counting on that connects with all other touch points. A consumer may see a commercial on TV for a few seconds, but the element that enters your home and life is the package - it is the most personal experience. Seeing a TV commercial with the package featured makes it easier for customers to find the product in the store, but only if it is a good package design. A designer said marketing people should pay a lot of attention on getting the packaging image and strategy right. Another designer said that the marketing strategy in packaging design is all up to the marketer.

4.1.2. Visual elements

A majority of the respondents agreed that it takes five visual elements (color, material, graphics, shape and size) to create a message that speaks to a consumer's emotions. One respondent said that just as it takes flour and water to make bread, it takes these five elements to create a message, however if one wants to classify the emotional drivers of a brand it can go way beyond the basic ingredients.

Some respondents emphasized that it is especially one specific element that should stand out the most, that is to say, be the focus of the package. One designers said:

"If you go to the store and just look at a shelf of hair care products, a lot of it will be the same shape, size, material, etc. However, these products still generally sell well and reach their target audience. Why? Good designers know how to take limitations (such as size, shape and materials) and create a beautiful piece of packaging that will engage their target consumer emotionally with other visual design elements (such as color and graphics). It's all about being creative within the list of limitations. In an ideal world, a designer would have free range over all five of these visual elements

and figure out how to best create a design solution for packaging. However, this is rarely the case because clients have budgets so there are usually limitations."

Additionally each consumer group is different so some consumers respond more to distinctive materials while others respond more to color and so on. It is when a target audience is identified that designers will figure out which visual elements will resourcefully attract and appeal to this consumer while staying within the client's budget.

Yet some respondents argued that you cannot have one visual element without the others, to create a message that speaks to consumers emotions, while some argued that you can both get away with one visual element or with all of them combined, the important thing is that they are used strategically. The brand's story, or positioning, is where the emotional connection happens. The physical elements must carry and communicate that story.

Apart from the five visual elements that we asked about in our interviews, some of the respondents gave us other design features that they categorized as visual elements. These were photography, illustrations, and typography. One of the designers said that he would place typography in front of the five visual elements that we had asked him about.

Two designers also emphasized that sometimes an 'invisible package' is ideal if the product itself is cool looking. In those cases an acetate box with little or no graphic support is a good choice; then it is the product itself, not the package that "catches some sort of emotive response in the consumer."

One respondent said that he would not limit the visual elements to merely five, because he believed there could be sub-categories within the elements; for instance, a designer can create a motion element, such as color or graphics, which can certainly stimulate the consumer's emotions at a deeper level. But if you include one or two senses in this interaction such as scent, touch and sound, the message can communicate better to the target consumer and at a much deeper level.

Now, we move on to the results we got from asking the designers which visual elements they found to be the most effective for influencing consumer emotions. Many of the respondents said that all of the visual elements can be important depending on the circumstances but if they had to choose, the greater part picked color, followed by graphics, while shape came in

third place (see section 4.3.3 Summary to find the complete results). The combination of graphics and color was also a common choice.

The reason that many of the respondents chose color as their first choice is since several said that the attention span of a consumer today is short; thus it is crucial to grab their attention with color, as this element directly communicates to each consumer's preference. People are very responsive to color, as it is one of the most instantaneous emotive elements that our visual senses can respond to. The ability to quickly catch the attention of people was also why many respondents chose graphics as one of the key elements for emotional influence. One respondent said that color is the most effective element for influencing emotions because people easily associate with it. Blue feels sober and red speaks passion in Western culture. Another respondent said that in the process of creating and evaluating their designs in their studio, "the same designs done in several color interpretations will significantly alter the perception" of how they feel about the design.

There seemed to be an agreement among several of the respondents that color and graphics together are very effective for influencing emotions since designers can achieve illusions with them. For instance, by using color and graphics alone, you can achieve faux finishes (materials) or make the package seem slimmer or larger. One respondent compared colors and graphics with being a sort of clothing for packaging; she elaborated that you select colors that look good on you based on your body type (shape of the package). For example, a wine bottle has a very basic shape, it is tall and has a skinny neck. This can get quite redundant in a row with a lot of other bottles, but once colors and graphics are added to the package some bottles will suddenly stick out more than others and appeal to different emotions of a consumer.

According to some respondents, graphics was *the* most important because packaging is mainly communication design. It is mostly graphics that communicates with consumers, can cause most surprise and "hopefully close the sale of the product".

A respondent said that even if color might influence our emotions the most quickly, shape is a more universal language. "The implications of a square (rigid) and a circular shape (soft) are universal, while color may imply different things across culture." Also, other respondents argued that since consumers are typically determined in their shopping habits, they have

certain inclinations towards certain sizes based on various factors (budget, environment, mood and weather). So if the function of the item comes into consideration, the size can play a key part in the decision making process. However, not everyone was positive about shape and size as key elements with the reason that many retail shelves dictate shape and size. Thus creative options with these elements are minimal. Neither did a lot of the respondents chose material as an effective element for influencing consumer's emotions, one of them said that materials are not always noticed initially, and they are limited by manufacturing costs.

Finally, numerous respondents said that the choice of visual element really all depends on the product and what you want to communicate. For beauty products you need good graphics and illustrations while in food packaging a punchy name has the ability to really influence the emotions of the consumers. The shelf presentation is vital, thus in retail environments you need to have a brand and packaging strategy well in order. So to arrive at knowledgeable choices, a thorough analysis of the elements is required; from here on clear principles can be made to connect to your marketing and communication objectives. One respondent said that: "Strategic branding and packaging design require the ability to take into account a complex combination of factors." This brings us to the results we gathered regarding how the visual elements should be interlinked.

The majority of the respondents emphasized that the visual elements should together create a story, message, idea, or -as one designer called it- a "first impact of visual emotion". No elements should be added to the package just to be there but they all have to have a purpose. One respondent said that the elements have to be interlinked strategically and that there are no actual rules to achieving this. Instead, what is important is that they all follow the same vision and tell the same story.

Some respondents argued that all the visual elements need to communicate through a brand language, if any one of the elements is off, the message becomes dull and unmemorable. It is therefore important that all the visual elements are consistent with the brand. That is how they are interlinked, because then a constructive representation of a brand can be achieved, which brings it to life. This interlinking of elements allow a consumer to hold and interact with a brand.

One designer said that all the elements have to sync and that a hierarchy needs to be established among the elements:

"If all pieces are visually equal, the customer will be confused. Establishing what information or graphic element is 1st, 2nd, or 3rd hierarchy will help develop an effective package with clear communication."

Conversely, according to another designer, the visual elements are not merely linked to each other but rather they are morphed into one another so that an actual hierarchy would be difficult to achieve. Even if the visual elements can work alone, right combinations can either cause a reliance of one another or a elimination of the use of additional elements.

Another respondent said that packaging elements create a balance. For instance, you might go for a very serious and sophisticated package but by changing a font style that is more playful or in bright colors, the design can swiftly change to what started off as very serious and premium can become a bit fun as well.

4.2 Marketers

Here we present the marketers' perspectives on how packaging communicates marketing information: on how the package design communicates the brand message and is a part of the marketing strategy. Also how marketers use visual elements to create brand messages that speaks to consumers' emotions.

4.2.1. Brand message and marketing strategy

"We go great lengths with our marketing team to make sure we convey the message and strategy of our clients."

Communication with the client is the first step in understanding the brand. A marketer described that the first step in the brand message process was to meet with the client extensively before working on the package design. Part of the creative process involves creating a storyboard so that they may understand the ins and outs of the product, what the company values, colors, key objectives, motivations, and goals. The most important part of the process is identifying exactly what the client wants to achieve. The respondent mentioned

that this can be more difficult when starting completely from scratch. A respondent would always start with the brand message and brand essence, later on analyze the target group and find out what they have in common and what triggers them. According to another marketer, working with the marketing plan and the planned result and main goal of the product will help understanding a brand's message and translate it into packaging design. The competition is, according to the same marketer, important to analyze.

One of the interviewed marketers always makes sure that the brand has certain core values and then these values are introduced or passed across in the package design. For example, the core values of environmental, healthy, organic, luxurious and cheap will somehow be incorporated in to the package. So, it is common to use a test panel after creating the first draft of a package design. Test the market to see if the message will reach potential customers.

People remember the packaging and identify immediately with the relationship a product is trying to convey, according to a respondent. It really helps to have a strong packaging design when creating values. Helping the consumer understand the company as a whole and then on the secondary phases, consumers will recall the image and hopefully become repeat customers. The same marketer said costumers get excited when seeing the packaging they like and that stays true to the brand itself.

But how important did the marketers think that the design was in terms of a brand's marketing strategy? Well, according to one respondent, packaging can mean all the difference in the world, and depends on the products you are selling.

Almost all the marketers' pointed out the importance of packaging design in the marketing strategy. The packaging must fit in the brand's marketing strategy and overall advertising campaign. Advertisements in magazines to press conferences have to stay true to a brand's message and the personality of the package design. It is essential to design a package that helps the client achieve the goals of getting a product to the shelf in the most cost effective way, without damaging the product, but at the same time putting all the efforts into the design so it will ultimately be an "attention-grabber" in the store.

Package design falls under the overall design and graphic profile of a product such as, the name, words, pictures, and logo. Other graphic elements, unique characteristics, package

design and the application of brand design are all important functions in the branding efforts and a part of the brand platform, said a marketer.

Packaging represents the brand and is also extremely important to the marketing strategy itself; it is critical to the positioning and overall experience of the brand according to a marketer. It is life or death to a product. If you do not have a strategy, why rely on luck to get across a product's message? The professionals strive to relay the company's entire feeling, mission and goals. They read their mission statement and aim to develop a strategy that allows them to create a packaging and design which is relevant to their product. You only have one chance to make a first impression to a consumer so ultimately, the design, color, etc. They all play vital roles.

4.2.2. Visual elements

All the respondents in this group said that yes, you do need all the visual elements to create a message that speaks to consumers' emotions. Some of the marketers also added that the inside of the packaging is as important for creating a message as the outside. Such as the quality of the tissue paper found inside shoe boxes helps consumers to remember the product.

One respondent argued that the market is competitive worldwide and any competitive edge you can gain on your competitors will help consumers remember and differentiate the product from the many choices available, thus it is important to use all the visual elements. The marketer needs to constantly consider new ways for packages to stand out, to cut costs by using recycled paper and plastics and to use colors, shapes, etcetera that are resourceful for shipping and cost, while looking great in the eyes of the end consumer.

Another respondent said that there is also another element that marketers call the "sixth sense". This sixth sense is created when all the five visual elements come together "correctly and perfectly to create a perfect design". He said that marketers relate these to what are referred to sometimes as viral marketing, and that all the five visual elements are "combined ingredients to strike an emotional chord with the consumer".

Some respondents said that since each element stands for both a brand's message and also speaks to customer's emotions, it really depends on who the consumer is and what they

desire. The color white is usually used when packaging clean and simple products while green and earthy colors are used in more natural packaging. Also the consideration of negative space is also very important to keep the package as clean as possible.

Material is used for example in organic products as perhaps reusable material, while luxurious products use high gloss material; paper or plastic. The emotional message that the visual elements bring forth all evolve around what the brand stands for. Which brings us to the results we got of the visual elements that marketers found to be the most effective for influencing consumer emotions.

Seventy five percent of the respondents said that color was the most important visual element for influencing consumer's emotions. The reasons were that colors are "tightly connected to our basic instincts", they help identify the brand immediately and are attention grabbers. One respondent said that color psychology plays a central part and affects consumer behavior in subconscious ways. Two respondents used the color red for package design as an example because, research has shown that the human mind reacts to this color and triggers a response mechanism to food. That is why many food chains use it in their branding and packaging. One respondent said that he is particular to start with color, as many of his clients are food related and fast-service restaurants;

"It's remarkable how many restaurants use the color in their branding and packaging and this is the most completely emotional response you can get from a marketing decision. The answer goes back to thousands of years of the human evolution and can even be said that the color relates to "blood" and triggers an affinity to hunger/need for food. We believe the ultimate goal in marketing or designing a package starts with hidden triggers in the consumer such as a psychological factor like color. We want to get inside the customer's mind even before they realize it."

Though many of the respondents chose color as the most influential element, one respondent did not want to choose because he said that all of them are important as it is the entire package which people remember. Also, another respondent pointed out that the elements apply to the identity of the product and thus it is this that determine which visual elements that should be chosen. Finally, another respondent said that since you have a split second to get your

message across to consumers, you need to differentiate your product to stand out. The best way to achieve this according to him was by "ultra creative logo design and packaging." The recipe for this was to have memorable colors, easy to identify package and a creative logo.

Now, we will get into the results of how to interlink the visual elements. Most of the respondents argued that all the visual elements of a package need to work together to communicate the overall message of a product. One respondent said that the creative process of interlinking the visual elements are endless. Marketers use different methods and tests to show their clients how a consumer responds to different types of packages.

Other marketers explained that the elements all must fit together to convey the brand's image. The color, the logo, the style, the material, etcetera are building a brand well beyond than just one product. Marketers need to create a feeling and sense of pride for the consumer, they need to create something that lasts in the consumer's memory. The package is not just selling a product, but it is selling a lifestyle that needs to appeal to the target audience.

According to one respondent, all the elements are interlinked once a marketer has done his/her job accurately, and that is by listening to the wants of the client. Here the respondent touches on something that many of the respondents have referred to; the brand's message. The message of the brand must clearly be expressed on the package and the most essential use of logo, color and other elements together create a memorable package.

Another respondent said that one should look at Coca Cola's packaging to find how the best marketers in the world interlink visual elements. He said that all the pieces of their packaging is intertwined to the company's marketing.

While many of the marketers focused on the marketing process that the visual elements need to follow, two of the respondents emphasized the design process. One said that you could either choose to combine all the elements or just a few of them but that shape and size are really important to consider because of space management in the store and also that you need to consider the content of the product. The other respondent said that designers usually emphasize what is important by the size and color of graphics and type. Visual elements that are planned to be seen first (suggesting that there needs to be a hierarchy of elements) are

often bigger in size and/or with have an attention grabbing color so that the eyes are drawn to a specific area.

4.3 Results

The respondents see the importance of a strong communication with the client when trying to get to know a brand's personality and understanding the product. They also express how important it is to know the target audience and competition.

A majority of the designers were concerned with creating a package that is unique, but at the same time stays true to the brand. Some of the designers also told us they work closely with a brand team.

Many respondents stated that they like to test a message before going into production with the package. Marketers talked about really understanding the brand message through the marketing plan. Almost all respondents, designers, and marketers emphasized the importance of communication with the client, research, and analyzing the target audience to help understand the brand message. Also roughly all respondents pointed out the great importance of packaging design in the marketing strategy. The package is as important as the other components in a strategy, if not sometimes one of the most important components for some products (like Dove or Crest). Packaging is considered by most designers and marketers as the opportunity to make a first impression of a product and therefore being “The Face”. Spending more of your budget on the design of a package could result in a higher profit. Designers would like to think that the part of connecting packaging design with the overall marketing strategy is however a marketer’s job.

In the table below, you find which of the visual elements the designers and marketers found to be the most effective for influencing consumer emotions. Note that some designers chose more than one visual element.

Table 1:

Visual Elements	Designers	Marketers	All the Respondents
Color	34,8 %	75,0 %	45,2 %

Material	4,4 %		3,2 %
Shape	13 %		9,7 %
Size	8,7%		6,5 %
Graphics	21,7 %		16,1 %
All/Combinations	17,4 %	12,5 %	16,1 %
Other		12,5 %	3,2 %

5. Analysis

In this section, we will evaluate the collected empirical material based on our theoretical assumptions. We will present the analysis based on the research model to thereby maintain focus on the essential components of our extensive empirical data.

5.1 Brand message and marketing strategy

According to Mininni (2008), the brand is a company's most valuable asset. Customers will choose brands that match their lifestyle and brands that stay true to who they are. In reference to our respondents, almost all of them say they need to get a true understanding of a brand's personality before starting to create a message.

The client seemingly is said to understand the company best and can express this together with designers and marketers, so that the professionals can learn what the client's goals are through proper conversation. A majority of the respondents, both designers and marketers, believe that a clear communication with the client is a top priority in the process of understanding a brand. Referring to Adamson (2009), this way the marketer can bring a brand to life through advertising and communication, but our interview results showed that a big part of the communication is also delivered by designers, who specifically focuses on the consumer's core emotions and from there form a message that speaks to these.

Our collected theory showed that when building a consumer's trust every feature of the product needs to be consistent with the brand. Lane (2010) expresses that a brand's personality should be coherent with the audience's perception of the brand. In our interviews the respondents wanted to understand the target audience in their work so that they could communicate a brand's message into the package design. Both designers and marketers wanted to understand the outside competition, which confirms Lane's theory (2010).

In our interviews, we analyzed the necessity of a "brand team" and how designers working together closely in this team served the ultimate goals of the client well. We think it was slightly unusual that the marketers we interviewed did not mention whether they did work in a "brand team" and therefore looked at this more diligently. Upon further research, we concluded that marketers must work closely with one another in order to achieve the best and

maximum results for the client. In the business world, the client is the king and makes the final decision. In one of our interviews a designer commented:

"As designers we work with color, tpestyles, and photography to create the brand's image and gain agreement among others that it is communicating as intended, however ultimately it is the consumer that determines if we and marketing people have been successful in what we have strived to accomplish."

Instead of a "brand team" some designers and marketers explained the importance of both working together and the positive impact it has when creating the correct message for a client.

The results from our primary data seem to insinuate that the more information you can obtain from your client who has experience in dealing with their brand, and the more you can listen and understand their vision, then one (whether this is the designer or the marketer or a combination of both) can create a better solution for the client. The ultimate success of this solution is what will bring the client back for further consultation, future campaigns and repeat business. Just like the necessity of a brand to be memorable to its consumers, the designer and marketer must do such an incredible job that their client should want to use their ideas, their concepts and their team over and over. Maintaining clients and developing new clients is essential to the success of their own business. Meyers and Gerstman (2005) argue that a package is vital for a brand and that both designers and marketers are required to achieve this, and it was evident in our primary data that successful companies pursue clear communication between the departments. The proof of communication is evident by the creation of a brand that works.

"The package is "the face" of the brand" - designer

The statement above summarizes many key points of marketing in just one sentence. For example, 'the face' can decide the future of a specific product through its first impression. Kotler (2008) talks about the importance of the marketing mix and how the different disciplines affect a product. Lane (2010) also adds that it is important for advertising and packaging to support each other. Packaging is the most important point-of-purchase merchandising tool in the marketing mix, it communicates the brand's message and values (Nickels and Jolson, 1977). A clear and succinct brand communication is essential in the marketing strategy, and should be incorporated in every product's packaging according to

many of the respondents. 'The face' of the brand also must take into account a company's color, logo or message. We found it fascinating when conducting our own research to see the importance of 'the face' for a brand, and comparing it to the empirical study. Some of the respondents commented that you have to remember the package from other marketing efforts (like TV and print), but there has to be some unique aspects of the package in order to compel the consumer to pick it up in the store.

The ultimate goal of the company is that once a consumer sees a package, aka 'the face' of the brand, his or her mind later recalls it in the future. The package represents the brand and is based on the collected marketing information concerning who the target audience is and what the history of the brand stands for. Packaging is also, according to our representative group, extremely important when taking into account the analysis of a marketing budget and its strategies. One designer we interviewed remarks:

“...good packaging will always create a first impression of the product. Therefore, the package design has to be very consistent with the message that all other marketing materials, such as TV, commercial, and printed advertisements represent. All of these communications must combine to match the overall look the brand wants to convey.”

Packaging brings the psychological elements of a product together, such as the four P's and also the four C's (Ambrose and Harris, 2011). Packaging connects different areas within the marketing mix and forms a creative presentation of the product, according to Ambrose and Harris (2011). The packaging is thus extremely important; sometimes, depending on the product, a package can really do all the talking for the brand. In some cases, as we learnt in our interview research, brands like Dove or Crest have packaging that need to speak by itself to the customer. While products like Acer and Samsung, on the other hand, have been created to protect their goods on their first level of package design.

While both designers and marketers in our interviews have similar thoughts about packaging in regards to the brand's "face", the designers suggested that it is a marketer's job to connect all other marketing efforts in order for a client to reach the consumer.

In summary, packaging as the representation and the first impression of a brand as "the face" provides a connection of all the dots that work together. The designers and marketers take

packaging very seriously, and by collaborating they can achieve packages that draw the attention of consumers and tells the story of the brand. They can achieve this together since both groups have rather similar views on how to communicate a brand's message, but their processes differ. The designer makes sure that the consumers emotions are spoken to and that the brand's story is told through for instance mood boards while the marketer ensures that the package does this through the analysis of a brand's core values and establishing a position in their market field.

According to Ambrose and Harris (2011) packaging could be the fifth 'P' in the marketing mix, or the sixth 'P' according to Meyers and Gerstman (2005). Packaging as a vital part in the overall marketing mix became also evident in our interviews as the respondents referred to how sales are dependent on the look and feel of the package and how it can determine the final outcome or lifespan of a product.

5.2 Visual elements

According to the theory we gathered, the visual elements consist of color, material, graphics, shape and size (Kuvykaite, Dovaliene, and Navickiene, 2009), however in our primary data some designers added further design features that they counted as visual elements, these were photography, illustrations, and typography. According to Adhesives & Sealants Industry (2011) photography and illustrations are a part of 'graphics', but some designers valued their significance to be counted independently.

All things considered, both our primary and secondary data showed that five visual elements are required to create a message that speaks to a consumer's emotions when designing a package. According to Stewart (2004), package design has an ability to trigger an emotional dialogue with a consumer through these elements, which is what mainly affects the consumer's decision-making. We found in our primary results that you can either use the visual elements individually or combine them to achieve this. What is important is that the elements follow a brand's story and are used strategically. The choice of emphasized visual elements lie in the client's budget and the preference of the consumers according to our respondents. But it also lies in what kind of product the brand is selling, if for example a product tells the brand's story by itself, then the package should be as invisible as possible and direct the focus to the product.

Rettie and Brewer (2000) argue that if consumers are to remember a package, then the elements that most likely will influence remembrance are font styles, sizes, and colors. But according to Harper and Miller Burns (2012) color seems to be one of the most powerful visual elements that can change people's moods quickly. We found in our results that almost half of the respondents agreed that color was the most effective visual element for influencing consumer's emotions. The reason was that it has a significant effect on human psychology and human instincts. This goes well with Wu et al (2009), as the authors describe that colors in package design should not be looked upon as simple decoration because colors bring strong symbolic significance and consumers are very effected by them as they impact their visual and psychological feelings. The strong symbolism that exists within elements make a lot of sense since various meanings about certain colors and materials were the same in our primary and secondary data. The color blue was said to represent tranquility and red represents passion, especially in Western culture. On a more international level, the color red triggers a response mechanism for food according to two respondents. For materials, plastic and shiny surfaces are used for high end products while organic products are applied with natural and reusable package materials, in reference to our interview results. Wu et al, (2009) also describe that metal gives a high-tech experience and can be connected to pride, while wood and other natural materials connect consumers with nature. In reference to Hong and Suhua (2011), plastics are aesthetically a great marketing alternative as pictograms can be directly printed onto the package.

Referring back to colors now, Milotic (2001) says that the packaging and colors need to be congruent with the product. As said by one of our interviewed designers, packaging design and strategic branding necessitate the capability to take a complex combination of factors into account. The selection of visual elements all depend on the product and what needs to be communicated, for example one designer said that beauty products need good graphics.

Past researches point out that the three functions for packaging colors are attention, aesthetic experience, and communication (Kauppinen-Räsänen and Luomala, 2010). This becomes clear in the respondents' answers as not only was attention emphasized but color's ability to communicate through symbolic meaning and also its ability to aesthetically create illusions that make the package seem to be of different sizes or materials then it actually is. We find

then that color has an incredibly significant place in the design of a package as it instantly gives values, culture and a strong emotional vibe to a product. Using especially the "right" or "wrong" colors in packaging to communicate a product's essence can really make or break the success of a product.

In accordance with some respondents, graphics was the most important visual element for influencing consumers' emotions because packaging is mainly within a field called communication design, and it was argued that it is mainly graphics that communicates with consumers, can cause most surprise and ultimately sell the product.

Adhesives & Sealants Industry (2011) wrote that it is important to note that cultural differences can effect preferences in package design elements but according to one of the designers, shape is one of the most universal visual elements. For example the shape 'circular' is considered to represent 'complete' almost everywhere; Wu et al (2009) say that circular shapes are perceived as 'complete' or 'perfect'. In our secondary data we found that larger portions are often associated with higher social status and people may choose larger portions when they want to affirm themselves (Chandon, 2012). The height of a package are often used by consumers as guidance to make volume judgments, according to Raghubir and Krishna (1999). This was no mentioned in our interviews, but it was mentioned that the function of the product and shopping preference of the consumers are considered when selecting the size of the package.

Daily Foods (2001) argued that to truly establish good packaging, one needs to focus on the packaging materials. However, the interview results showed a completely different opinion. Only 3,2 % of the respondents said that material can be placed as one of the most important visual elements. One reason that materials are not highly valued by the respondents was that it is not always noticed initially by consumers.

The majority of the respondents argued that the interlinking of the elements all go back to the brand. It is the emotion a brand conveys that decides how the visual elements are used and which ones that should be emphasized. Through the visual elements an image or a consumer's lifestyle can be formed thus the creative process of interlinking the visual elements can be endless. In reference to Gregory (2013), the packaging plays an important part in creating an

experience of a product, and it should achieve this without straying from being functional. To establish a wanted emotional response, designers and marketers choose specific elements that fit their goals best and then combine them either in an hierarchical manner or by trying to morph them so that separate elements are not noticed. The combination of elements can be designed in such a way that they portray a product's best qualities according to one of the marketing respondents. But the different elements can also play off each other, as some of them are of serious character and other more playful, which together create an interesting experience.

5.3 Designers and marketers

This is the comparative part of our study. We discuss the respondents' answers on how designers and marketers differ and compare these with the results that have been collected through the interview results. This is done to find whether their presumptions and our results match up. But before jumping into the analysis, we like to say that we realize that each individual, whether a marketer or a designer, thinks and acts based on their own experiences and understandings. In this study we only aim to measure what some common principles and outlooks are of the two groups of professionals.

By studying the respondents' answers, we found some similarities and dissimilarities in how the two groups of professionals think about packaging's ability to communicate emotions and information. Their goal is to be consistent with the client's ideas about the brand and bring these ideas into the packaging design. They want to communicate a message that fits a brand's overall marketing efforts and identity. Both professionals value the client's description of the brand and incorporate their own experience and skills to meet a client's specifications and standards of success. Now, a designer and a marketer do differ in ways that became clear in both our theory and empirical study. According to Meyers and Gerstman (2005), designers are commonly not incorporated in the marketing strategy, but can be of great value in this area. We found in our results that both designers and marketers agree today that packaging design means a lot to a brand's marketing strategy. We also learnt that designers truly underline the importance of a brand's message and strategy while working with valuable design functions. We also noted that marketers are very focused on organizing the design in a way that sells the product and are conscious about how this affects sales

figures. In other words, a marketer might focus more on other parts of the marketing strategy for a brand and on the client's goals or sales mission, while the designer is focused on forming the packaging into a brand experience.

The design respondents explained that often designers value details more than marketers do, but marketers are more involved with the messaging of words and their meanings, that is to say, marketers are more concerned with copywriting. Most of the respondents argued that a designer and marketer's views can be similar because they want the brand message to be impactful. They both create for the client, which demonstrates that some views are similar, but they have different approaches to packaging. As an example, when both groups chose color as the most prominent visual element, the use of this element can differ. Many designers had experienced for instance that marketers are so eager to ensure that a package stands out on the shelf that they can rationalize that a bold design will be of good choice. But according to designers, the selection of a bold design, (let's say by using red as a color) must be related to the overall vision and story that the brand tells. In reference to many design representatives, a marketer wants to catch consumer's attention while designers want not only to catch their attention, but also to maintain it. This rings some truth in how the marketers referred to using visual elements in our results as they said that they needed to constantly consider new ways for packages to stand out, cut costs by using recycled materials and use colors, shapes, etcetera that are resourceful for shipping and cost. Much of this is more focused with the financing of the package rather than on the consumer's behavior and relationship with the brand. But to be fair, some marketers also said that they focused on creating a sense of pride for consumers that can last in their memories and that the package is not just selling a product, but forming a lifestyle. Taken as a whole, our results show (and also was discussed by the respondents) that designers usually have a better human understanding of how consumers will interact with the product once on the shelf. Marketers often have a better understanding in driving sales, and establishing product placement in-store, pushing campaigns and building brand equity.

One problem that designers mentioned was that marketers do not always respect a designer's expertise, as is also discussed by Meyers and Gerstman (2005) who argue that marketers and other business departments deprive themselves of the designer's capacity when failing to include them in the making of strategic decisions for the package. Marketing requires design expertise to meet user needs and communicate the brand's values. Design can be perceived as

the visual understanding of marketing, and is very valuable when expressing brand values to consumers (Bruce and Daly, 2007). This was very clear in our empirical results as the designers emphasized the importance of intensifying the experience of the brand via visual elements more than the marketers did. But on the other hand there were also complaints about how designers could get too involved in their own personal style, and this was discussed by both representative groups. The designer can possibly forget that packaging is a marketing tool and not just the designer's own art. So naturally both groups must learn to work and listen to each other so that they can achieve the best outcome for their clients and avoid that 'uneasy tension' that Beverland (2005) is referring to when the two groups of professionals misunderstand each other's disciplines.

As mentioned above, many respondents said that marketers like to sell as much as possible by screaming out to consumers, and they do this with the use of grand logos, big labels and packaging that is covered with vast amounts of information. Most of the designers said that marketers are focused on data and text. This kind of information belongs not among visual elements in reference to Silayoi and Speece (2004) but within verbal elements because they effect the consumer's cognitive orientation. After studying the outcomes of this, we wonder if we in our study had asked about *both* verbal and visual elements in depth that perhaps marketers' answers might have been different. In our interviews we focused on questions such as "Which visual elements are the most effective..." as we presumed that the differences in marketers' perceptions and designers' perceptions lied especially within how visual elements could influence emotions. This was because we wanted to find out how marketers and designers differed in influencing emotions and we chose visual elements because Stewart (2004) argue that they are the ones that chiefly influence consumers' decision making process. Our empirical results however insinuate that marketers perhaps do influence consumer's decision making through the use of verbal elements.

Many of the marketers were very sure of their ability to understand design and one respondent argued that a marketer can make or break a design. Many marketers thought that marketers and designers have rather similar views on how to affect consumers and that they often have the same knowledge about what works. But they think differently in some aspects, as it was argued that marketers want the best for the product in terms of the final shelf appearance, as discussed above. While designers think of the overall approach of how to get the product from the factory to the shelf in the most cost effective and efficient manner. The interview results

of the designers and marketers show that both of them are concerned with cost but also that both of the groups consider that the other group to be more focused on cost and shipping. But we found in our results that it is mainly marketers that discuss the importance of sales figures to achieve success. Some marketing respondents said that sometimes the marketers need to consider the designers as being the first consumers because designers have to understand how the package speaks to a client's budget but also to their emotions and senses. However, according to another marketer, packaging depends mainly on the knowledge of that a particular professional possesses, whatever field they might be incorporated in. The more marketing information you are able to collect the easier the process will be to provide a better solution for the client. While marketers may follow a template or model of working, they need to listen to the client and be creative and if marketers take designer's role in the design process seriously, it will be a big competitive advantage to them.

A few respondents in our empirical study emphasized the fact that designers and marketers could achieve great results by working together. Bruce and Daly (2007) talk about design and marketing that balance each other. Together they can implement and develop innovative concepts since they are both concerned with consumer needs. By combining forces, designers and marketers can achieve successful results because while a designer might do a great job forming a package that lasts in culture, a marketer knows how to sell and maximize profit today.

6. Conclusions

This last chapter presents our conclusions in relations to our study, were we first present our conclusions for our research problem, move on answering our purpose and finally getting into how our essay could have improved and suggest future studies.

6.1 How are packages used to communicate marketing information?

Designers as well as marketers need to create a true understanding of the brand's personality, through extensive communication with the client. Thorough communication does show in the packaging design and overall success of the brand. Our results showed how important a unique packaging design that stays true to a brand's personality is, in order to influence the consumer. According to our respondents and theory, packaging is the most important point-of-purchase merchandising tool in the marketing mix, it communicates the brand's message and values. It is the creative presentation and "the face" of a product, furthermore packaging represents the final moment of truth, where a consumer will purchase a product with a packaging that best communicates with him or her.

Through visual elements a package can communicate a message that speaks to a consumer's emotions. The way in which this is done is through a thorough analysis of the consumer's choice patterns and preferences. Many designers and marketers always test their designs using focus groups so to find out whether the emotions that they are sending out matches well with their marketing information. Our results showed that color is the visual element that both designers and marketers use to instantly grab the attention of the consumers and most effectively influence their emotions. Thus knowing the preferred visual element of the consumer group is the most important marketing information that the professionals can have when influencing consumer's emotions, according to our study.

6.2 Comparing designers and marketers

It became clear that both the designer and the marketer are focused on communicating a message to the consumer's emotions and mind, based on the information that is available to them. They both have in common that they value the client's opinions and the brand's history. But marketers focus more on catching the attention of consumers and selling the product

today. In contrast, designers want to make the new package design into a part of the brand's history, so that the story of the brand continues.

When some respondents and academic authors argue that both fields of professionals are required to create a successful package, we suggest that it is due to the different approaches in which both of them strive for the same goal, the goal of communicating a message that speaks to consumers emotions, and becomes a part of their lives. Designers and marketers can together achieve successful packaging as the designer combines design elements that tell the brand's story and the marketer knows how the package sells and maximizes profit today.

6.3 Limitations

In our study we conducted interviews with a representative group that consisted of twenty-two respondents in which fifteen were designers and seven were marketers. Thus as a big part of our study was a comparative one, we do acknowledge that this is not a fair comparison of the two professional fields as there were lesser respondents who represented marketers. Thus had we had an even amount of respondents in each group, our study would have become a bit more consistent.

6.4 Propositions for future studies

This essay was especially focused on a package's visual elements and on how these carry out marketing information by influencing human emotions. But there is another big category within package design that influences human cognition, and these are the verbal elements. Due to lack of time, we did not focus on this area but we would definitely propose further research on this subject area as a part of our empirical results implied that perhaps why both designers and marketers are needed to create a packaging message that communicates to a consumer is because a designers focuses on visual elements while the marketer is more inclined to focus on verbal elements; thus the package communicates both with the consumer's emotions and cognition.

Another interesting study would be to instead of interviewing the respondents about their packaging design process, to actually go to the location and observe their process. This would

lead to a more in depth study of how the professionals handle obstacles and perhaps one could also find out how they achieve a package design that speaks to multiple lifestyles and identities.

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Appendix

Interview guide (Email version)

Note that, this has not been treated as a survey as we have asked the interviewees to explain more in depth particular questions if this has been considered necessary. We have also asked them to clarify some of their answers, if necessary.

1. What is your process for making sure that the package design communicates a brand's message?
2. How important is package design in terms of a brand's marketing strategy?
3. Does it take five visual elements (color, material, graphics, shape and size) to create a message that speaks to a consumer's emotions? Please explain.
4. Which of the visual elements do you find to be the most effective for influencing consumer emotions? Why?
5. How are the visual elements of a package interlinked?
6. How differently (or perhaps alike) do marketers and designers think about packaging?

Introduction of the respondents

Respondent 1 is a creative director and principal of a package design firm. Interviewed via email 120513

Respondent 2 is a freelance graphic designer and a branding design specialist with more than 10 years of experience. Interviewed via email 120513

Respondent 3 is a freelance industrial designer who will graduate with a BFA this year, but has already designs published in prominent magazines. Interviewed via email 120513

Respondent 4 is an advertising designer working at a company's branding design department. Interviewed via email 120513

Respondent 5 is an industrial designer with six years of experience, who has worked as a consultant for various firms on electronics packaging, bottles and cosmetics. Interviewed via email 120513

Respondent 6 is a freelance graphic designer with focus on packaging and interactive design. Has seven years of experience. Interviewed via email 120513

Respondent 7 is a freelance graphic designer who specializes in packaging and branding & corporate identity. Interviewed via email 120513

Respondent 8 is a freelance industrial designer, specializing in industrial design, packaging and user experience. Interviewed via email 120513

Respondent 9 is a designer with industry experience in packaging, display and product design. She currently works at Otterbox. Interviewed via email 120513

Respondent 10 has seven years of experience, and is an award winning graphic designer with emphasis in conceptual layout, typography, packaging design, logo design and book design. Interviewed via email 120513

Respondent 11 is a freelance industrial designer with over ten years of experience in product development and print production. Interviewed via email 120513

Respondent 12 is a creative director at a brand design firm, who specializes in package design, brand identity development and print collateral. Interviewed via email 120513

Respondent 13 is a freelance product designer with three years of experience. Interviewed via email 120513

Respondent 14 has branding and packaging design experience for more than fourteen years and has lot of experience working with international and local clients. Interviewed via email 120513

Respondent 15, 59 years, marketer for shoes in Canada, interviewed via email 160513

Respondent 16, 51 years, marketer at a paper company in USA, interviewed via email 150513

Respondent 17, 29 years, marketer at general advertisement agency in USA, interviewed via email 210513

Respondent 18, 35 years, graphic designer and AD at his own company in South Africa, Austria and Sweden, interviewed via email 220513

Respondent 19, 34 years, marketer at general advertisement agency in USA, interviewed via email 220513

Respondent 20, 40 years, Marketer at a general advertisement agency in Sweden, interviewed via email 210513

Respondent 21, 59 years, marketer at a general advertisement agency in Sweden, interviewed via email 240513

Respondent 22, 38 years, Marketer, Account Executive in USA, interviewed via email 240513