



Internet research

Search for the keywords "universal design" packaging to find out about Universal Design and its impact on packaging.

3.1 About business Packaging



Discussion

1 With a partner, think of three examples of products which are packaged well or badly, and say why. Think about protection, identification, transport, storage, display and security.

Listening for gist

2 1:28 Listen to an interview with Charlie Wang, President of New China Packaging, a design consultancy based in Taipei, and answer the questions.

- 1 Why does he think packaging is so important?
- 2 What is special about New China Packaging's approach?

Listening for detail

3 Listen again and mark these statements *T* (true) or *F* (false).

- 1 Branding is not enough to differentiate almost identical products.
- 2 American business guru Jack Trout thinks that companies overcommunicate their difference.
- 3 Most customers decide which product to buy before going to the store.
- 4 Wal-Mart believe that a product must communicate its difference from 15 feet away.
- 5 In the past, design teams were isolated from financial and manufacturing problems so that they would be as creative as possible.
- 6 Creative ideas are often simplified and adapted because consumers in focus groups don't like them.
- 7 New China Packaging task forces can't leave their hotel until every stakeholder is enthusiastic about the new packaging concept.
- 8 Consumers are not always conscious of what they need.
- 9 New China Packaging's task forces need months or years to deliver a consumer-validated package.
- 10 New China Packaging helps its customers to react quickly to new trends in the market.

Discussion

4 Read comments a) and b) below on cross-functional task forces and answer the questions.

a) 'It is very helpful to involve everybody who will interface with the new employee in the selection process. We can never know candidates' future jobs and the qualities required, or the people they will work with.'

b) 'In our department they're probably less useful than in Marketing. The customer is unlikely to enjoy having several different contacts.'

- 1 Decide which department from the box made each comment and whether they are for or against cross-functional task forces.

Sales R&D Training IT HR

- 2 Discuss what people in the other three departments might say about cross-functional task forces.

Scan reading

5 Read the article and answer the questions. The words in grey are explained in the *Wordlist* on page 151.

- 1 What is wrap rage?
- 2 Who suffers from it?
- 3 What triggers it?
- 4 What are the underlying causes?

Paraphrasing

6 Reformulate these phrases from the article in your own words.

- 1 to reduce in-shop shrinkage due to pilfering (line 10)
- 2 the most common triggers of wrap rage (line 19)
- 3 even wrestling to remove price tags ... can raise blood pressure (line 22)
- 4 a red rag to the ecologically-minded bull (line 24)
- 5 there's light at the end of the tunnel (line 26)
- 6 The bottom line is that if they don't react, they risk losing sales ... (line 29)

Discussion

7 You have invented a new children's toy – MP-Bunny, an electronic rabbit which dances, talks and plays children's favourite songs. In small groups, discuss how you will package it. Think about the questions below.



- 1 What different materials could you use? What are their advantages and disadvantages?
- 2 What design elements will you incorporate? Think about shape, colour, photos, logos and text.
- 3 How will your packaging make your product look different from other electronic toys?

Present your packaging solution to another group.

Wrap rage

'... 60,000 people a year are injured in Great Britain ...'



SURVEYS show that intense frustration and even injury caused by modern packaging is on the increase, especially amongst seniors. Seventy per cent of over 50s admit to suffering cuts, sprains and bruises to fingers, hands and shoulders as a result of 'wrap rage', a new term used to describe the irritation and loss of self-control experienced when struggling to open wrapping.

In recent years manufacturers have been under increasing pressure to keep food items sterile, to provide child-proof packaging for dangerous or toxic household cleaning products, to protect products during transport and to reduce in-shop shrinkage due to pilfering. At the same time, they are forced to keep costs to a minimum. As a result, packaging has become ever more resistant to fingers, nails and even teeth. In their frustration with blister packs and welded plastic, which defeat all attempts to be pulled, torn or even cut open with scissors, consumers resort to stabbing with screwdrivers, twisting with pliers or slashing with knives. At best, the product inside the packaging is at risk; at worst, it is hardly surprising that 60,000 people a year are injured in Great Britain alone.

Some of the most common triggers of wrap rage are processed cheese packages, tightly wrapped CDs, child-proof tops on medicine bottles, and milk and juice cartons. Ring-pull cans are particularly problematic for arthritic fingers and delicate skin. Even wrestling to remove price tags from items bought as gifts can raise blood pressure, and unnecessary overpackaging is a red rag to the ecologically-minded bull.

However it seems there's light at the end of the tunnel. Manufacturers are listening to customers' complaints, and some have begun to research and invest in more consumer-friendly packaging. The bottom line is that if they don't react, they risk losing sales if customers simply stop buying products with packaging that offers too much resistance.