

An abstract illustration featuring a stylized, orange-toned face in profile, looking upwards. The face is composed of geometric shapes and has large, expressive eyes. Above the face, a large, colorful, swirling shape resembling a cloud or smoke billows out, filled with various gears, arrows, and symbols. The background is divided into sections of teal, yellow, and orange. On the left, there are dashed lines, arrows, and mathematical symbols like plus, minus, and percent. On the right, there are more gears, arrows, and a large blue shape with a teardrop. The overall style is modern and graphic.

**JOHN MAROVINO**

# **PACKAGING DESIGN INFLUENCING THE FIRST MOMENT OF TRUTH**



# CONTENTS

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CONSUMER .....	2
GETTING THE ATTENTION OF SHOPPERS.....	4
IMPROVE VISIBILITY.....	5
DESIGN TACTICS TO CREATE IMPACT .....	6
DISTINCTIVE BRAND ASSETS Separating the Wheat from The Chaff .....	7
A WORD OF CAUTION .....	10
GETTING THE MESSAGE RIGHT .....	11
GETTING THE MESSAGE READ .....	16
COMMUNICATION HIERARCHY .....	17
PLACEMENT OF CLAIMS .....	18
CATEGORY CONVENTIONS .....	19
HABITS ARE NOT IMMUNE TO DISRUPTION .....	21
THE ROLE OF COLOUR .....	22
FINDABILITY .....	23
THE MEANING OF COLOUR .....	25
MYTHS ABOUT COLOUR .....	27
HELP IS ALL AROUND YOU .....	28
TIPS FOR PICKING COLOURS FOR YOUR BRAND .....	29
BRAND ARCHITECTURE .....	30
NAMING ARCHITECTURE .....	33
FINAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	35
REFERENCES .....	36

# PREFACE

All CPG marketers recognize the importance of influencing the purchase decision at the moment of purchase, better known as the “First Moment of Truth” (FMOT). Packaging plays a vital role in FMOT. If a package is noticed by the shopper and is appealing, it stands a high likelihood of being purchased. This is why the package is often referred to as the silent salesperson.

The success of most brands rests largely on the ability of their package to be noticed, to generate interest and persuade consumers to purchase it.

It can be argued that most consumer-facing packaging is an evolutionary prototype, a perpetual experiment to see what messages and elements move the needle of sales. Packaging absolutely impacts human behavior, so the marketplace is like a giant experiment in which we all participate when shopping—most of us subconsciously.

Even though every package design is unique and requires unique solutions, through forty years of designing packaging, Marovino has developed proven key design principles that will always apply. These are some practical examples that we hope will help you in your journey.

In this e-book, we will cover,

- Strategies to help you maximize the performance your packaging system, on shelf
- Examples of high performing brands and what makes their packaging design effective
- Tips to consider when designing your packaging



# IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CONSUMER

To develop packaging that performs well, you must start with an understanding in how shoppers actually shop your section of the store.

A shopper's journey can vary widely: The type of mission, category, and retail channel will greatly affect a shopper's behaviour. With the advent of online shopping, that journey has become even more complex, offering shoppers more choices in retail channels, assortment, and occasion.

The resulting challenge and an increasing reality is an overabundance of choice. Consider this: the average length of a grocery shopping trip is 45 minutes, and the average US grocery store contains between 40,000 to 60,000 SKUs (Stock Keeping Units). It would be physically impossible for a shopper to see and consider every single item in that store.

We know from our own studies and from a growing body of academic literature, that shoppers only glance at less than 20% of all the items of a product category. Notice I said glance...

Our research tells us that within a fraction of a second, they look at an item on a shelf and determine whether that item should be in the purchase consideration set or not. Once they are satisfied that they have sufficient choice in their consideration set, they make the decision of which item to purchase within 10 seconds or less.

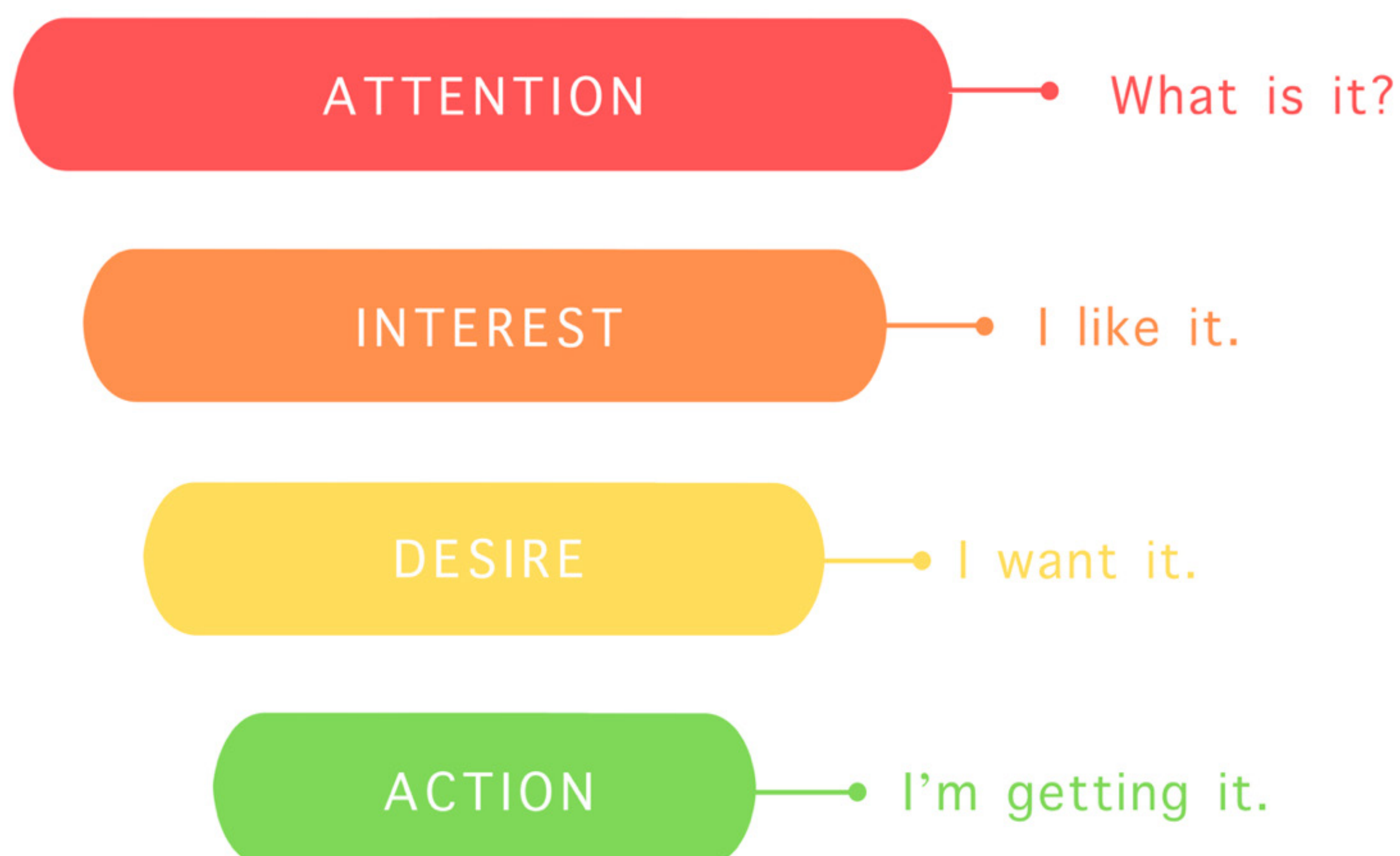




Time-pressed shoppers don't have time to sort and process all items in front of them. In fact our brains are wired to take short cuts and rapidly sort through multiple choices using a method called System 1 processing – a concept first introduced by Nobel prize-winning economist Daniel Kahneman in his book *Thinking Fast and Slow*.

The book explains two methods of processing information: **System 1** is a visceral, emotional, extremely fast, subconscious process. Whereas **System 2** is a more rational calculating and deliberate process which requires more time and focus. When we are shopping for groceries, we are typically on 'auto pilot' or System 1 processing.

This type of processing also correlates to the AIDA sales model, which was developed over a century ago to train salespeople how consumers move from stage to stage in the process of purchasing an item.



AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action) is key to every sales transaction: You need to get the shopper's attention, pique their interest, and evoke desire in order to close the purchase (action). This is not only key to understanding the function of a package, but also **the foundation of how we approach package design.**



# GET THE ATTENTION OF SHOPPERS

The process of selecting and deselecting items for purchase begins at the approach to the shelf. From eight to ten feet as they approach the shelf their eyes are already scanning it for the familiar cues that they associate with their favoured brand. Things like overall colour, brand logo, and perhaps a picture of the product inside are the usual visual cues that initially help them identify the intended Brand.

As I previously stated, our studies show that it takes shoppers less than a third of a second to scan an item and decide if it should be part of the purchase consideration. Data also reveal that 80% of purchases are products that were seen in the first ten seconds of search. Unequivocally, Visibility is the most powerful design factor directly affecting sales, hence the saying; "Not seen, not bought".

**Visibility is the most powerful  
design factor to directly affect  
sales, hence the saying;  
*"not seen, not bought"***



# IMPROVE VISIBILITY

**B**efore diving into design tactics that help improve visibility, it's essential to acknowledge the importance of shelf placement. There is a direct correlation between shelf placement and off-take.

Based on our attention-tracking studies covering thousands of shoppers in multiple categories, over one decade, data show a significant difference in how many shoppers see an item depending on where it is placed on the shelf.



Red dots represent the location of the viewer at the moment of the snapshot.  
Green indicates their path. Notice the concentration of viewing paths occurring mostly at eye level.

Items merchandised at eye-level are noticed first and by more shoppers – typically in the range of 60% -80%. When the same item is placed one shelf above or below eye-level, visibility (measured by how many shoppers notice the item) drops by approximately 15%. Bottom shelf items are typically seen by fewer than 20% of shoppers.

The implication is: while packaging design is critical, shelf placement and the amount of real estate occupied by a brand have a major impact on visibility. Even the strongest package will have difficulty being noticed if it has a single facing on the bottom shelf.



# DESIGN TACTICS TO CREATE IMPACT

The most effective way to achieve visibility usually involves colour blocking. But visibility enhancement can also be effectively achieved through strong branding, graphic elements and with structural design.



The most effective way of achieving high visibility on shelf is through the use of colour, to create a visual colour block that is unique to the brand and contrasts well against its competitors



Brand blocking can also be achieved with the use of a strong common graphic element that visually connects all of the members of the brand. The Wordmark (Kelloggs), the visual bullseye of Tide or the unique shape of the Coke (structural design) are excellent examples of strong Brand Blocking.



# DISTINCTIVE BRAND ASSETS

## Separating the Wheat from The Chaff

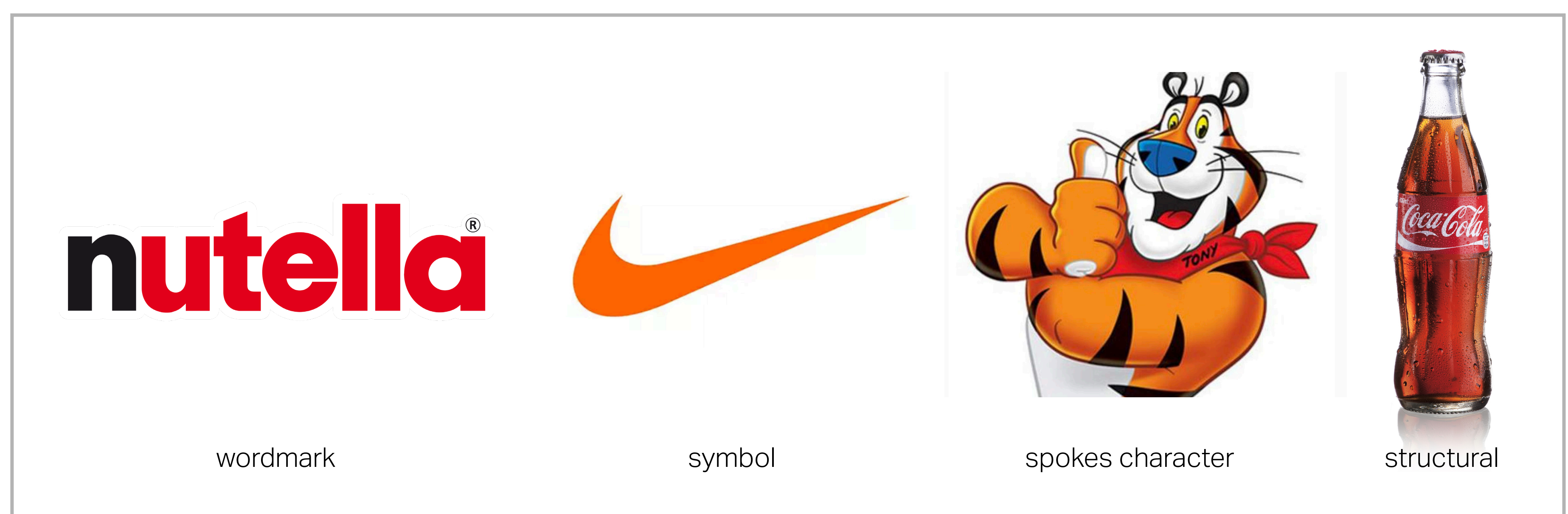
When designing a package, brand owners should recognize and leverage the brand's visual equities. An established brand will leverage and protect its visual equities – now called Distinctive Brand Assets- and new brands should strive to design visual assets that are distinctive and ownable. These assets in time will become the visual cues that assist shoppers in rapidly identifying the brand at point of purchase as it becomes more entrenched in their minds.

We have developed a simple system to assist you in identifying which visual elements are likely assets to your brand and which are simply passengers – only there for the ride.

### Three types of Visual Assets: Identifiers, Contributors and Passengers.

**Identifiers** are design elements that unequivocally identify your brand – these typically include the brand name itself, plus other highly distinctive elements such as the logo, a spokes character or even a unique container.

#### Identifiers





**Contributors** are visual elements that most consumers will attribute to a brand with some assistance: High contributors require little assistance for consumers to associate that element with the brand. Lower contributors can assist or confirm the identity of a brand but require help from other contributors.

### Strong Contributors



Billy Bee



Eveready



Whippet



**Passengers** are elements that are not ownable by a brand and are not considered assets. They could easily belong to any other brand in that category.





# A WORD OF CAUTION

To remain relevant, brand assets must continue to evolve over time. When refreshing a brand, marketers should retain the chords of familiarity that reside in consumers' minds. Breaking these chords can lead directly to hesitation, confusion, and sales declines. Packaging changes that disrupt familiarity should be supported with a strong communication program before the launch of the newly redesigned package to alert consumers of the upcoming change and to incentivize them to purchase the new package.



When Tropicana launched their new packaging in 2009 their sales immediately dropped by 20%. The new design completely ignored to maintain any chords of familiarity with the existing design that shoppers were used to seeing.



# GETTING THE MESSAGE RIGHT

There are two main components to messaging: the content and the design.

Influencing consumers to reach for your product at shelf rather than the alternative is a considerable challenge. Certainly, product attributes, functions, and benefits form the building blocks that differentiate one brand from another. But simply being different from the competition is not enough to win at shelf.

Consumers demand and expect products to function and deliver the promised benefits.

Today every brand is 'good'; every brand uses 'quality ingredients'. On the shelf, good equals the same as everyone else.

Abundant choice and clutter have made today's consumers deaf and blind. They're immune to buzz words, descriptors, starbursts, flashy colours and gaslighting in general. In our over-crowded, me-too marketplace, points of difference that are function-and-feature based are less sustainable. Consumers today are tuning out 'marketing speak' and tuning in to those brands that reflect their values.

If the product is functionally the same as everything else, copywriting and graphic design, no matter how clever and cool, may achieve trial but won't be effective in building long-term sales growth and brand value even if you win some design awards.

**Consumers  
demand  
and expect  
products to  
function and  
deliver the  
promised  
benefits.**



**To win at shelf with your packaging consider the following:**

Features and benefits are most likely antes in the category. Connect your brand with its core purpose and focus on expressing the reason-to-believe.

Develop a compelling positioning idea that focuses your marketing resources on the “one thing” your brand can own in the mind of consumers. **This is the “art of sacrifice”: Knowing what not to say is as important as what to say.** Define your high value target consumer segment and aim your creativity and marketing resources only at them.

Design product packaging around the primary ideal your high value consumers (primary target) really care about.



On-pack claims are meant to provide secondary information that support the “reason to believe”. It would be naïve to think that consumers will simply buy into claims without any supporting evidence. Shoppers will only invest a very small amount of time when considering your brand at the moment of truth. The more information they have to process, the less likely they are to purchase your product. Impulse items especially benefit from uncluttered, appealing packaging.



Avoid claims such as “Quality Ingredients” or “Premium” that are trite and carry very little meaning with consumers. Based on some of the research that we have conducted, there are many claims that raise more questions than answers with consumers. One such claim which seems to be gaining increasing presence on packaging is the claim of “real ingredients” ...the reaction from many consumers is puzzlement: “If you are using real ingredients now... what were you using before? ... real, as opposed to... what?”

**‘real’ is more  
believable  
when it is  
implicit**

When research comes back saying that consumers are looking for real ingredients in their food, it means that consumers are looking for more real and authentic products, rather than processed or mass-produced items.

It’s critical to have packaging that speaks to these priorities, through both appearance and messaging. To this end, marketers should consider highlighting product origin and production process as a way of humanizing their brands, “story-telling” and connecting with consumers on a more personal level – ‘real’ is more believable when it is implicit.

We have also found that emphasizing more positive and nature-based claims, is a stronger purchase driver than referencing what is not in the products, which can inadvertently drive negative associations or product perceptions.





## Semiotics

Visually, the current semiotic cues for communicating authenticity, freshness and wholesomeness are gravitating to minimalism. Very simple fonts, flat colours, the absence of shapes, flags or flashes are the current trend. The challenge however is to own a unique look that is distinctive for the brand, and therefore more readily recognized and remembered by shoppers.

### Simplicity doesn't mean generic

It would seem that Helvetica has become the world's favourite font. Its ubiquity in branding is not surprising because it is such an adaptable font. So adaptable that it is being used to brand everything from off-road vehicles to high fashion. I am intrigued how certain brand owners are choosing to transition from their long-standing distinctive brand ID to a more generic look using Helvetica or Sans Serif fonts in the name of freshness and simplicity. Regular fonts don't make distinctive brand assets. Simplicity of brand ID and pack design is very important. However, designers that interpret simplicity as license to use standard fonts, without any modifications to make the wordmark more distinctive and ownable, risk joining the ever-increasing number of brands that are less distinctive and less memorable. Simplicity can be found in many of the world's most successful brands, such as Nike and Apple. Simple logos with a lot of personality and instant recognisability.

**I would like to encourage designers to look more carefully at what makes a brand unique, before simplifying it just for the sake of simplicity.**

**American  
Apparel**

**Jeep**

**Panasonic**

**Knoll**

Brands using standard unmodified fonts  
for their brand ID

**Oral-B**

**THE  
NORTH  
FACE**

**Dole**

**evian.**

Brands using modified fonts and graphic  
elements that create distinctive brand assets





Examples of well-known fashion brands that have joined the Sans Serif bandwagon relinquishing decades of visual equity.

## Keep it simple

Whenever possible, show the product. Transparent substrates or “windows” are a powerful visual cue which intuitively signal openness, freshness, and good quality especially with perishable products.

When it comes to packaging, **more is more but less is better**. Resist the temptation to write a novel. Know that consumers are not willing to invest as much time as you would like them to learn about your brand. Highlighting one key message (the reason-to-believe) is usually more effective than overloading a package with four or five claims.

Whenever possible, **show, don't tell**. Seeing is a System 1 process. Overloading your package with text is counterproductive. Reading is not intuitive; it is a learned System 2 process, and it requires more work. Many studies show that visceral emotive communication is more effective in driving purchase, especially with categories that are more indulgent in nature.



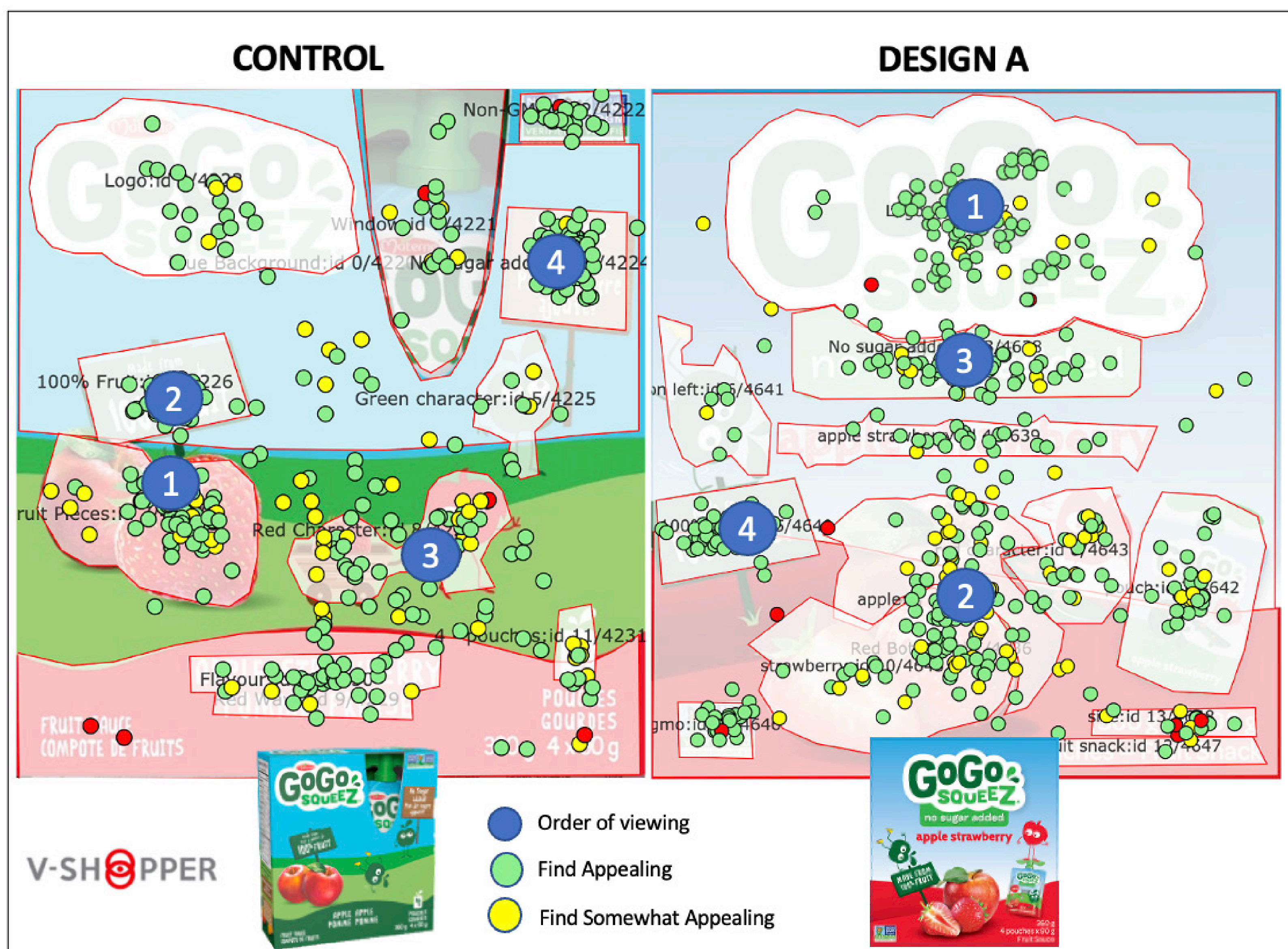
Avoid cluttering the pack with too many messages. By trying too hard with bold violators, and too much text, packs can often come across as “mass-produced” and inauthentic



# GETTING THE MESSAGE READ

What is the optimal placement for claims? Ensuring that key claims are consistently seen is perhaps the single most important reason for testing viewing patterns on a package. Often, claims are relegated to the periphery of the principal display panel (PDP) only to find that they fall outside of the main viewing pattern and are missed by most shoppers.

We find that claims are most effective when closely linked to the subject they are addressing: If the claim addresses the product, it should be placed in proximity of the photo of the product; if the claim refers to the brand, it should be in proximity of the brand name etc.



Design A 'controls' the viewing path into a more centralized pattern vs. Control, bringing more focus to the claims, the brand and fruit which is hero.



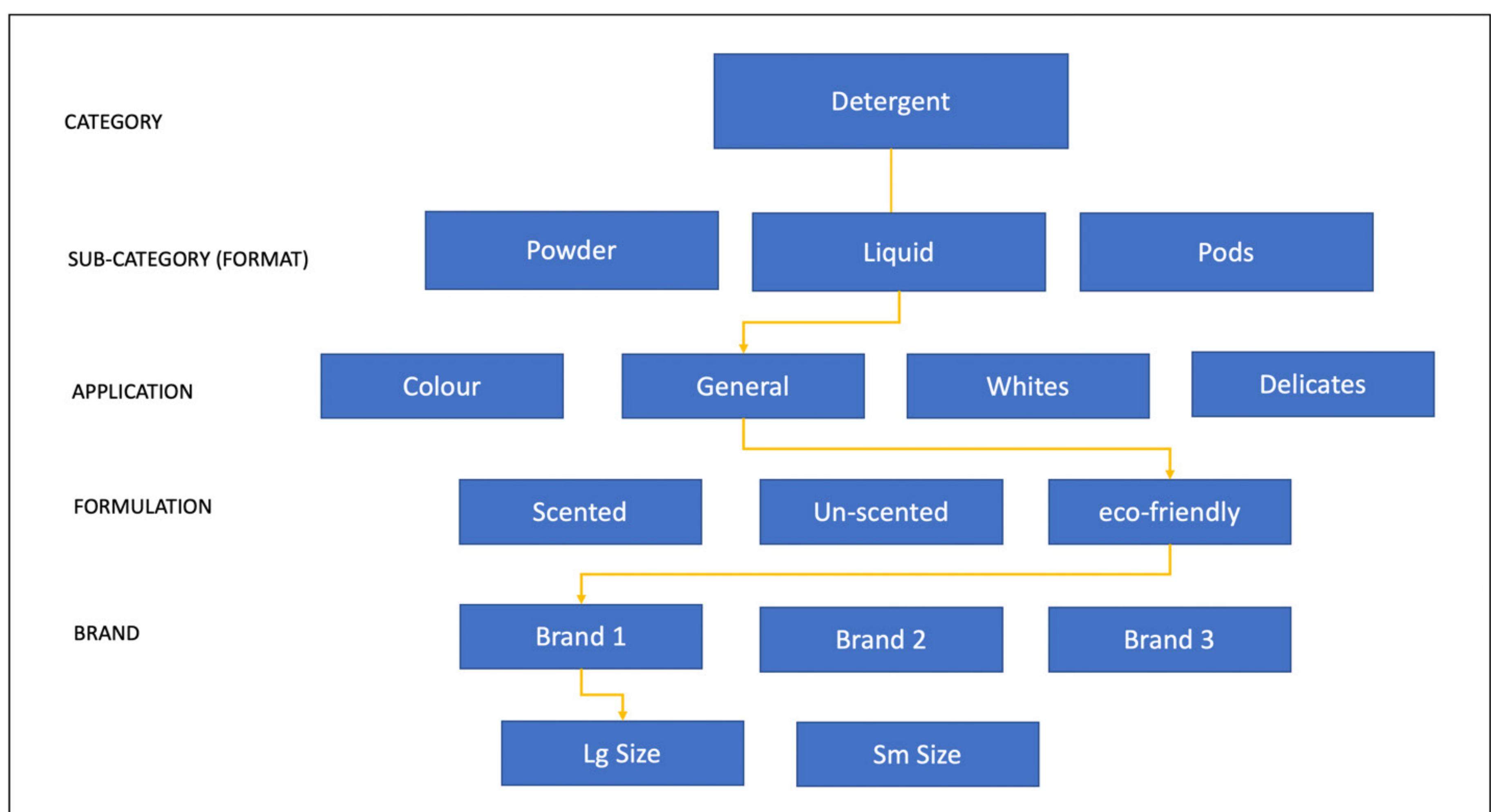
# COMMUNICATION HIERARCHY

There is a direct correlation between package viewing patterns and 'SHOP-ABILITY' (ease of finding and choosing a product variant) on shelf.

When considering the prominence and placement of key visual elements, it is helpful to consider the shopper's decision tree and prioritize the prominence of elements based on their decision hierarchy. In other words, the firing order of information should mirror the order of priority in the decision tree.

One might be tempted to want the brand name to be most prominent, but for shoppers, flavour or format or formulation may be of higher ranking followed by brand.

Shopper decision tree for the detergent category





# PLACEMENT OF CLAIMS

When thinking about Shop-ability, it is important to make a distinction between the information that shoppers look for: size, flavour, quantity, compatibility etc. as opposed to claims that you want shoppers to see and comprehend. Claims need to be within the main viewing path where they can 'intercept' shoppers attention, whereas product details simply need to be placed in a consistent visible space.



A common myth among marketers is that shoppers begin viewing the package from top left to bottom right, following the western reading path. That is not the case. Eye tracking tests consistently show that the usual starting point is somewhere in the middle of the package... where the brand name is usually located. This illustration demonstrates where most fixations (where the eye landed) occur. The first three fixations occurred in less than one third of a second.



# MAKE CATEGORY CONVENTIONS WORK FOR YOU

We are habitual creatures. Habits are a specific form of automaticity in which responses are directly cued by the contexts. In daily life, the tendency to act on habits is compounded by everyday demands, including time pressures, distraction, and self-control depletion.

Habits feed into our System 1 method of coping. **Every category contains visual cues** that identify certain features relevant only to that category – for example in the coffee category, green usually indicates Decaf; in the Chocolate category, black represents dark chocolate or 85%+ cocoa content.



In the coffee category, green usually indicates Decaf

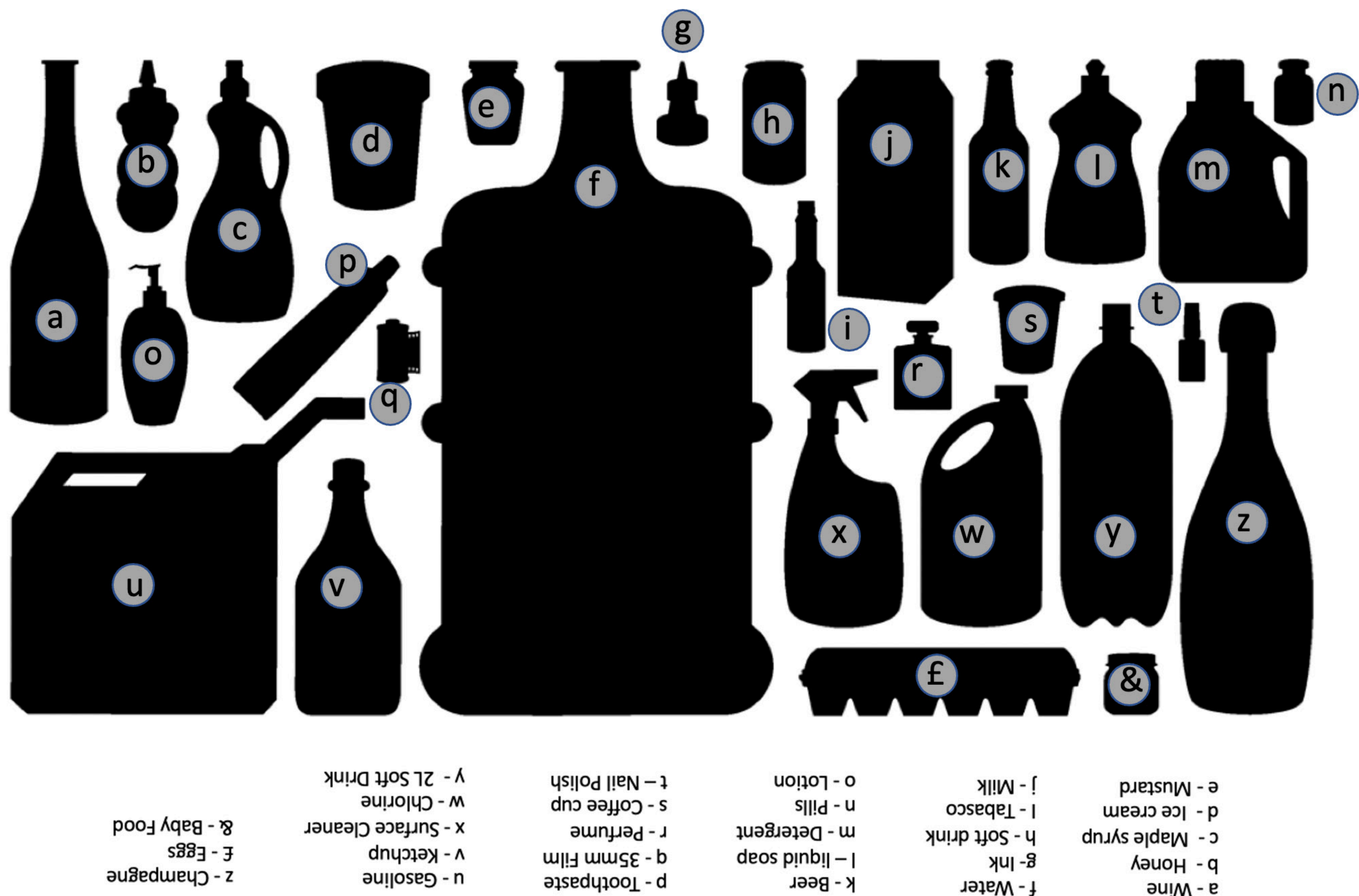


In the North American market, homogenized milk is usually packaged in a red container, 2% in a blue container and skim milk in a light blue container. Understanding and leveraging category conventions will help your brand help shoppers in their selection/deselection of products. Brands that facilitate that process are more likely to be selected, because they require less effort to be understood



Another example of category conventions is illustrated by the shapes of containers of products we are all familiar with. Package shapes play a considerable role in identifying the type of product that they contain. Most of us I'm sure, can identify a good number of these containers, perhaps with the exception of G and Q, which clearly belong to the Boomer generation.

How many containers can you identify?





# HABITS ARE NOT IMMUNE TO DISRUPTION

Challenger brands will typically have suboptimal shelf placement, fewer facings and less brand awareness. This is where the adage “when everyone else zigs, you zag” comes into play.

If you are not seen, you are not bought. So, disruption is the only solution. Challengers must draw the attention of shoppers and to do so they will have to adopt unexpected tactics that will **disrupt the habitual path to purchase**.

When our brain is in System1 it anticipates what it will see next... more of the same. If it is confronted with unexpected stimulus, we temporarily snap out of System1 and sharpen our focus on the disruption.

The goal of challengers is to create that disruption. A very common mistake is for challengers to want to copy the brand leader, because “...they must know what they are doing, after all they are the brand leader...” giving shoppers little incentive to switch to a brand that isn’t much different from the one they are currently buying.



Function of beauty (Challenger brand) creates a highly disruptive presence in a highly competitive category, by utilizing colour, formatting and a powerful Unique Selling Proposition that is visually appealing but also unique in its highly personal approach to providing consumers with the ability to create their own formulas.



# THE ROLE OF COLOUR IN PACKAGING



Colour plays a very important role in the selection process on the path to purchase.

The psychology of colour has already been covered countless times by other sources and ultimately there will always be an element of subjectivity to picking the right colour(s) for your brand but understanding brand colour psychology will help you choose a colour(s) that evokes the emotions you wish to convey.

In this e-book, we will focus on colour tactics that are not often discussed but have a direct impact on influencing the attention and perception of consumers.

Eye tracking research indicates that colour is one of the first elements to be noticed during a shopping mission. It takes the average person less than 1/20 of a second to notice the dominant colour on a package. Most shoppers use colour as the primary clue to find their item of interest.

Colour can be used to visually unite a line of products into a single entity this is called colour blocking. Colour is also used at the opposite end of the spectrum to differentiate variants within a brand.



# FINDABILITY

Typically, large brands with many variants, are challenged to facilitate the findability of variants within their brand – measured by how easily shoppers can find a single variant within their line after navigating from brand to sub-brand to variant (decision tree).



Example of effective colour blocking to identify the brands, but less effective at helping shoppers find lithium vs. alkaline, vs rechargeable batteries within each brand. Energizer does a more effective job.



**S**maller brands with fewer facings have an even bigger challenge, that of being noticed at all. We refer to that as visibility. Although Colour Blocking is an effective way of maximizing visibility on shelf, it is only effective with a greater number of facings, enough to create a visual block.

In the absence of sufficient facings, the brand manager should give serious consideration to alternative methods of getting the shoppers' attention, like using an unusual structural design, or to offer a unique merchandising solution.



# THE MEANING OF COLOUR

Colour carries psychological and semiotic significance that can vary considerably from culture to culture, that significance can have religious meaning (Green for Muslim communities), political (Red and Blue states) and social significance (the LGBTQ rainbow).

In the FCPG world, the meaning of colour is highly contextual. In the food world colour is most readily associated with flavour: Orange immediately evokes images of fruit or juice; Purple with grape etc. In the retail world, however, orange might be more readily associated with Home Depot.

Colour intensity correlates directly with flavour intensity – saturated colours suggest a more intense flavour, pastel colours suggest less intense flavour. If you are designing for a product with less sugar, less saturated colours will convey that message more convincingly.





**The idea of a brand 'owning' a colour is a vanishing dream.** There are brands that are immediately associated with a colour: the Tiffany blue, UPS Brown, Ferrari Red and Cadbury Purple come to mind. These are brands that have been around for a very long time with millions of dollars invested. In the FCPG world one of the most intense efforts to own a colour was Cadbury's attempt to trademark PMS 2865C – I would argue that most North American consumers associate that purple with the brand, however from a legal standpoint, Cadbury gave up the trademark in 2019 after a lengthy legal battle when challenged by Nestle, eventually losing their appeal. Colours are difficult to trademark. Brands can 'own' a colour within a category, but it is very unlikely that you can stop another brand from using a very similar colour.



From a shopper's perspective, colour is the most frequently used aid to identify and differentiate variants within a line. When selecting colours to distinguish variants one should keep in mind the limitations of the available Pantone colour spectrum.

A good example is trying to distinguish berries by colour: Strawberry, raspberry and cherry flavours may prove challenging to distinguish by colour and will require additional flavour cues to make sure that consumers don't mistake flavours.



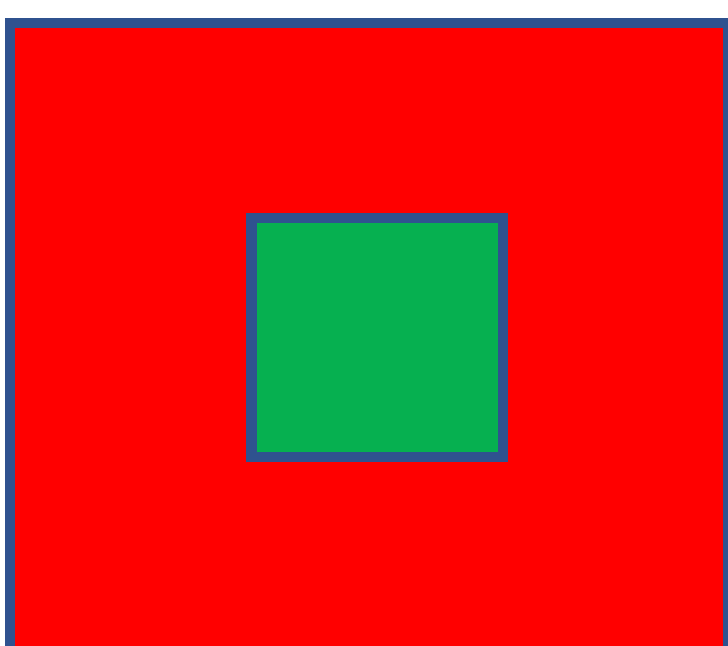
# MYTHS ABOUT COLOUR

When I was in high school, my art teacher repeated the trope “blue and green seldom seen”, Nonsense! The possible combinations of colours are endless. Don’t be afraid to experiment – know when to be conservative and when to swing for the fences. We simply must be careful in recognizing colours that are readily associated with the flavours and formulations of specific categories.



The only rule about colour is that there are no rules. A few years ago it would have been unthinkable to use black for milk, or any dairy packaging. That convention was successfully challenged by Agropur with their Natrel brand in Canada.

Most colours fall in either of two camps, warm and cool. Warm colours have pronounced amounts of red or yellow, cool colours contain blues and greens. Are you familiar with staring at a red square with a green dot inside it? If you look away after staring for several seconds you will see the reverse image – a green square with a red dot. Why? When you look at a red object for a long time, the cells in your eye adjust by becoming less sensitive to red light. Now, when you suddenly look away from the red, your green and blue cells are more sensitive than your red cells and you end up seeing that image in reverse.



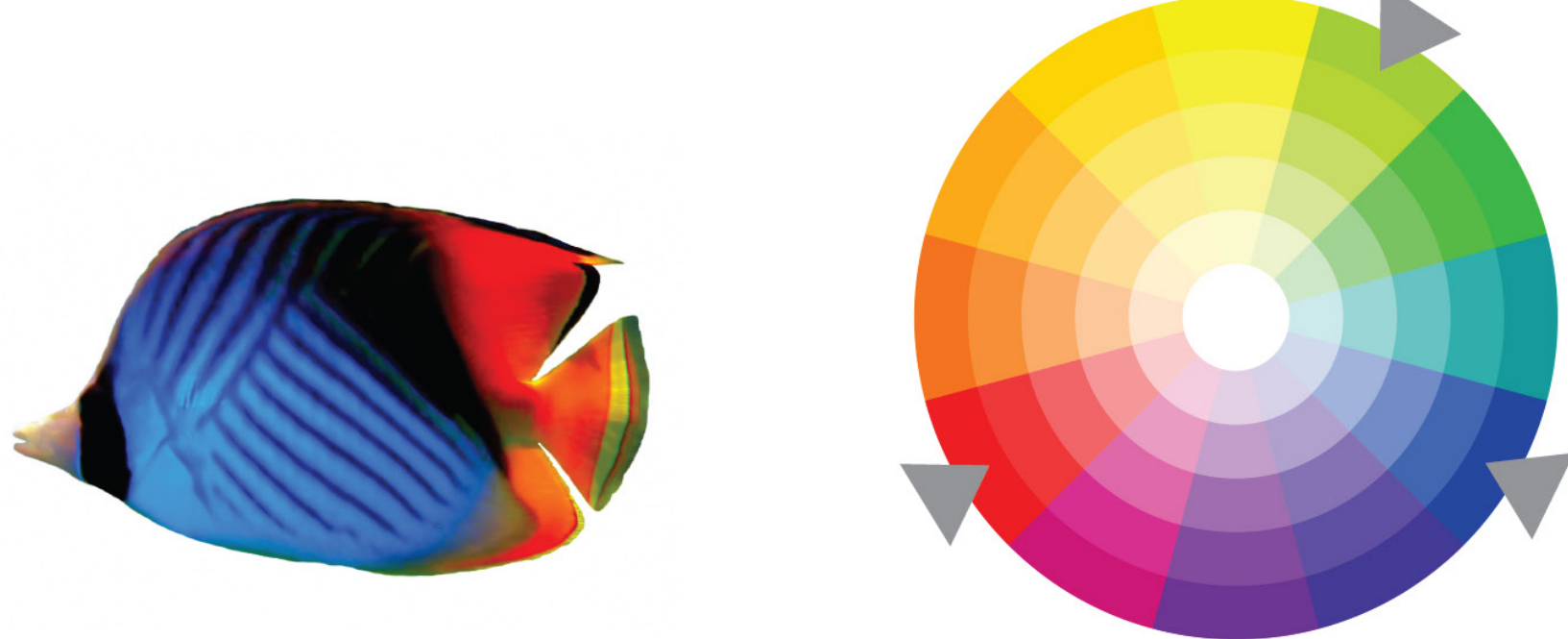
How does this apply to package design? Our brain seeks balance. Intuitively we are more comfortable with visual balance, both in composition and colour. When designing packaging, it is advisable to have a **balanced colour palette**: When using mainly warm colours, adding a cool colour as an accent will ‘feel’ more balanced. The inverse applies as well.



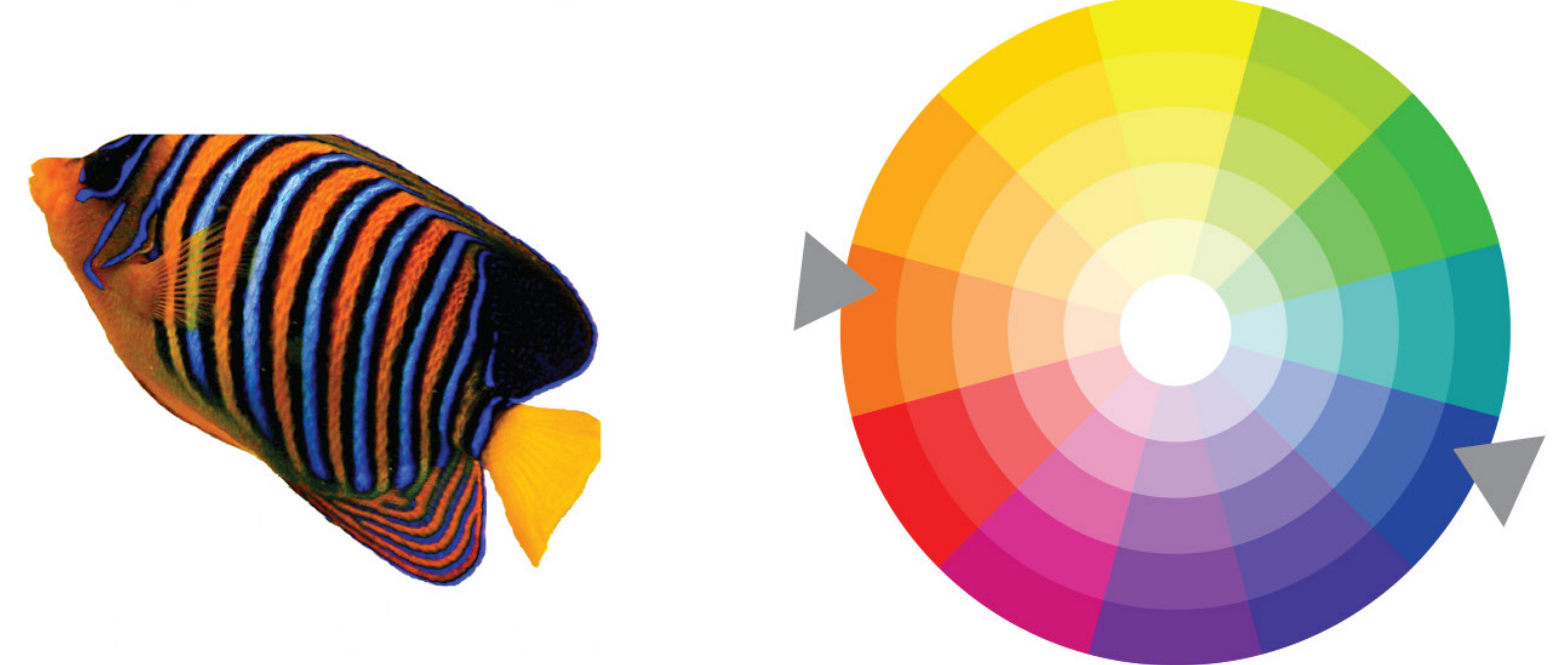
# HELP IS ALL AROUND YOU

**N**eed some inspiration to find the perfect colour combinations? Look to nature... for a vast array of beautiful colour combinations that are uncannily relatable to the colour wheel.

**Triadic**



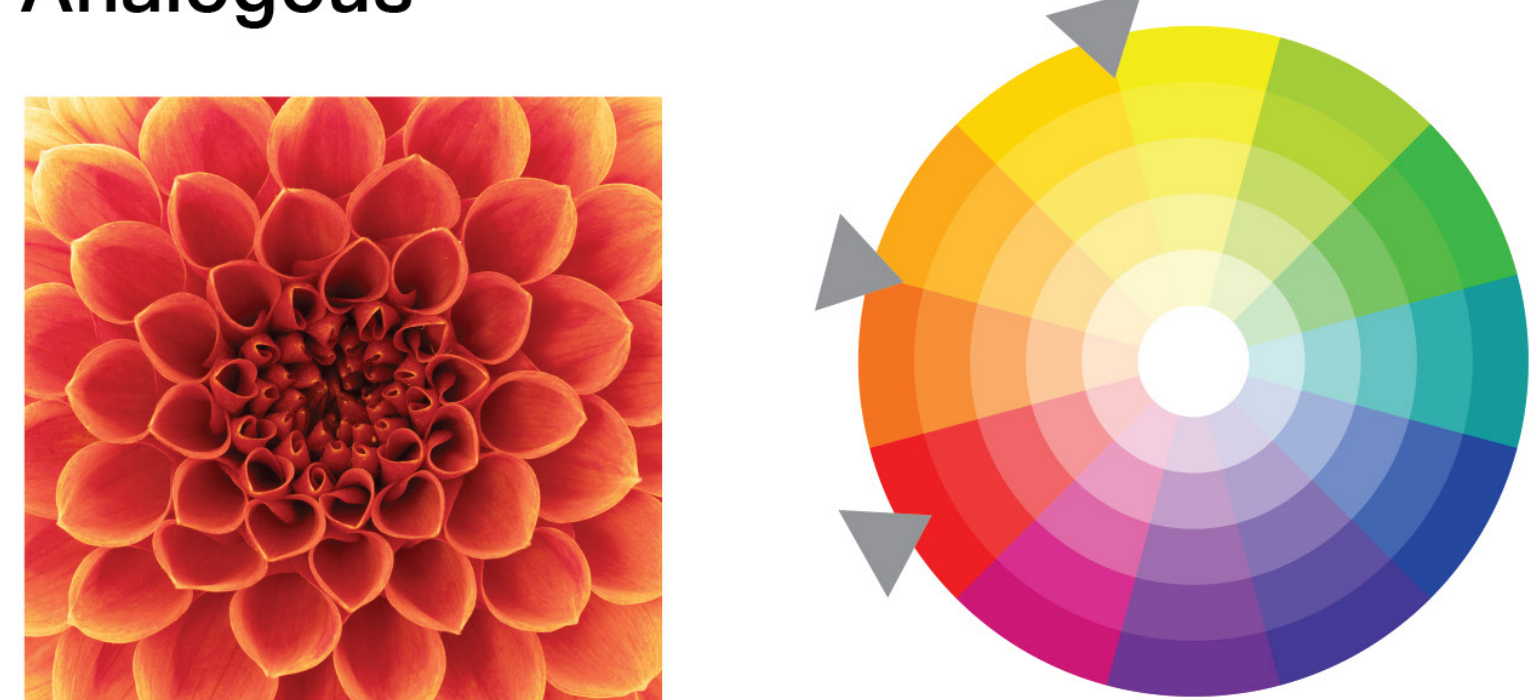
**Complementary**



**Split Complementary**



**Analogous**





# TIPS FOR PICKING COLOURS FOR YOUR BRAND

There are four factors you should keep in mind when selecting colours for your brand or packaging:

## 1. Choose a Colour that is 'Authentic' to Your Brand

It's important to choose a colour that feels appropriate to your category and authentic to your products. This is more important in certain categories than in others, but there's no easier way to turn off potential customers than to pick a colour that feels wildly inappropriate for what you do.

## 2. Choose a Colour That Embodies Your Brand Personality

Your brand personality—how you would describe your brand if it was a person—is the part of your brand that audiences identify with on a human level. Because it evokes human emotions, colour is one of the most immediate ways to express brand personality. Choosing a colour that embodies your brand personality is critical to building a consistent and cohesive brand experience.

## 3. Choose a Colour That Appeals to Your Audience

Understanding your target audience is Branding 101. This is especially true when picking the right colour for your brand or package. Consider your typical buyer persona. What colour is going to resonate with them most? Whether it is masculine vs. feminine, energetic vs. understated, or passionate vs. practical, your target audiences' defining traits should align with those of your brand colour.

## 4. Choose a Colour That Differentiates Your Brand

Another important criterion for choosing your brand colour is differentiation. While it isn't imperative to choose a colour that none of your competitors are using, it can go a long way toward setting your brand apart from the pack. A competitive brand audit is the best way to do a survey of the colours your top competitors are using so you can identify opportunities for differentiation.



# BRAND ARCHITECTURE TELLS A BIGGER STORY

A good architecture strategy will articulate the desired level of association between the corporate brand, its product brands, and their sub-brands

The two main types of Brand Architecture used in retail products are: The Branded House and the House of Brands. There is abundant literature that describes these architectures and their pros and cons from a marketing perspective.



Mott's is an example of a Branded House in the Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) sector: All their products, except for Fruitsations, simply have product descriptors under the Mott's brand

A key benefit of Branded House architecture is that they don't require multiple and expensive unique branding campaigns for different products, as all value accrues to the one brand. Another benefit is that product names under a Masterbrand are relatively easy to trademark.



Distinctive brands that make up a House of Brands such as General Mills and Mondelez consist of brands that are usually acquired and unrelated to each other. It's a strategy where each brand has its own brand identity, often representing a separate demographic, need, or occasion. One main benefit of the house of brands' approach is the ability to build distinct brand voices to serve and appeal to a much broader and diverse audience.

There are many websites that delve deeper into naming strategies for branding than this e-book was intended for. As an overview, there are two basic approaches to naming: Distinctive names vs. Descriptive names. Distinctive names are much more effective in gaining distinction and mnemonic 'stickiness' as time passes. They are also, typically easier to trademark. Distinctive names are recommended when developing a name for a new product.

**'truth,  
simplicity  
and a kind of  
irreverence'**

You can emulate the best brands but copying them might not get you far because every brilliant brand is brilliant in its own way. Siegel+Gale's Philip Davies tells us that there are only three things that unite excellent brands: truth, simplicity and a kind of irreverence. Here are a few of my favourite examples:





Vice Cream differentiates itself with honesty about its unhealthy product. Full fat and proud. Unapologetically indulgent. Perfectly named. It's a true contrarian success story. It's selling by the bucket-load in the US



The Swiffer came into existence after researchers videotaped people cleaning their homes and realized just how much people hated touching dirty mops. The word itself phonetically imitates or suggests the sound that one might imagine when cleaning a surface in one fell swoop



Starbucks – The name was inspired by the classic tale, Moby-Dick. Starbuck was the name of the chief mate on the Pequod. Evoking the seafaring tradition of the early coffee traders and sirens that lured sailors to shipwreck in an island in the pacific called Starbuck Island. The Starbucks Siren lures coffee drinkers from all over the world



# NAMING ARCHITECTURE

A good architecture strategy will articulate the desired level of association between the corporate brand, its product brands, and their sub-brands. This has a major impact on naming strategy. For instance, where a brand already exists, and sub-brands are needed to distinguish one group of related products from another, descriptive names are usually more helpful in assisting shoppers to understand the difference or the unique selling proposition of each group.

What are the strategic considerations that should guide your product naming? What is the relationship of your corporate brand to the product name and subsequently to variants of the product? When should a product have its own brand?

A brand's architecture is a way of organizing the different product groups of a larger master brand. Brand architecture shows us how the sub-brands of a larger whole are organized, and how they relate to each other. Naming architecture is the integrated system of names, symbols, and visual elements informed directly by the consumer decision tree.

This is because key to brand architecture is your consumer's mental organization—how they visualize your category, how your offerings fit within their paradigm, and how each offering satisfies their needs.

Visual segmentation is very important in creating an intuitive path to purchase. One that shoppers can easily understand. Marketers should take care in developing naming conventions that make sense to consumers and aren't simply carry-overs of internal marketing monikers. One such example is using the sub-brand 'family favourites' – it sounds nice, but it is meaningless in helping shoppers understand what the segment is about.

Sheena S. Iyengar is the S.T. Lee Professor of Business in the Management Department at Columbia Business School, widely and best known as an expert on choice, states "The value of choice depends on our ability to perceive differences between the options". The role of packaging is to make those differences very easy to perceive.





Example of descriptive sub-branding

Anyone who has completed a naming project knows that names are one of the hardest subjects on which to find consensus. No matter how hard you try to contain them, decision-makers' personal preferences end up having influence.

Keep subjective opinions to a minimum by grounding name evaluation criteria in previously agreed-upon brand and architecture strategies. Instead of asking leadership whether they "like" a name, ask them if they think it supports the brand strategy, or if it will work seamlessly in the brand architecture.

Having critical brand elements in place before discussing whether or how to name the brand or product segments within, will provide an objective framework for judgment, diminishing tension and easing decision-making.



# FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

**A brand's competitive advantage happens when the visualization of the strategy is delivered effectively through the packaging. This is the beginning of the relationship that potentially leads to brand preference and subsequently brand loyalty**

Strong brands have distinct visual and verbal identities that begin with the design of the package and are instantly recognizable in every brand experience.

Informed by our data-driven strategy, the packaging design systems we create **connect with audiences in meaningful and measurable ways**, boosting brand awareness and maximizing performance at shelf. With every interaction with shoppers and consumers, your brand(s) will be relevant, differentiated and memorable.

By defining how your brand looks across touchpoints, we ensure that its presence in the marketplace is cohesive and memorable, building the equity that is essential to growth. Using proven behavioural shopper research, we work collaboratively with your team to build a brand that is consumer centric and will drive business growth.

Whether you need a new logo, a complete rebrand, or something in between, the first step is talking with an expert. During your call, we will:

- Answer all your branding questions
- Nail down your specific branding needs
- Explore different paths to your goal
- Build a ballpark budget and timeline
- Help you build a case for your project

All trademarks appearing herein are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. Marovino does not claim ownership of any third-party trademark or image contained herein. Marovino does not claim to be endorsed by, nor does it endorse any product, business, or trademark contained in this document.



# REFERENCES

Cowan, N. (2010). **The Magical Mystery Four.** Current Directions in Psychological Science, 19(1), 51–57.

Gobb, C., & Hoyer, W. (1985). **Direct Observation of Search Behaviour in the Purchase of Two Nondurable Products.** Psychology & Marketing, 2(3), 161–179.

Hamaekers, W., & Depoortere, L. (2010). **Getting into the Real World of the Shopper: Using Eye Tracking in a Multi Modal Research Approach.** ESOMAR, 1–21.

Hoyer, W. (1984). **An Examination of Consumer Decision making for a Common Repeat Purchase Product.** Journal of Consumer Research, 11(3), 822–829.

Iyengar, S. (2014, December 6). **Sheena Iyengar: How To Make Choosing Easier.** Ted Summaries. Retrieved July 22, 2022, from <https://tedsummaries.com/2014/12/06/sheena-iyengar-how-to-make-choosing-easier/>

Krishna, A., & Aydınoğlu, N. (2017). **Sensory Aspects of Package Design.** Journal of Retailing, 93(1), 43–54.

Macdonald, K., & Sharp, B. (2000). **Brand Awareness Effects on Consumer Decision Making for a Common, Repeat Purchase Product: A Replication.** Journal of Business Research, 48(1), 5–15.

Sharp, B. (2016). **How Brands Grow.** Oxford University Press.

Underwood, R., & Klein, N. (2022). **Packaging as brand communication: effects of product pictures on consumer responses to the package and brand.** Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 10(4), 58–68.

Zajonc, R. (2001). **Mere Exposure: A Gateway to the Subliminal.** Current Directions in Psychological Science, 10(6), 224–228.



JOHN MAROVINO

**PACKAGING DESIGN  
INFLUENCING THE FIRST  
MOMENT OF TRUTH**