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AN EVALUATION OF THE FUNCTIONS OF PACKAGING
AND THEIR RELATIONS TO MARKETING

By

Frank L. Bain

B. S., University of Montana, 1968

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Approved by:


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I

INTRODUCTION

The packaging industry includes a large number and variety of companies engaged in the manufacture of materials, the formation of packages, and the marketing of packaged products. All of these companies, while concerned with packaging, are actually engaged in marketing.

The essence of the marketing concept is that all elements of a business should be geared to the satisfaction of its consumers. Packaging is a marketing tool and, as will be shown, is closely interwoven with the performance of marketing functions other than selling.

The term "packaging" can be used, in the narrowest sense, to refer to the physical task. In this sense, it is concerned with the packing materials and processes used. Primarily, this involves a delimitation of space, a setting aside of the contained product from the external environment. The materials of packing include glass bottles and jars, metal cans and foil, plastic films, molded containers, paperboard boxes, and many more.

However, packing is not in itself equivalent to packaging. Packaging in the true sense is a totality and cannot be separated from its primary marketing function. One purpose as a tool of marketing is to move those goods which satisfy consumers' needs to the consumers. For this purpose, packaging employs various packing materials. The other, and most important, function of packaging is to cause a favorable reaction in the consumer. It is this function which determines the success of the product. This is common knowledge in post-war marketing, but even back

in 1937, sometimes even in the late 1800's, there were some good marketers who were aware of this aspect of marketing. For example, "The underlying objective has been and is to stimulate the movement of goods. Properly designed, the package should enhance the value of its contained product and impart that impression, either directly or subtly, to the customer."¹ This was a quote made in 1937.

Packaging has a long and fascinating history and could be an entire study in itself. The materials of packaging extend from the clay pottery and leather sacks of prehistory, to the metal-working processes of the Renaissance, to the most recent plastic film and molding concepts. A major impetus to the use and spread of packaging, "was the perfection by Nicolas Appert of France, for Napoleon's armies, of a process for preserving food in glass, followed shortly by the use of tin-plated steel cans."²

With the development during the nineteenth century of brand name products and selling, packaging materials and designs proliferated. Acceptance of packaging grew more widespread with the changing pattern of retail merchandising and the increased efficiency of transportation media, especially the railroads. Finally, "the end of the nineteenth century saw the creation and overwhelming success of a classic package---the Uneeda Biscuit box---by the National Biscuit Company. This package, presented in a surprisingly modern total program of advertising and merchandising, helped bring an end to the "cracker barrel" era and paved the way for the packaging of today."³

¹D. E. A. Charlton, The Art of Packaging, (London: Studio Publications, 1937), p. 14

²Leonard M. Guss, Packaging is Marketing, (New York: American Management Association, Inc., 1967), p. 16

³Ibid

There are, generally speaking, two principal methods by which goods may be packaged. The first method is the unit, or consumer-sized, container and the second is the master container used in shipping. Some products are shipped in bulk, in which case the transporting vehicle itself is the master container.

In considering packaging as a marketing tool, the primary emphasis is given to the consumer-sized, or unit, package. This is the traditional package of the supermarket and other retail outlets. The package must protect the contents, provide a method of storage, display and identify the product, carry a selling message of design, provide information on the use of the contents, offer convenience in dispensing and use, and so forth. The unit package is what is usually meant in any discussion of packaging and is the subject of this paper.

The kinds of unit packages available today vary widely in appearance and performance, each having its own properties and characteristics of value. In many cases there is an overlap of function, giving the consumer a spectrum of packages from which to choose, depending upon the balance desired in appearance, performance, or cost. The most important unit packages are the folding box, the glass bottle or jar, the tin can, the rigid plastic container, the flexible-film container, the flexible plastic "squeeze" container, and the paper bag. Individual unit packages may be combined so as to form salable groups of packages, as in the paperboard carrier for bottles and cans or the multipack, which is a banding of paperboard or tape around three to six individual containers.

Packaging includes the successful performance of a series of functions, all of which are interrelated and failure in any one of which will

destroy the general utility of the package. Some of these functions are of vital importance throughout the life of the packaged goods, while others are important only on specific occasions and under specific circumstances. Obviously, performance in any subfunction can vary from barely acceptable to excellent, and the adequacy of the package as a whole reflects the composite of individual functional suitability. In this study the various functions of packaging will be grouped into two main categories which represent the two basic functions any package must perform. The first function to be performed by a package is the function of distribution, which, in turn, can be divided into the functions of protection, transportation, and storage. The second basic function of packaging is to cause a favorable reaction in the consumer or consumer identification with the product.

It will be the objective of this study to break down packaging into its basic functions and discuss each as if it were indeed separatable from the others. In reality these functions cannot be separated as each package is rated on its composition of all the functions and a failure in one can easily mean a failure in all. The functions are being separated for the purpose of discussion only.

II

DISTRIBUTION

The function of distribution is an important function of packaging. The product must first be moved from the manufacturer to the consumer before the consumer can purchase it, regardless of the consumer's demand for the product. During this distribution phase, the product must be protected from damage, be suitable for storage, be transported, and meet the requirements of the government.

Consumer and industrial goods are packed in the condition in which they emerge from the manufacturing process. During the succeeding stages of marketing, such as, factory storage, transportation, and shelf existence, this condition must not become degraded or deteriorated. If packaging permits the decay of the values originally included, it has failed in its initial function, protection of the product. To illustrate, metal goods in process are commonly treated with rust preventatives so they will not oxidize within the plant. But once the product leaves the plant, if it is a packaged good, it must rely on the package to act as a barrier against decay until the product is consumed.

Packaging cannot fulfill its marketing function independently of the technical characteristics and properties of the packaged goods. The kind and degree of protection required of packaging are determined by the requirements of the market, but the method for achieving this protection is based on technology. For example, the marketing requirements of a breakfast food dictate that the product must withstand a warehouse storage

period of several weeks and a shelf period of many days without becoming stale, tasteless, or soggy. The period of time required to consume the contents after the purchase is also a factor. If the goods are not consumed all at once, protection must be maintained for a reasonable period.

The following lists have been condensed from a technical text by Friedman and Kipnees.⁴ These lists demonstrate the importance of the function of protection to the life cycle of the product.

The protection afforded the contents by the package must be available at various stages in the life cycle of the product:

1. At the production line
2. During in-plant storage and handling
3. During transportation
4. During storage in a manufacturer's, distributor's, or retailer's warehouse.
5. On the shelf of a retailer
6. In the consumption process of the packaged product, if it is not used all at once

Such protection must guard against any of the following influences which tend to deteriorate the contents:

1. Breakage due to rough handling, crushing, or shock
2. Contamination by dirt, chemicals, moisture, fumes, or other noxious or toxic elements
3. Instability due to action of time, light, air, other physical or chemical influences, or temperature extremes
4. Absorption of tastes or odors foreign to the product
5. Loss of contents due to leakage, spillage, evaporation, or other causes
6. Loss of identity or value through improper marking, marring, or scratching
7. Pilferage

In addition to playing the passive role of barrier to decay, packaging may actually enhance the physical value of the goods by permitting desirable changes to occur. Certain materials age while stored and gain

⁴Walter F. Friedman and Jerome J. Kipnees, Industrial Packaging, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1960), pp. 38-53

in value by doing so. Wine and certain liquors are the outstanding example, but similar conditioning or ripening takes place with many other products, such as, metals, plastics, chemicals, and foods.

Another important facet of the distribution function is the handling, storing, and shipping of goods. These are a real and costly part of marketing and will be referred to jointly as the function of physical supply.

The act of packing segregates given numbers or volumes of goods. The goods enclosed are separated from a prior state of homogeneous bulk into discrete units which become a basis for the necessary standardization of content. In this task of unitization packaging is directed toward facilitating all three functions of physical supply.

Unitization in consumer goods is usually closely related to the needs of the consumers. Soap and detergent, processed foods, automotive parts, and thousands of other consumer items are unitized in numbers, weights, and volumes related to the purchasing requirements of the user.

Sometimes unitization can increase the quantity sold at one time, as in multipacking, where small consumer units are master-packed. These master-packs segregate the number of units applicable to the needs of the consumer, the retailer, the wholesaler, and the distributing system.

The ultimate unitization downward is the quantity so packed that sufficient material is contained for but one application or use, such as, one-portion trays of ketchup or jelly for restaurants. These ultimate units are often combined into intermediate containers, which are in turn master-packed in shipping containers. The ultimate unitization upward is called containerization. Containerization is the principle of consolidating

a load of standard shipping containers, usually corrugated boxes, within a large van type of container. These are usually made of steel, aluminum, plywood, or plastic, and are loaded at the factory onto flatbed trucks or freight cars. Containerization is a further development of the earlier concepts of piggybacking, in which a demountable truck body can be shipped part of its route on a flatbed rail car, and fishy-backing, in which demountable truck and rail-car bodies can be hauled on ships and barges.

Since transportation costs usually make up a significant portion of the delivered cost of goods, the former have a considerable influence on such factors as selection of markets, use of channels of distribution, and location of plants. "Costs are incurred in meeting the essential demands upon the transport system, which are:

1. That it be adequate to meet all normal demands of trade
2. That it be swift, minimizing the time between production and consumption
3. That it furnish the number and variety of services needed to make the marketing structure function with highest efficiency
4. That the cost of providing transportation be reasonably related to the worth of the services provided"⁵

Special studies of many kinds have shown that protective packaging can minimize these costs. However, packaging overdesign would be waste of another sort, probably involving much more money. The design problem is to achieve a balance between minimal and excessive freight damage, since the presence of some damage is the only real indication that the product is not overpackaged. An analogy can be drawn here to credit policies and bad-debt losses.

⁵Theodore N. Beckman and William R. Davidson, Marketing (7th ed., rev.; New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1962), p. 467

Of course, better packaging is not the only method of reducing transportation claims, since packaging failures are by no means responsible for all such claims. Care in assembling freight trains, the development of cars with better springs and shock absorbers, etc., all contribute to improvement in the ability of the railroads to meet the demands placed upon them.

By the time the usual manufactured product requires transportation, a significant value has accreted to it. This includes the cost of materials, labor, administration, capital investment, and other burdens of the manufacturer. Also included in the cost is the irrecoverable time factor in amassing these resources, manufacturing, and shipping. Often the product is not shipped until sold, therefore, selling expenses enter the calculation. For the product to suffer damage at this late point in the distributive time scale is a costly burden.

Storage is an inherent part of marketing as well as of physical production. Some stored goods are not packed, of course, especially raw materials on which little work has been done. But many industrial goods and almost all consumer goods are now packaged. This packaging must aid the storage function. The purpose of inventory storage, or the accumulation of goods, is to act as a reservoir to meet foreseen and possible unforeseen demand. The stored goods act as slack in the rope, permitting time to meet unforeseen demand while maintaining an even flow of processing or sales. Deterioration of goods in storage causes a deterioration of this safety margin, which means that it may not be in existence when called upon.

Packaging must do more to facilitate the storage of goods than simply maintain their condition in a sort of homeostatic defense against a hostile environment. Packaging must make the goods more amenable to placement and recovery by utilizing shape, volume, and linear dimension efficiently. Often packaging overcomes the awkward shapes of manufactured goods or parts, permitting a rational storage not otherwise possible. The relation of warehousing and materials handling to packaging is of increasing importance.

The concept of a warehouse has evolved in recent years from a place of storage to a means of movement of goods. This concept requires integration of all the factors associated with physical handling of goods. Warehouses themselves have changed radically. Rather than multistory they are of onestory design, with floor plans which permit maximum flow of goods from inloading dock to outloading dock with a minimum of handling. "Such warehouses lend themselves better to the essential steps in the warehousing process:

1. Unloading of cars and, where required, unpacking of cases
2. Conveying goods to storage
3. Moving merchandise from reserve to forward stocks
4. Assembling orders - putting together case lots or packaging smaller orders
5. Shipping and delivery"⁶

Warehousing expenses are far from minor. They represent an important part of total operating expense for wholesalers as well as significant outlays for retailers and manufacturers. Reductions in such expenses obtained by using buildings more efficiently, minimizing materials-handling

⁶Theodore N. Beckman, Nathaneal H. Engle, and Robert D. Buzzell, Wholesaling (3rd ed.; New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1959), p. 421

and labor costs, increasing inventory turnover, and reducing inventory waste due to obsolescence, physical damage, or deterioration can all provide significant contributions to net profit.

The present emphasis on one-story buildings has had direct effects on packaging.

"In a one-story building the space factor of importance is the 'cube'---the cubic content of the building; this is of more concern than square footage, the older measure for multistory warehouses. The desired situation is to stack goods as high as possible, limited only by available materials handling equipment and the height of the ceiling---which has grown from the 10 to 12 feet common to multistoried buildings to as high as 25 or 30 feet. In a multistory building the height of floor stacks is usually limited by two factors: static floor-loading limits, and the inability to get efficient but heavy materials-handling equipment above the first floor. Such problems are obviated in one-story construction."⁷

Since stacks are higher, packages must be stronger. This is true whether the goods are palletized or not, since palletization spreads out does not eliminate the weight. Some products themselves bear the weight of goods in a high stack. An example would be canned goods, where the can contributes greatly to the ability of the corrugated shipping container to withstand loading. In many cases the container has to bear all the weight, which has led to the development of stronger containers. What is implied here is that without this stronger packaging the higher stacks in today's warehouses would not be possible and the full cube of the warehouse would not be utilized. Since this waste space must be paid for whether used or not, warehousing costs would rise on all stored goods.

⁷Ibid, p. 422

Materials-handling factors are so basic that today's warehouses and factories are essentially designed around a materials-handling system. Conveyor systems, bulk materials-handling devices, fork trucks, and the like are the arteries of such a system. For the most part, in the mass movement of packaged goods today there is little if any of the manual handling that formerly constituted a heavy warehouse task.

Much of this machine handling has been made possible by palletizing. In palletizing, several containers are unitized on a pallet or skid. This is a low, portable platform or support made of wood, plywood, metal, or corrugated paperboard. Pallets may be heavy returnable platforms or the lighter, relatively inexpensive, disposable type. Even these, however, must be handled several times.

"The advantages of palletizing derive from the fact that it:

1. Permits automatic machine handling of cases for pallet loads
2. Lowers handling costs by unitizing loads
3. Speeds up the flow of goods through the warehouse
4. Provides maximum utilization of the warehouse cube
5. Permits better housekeeping and easier taking of inventories
6. Reduces damage done to goods by too-frequent handling"⁸

However, palletizing, although a powerful handling tool, is not the only tool. Lift trucks have been developed which can pick up and stack unpalletized unit loads by means of a pressure or vacuum clamping device which grips the stock. More and more the conveyor is being used in the mass movement of goods for unloading, processing and assembling orders.

⁸Containerization, Distribution Age, Vol. 59, No. 3, March, 1963, p. 74

The complex of warehouse materials-handling and packaging, then, is interlocked so that developments in one area both reflect and induce developments in others. These developments include new concepts of warehouse design, new methods of physically moving goods, and new packaging to aid and abet these approaches.

Packaging is also subject to regulation by government, primarily Federal, for the public good. Such regulation is closely related to the performance of two major packaging functions, protection and information. Packaging falls within the regulatory interest of the government when it either fails to protect, or actually contaminates the packaged contents, or inadvertently or purposely provides misinformation to the purchaser.

Fraud in marketing is as old as trade itself.

"In the early days of barter, cows were traded that were dry rather than fresh, horses sometimes had spavin that was unrevealed to the buyer, and jewels were not always what they seemed. The butcher developed a heavy thumb almost as soon as he was furnished scales; the vintner quickly learned the advantage of adding water to the wine; sand became mixed with wheat somewhat oftener than the laws of chance would allow; it was early learned that watersoaked meat was not impaired in price as it was in taste; and many men became rich after the development of coinage by systematically debasing gold coins."⁹

Careful attention to details of this kind was discouraged but not eliminated by early regulations.

In Colonial times local governments had programs for preventing both fraudulent business practices involving the use of false weights and measures and unsafe and deceptive practices. Since then a large body of both Federal and state legislation has developed.

⁹E. S. Turner, The Shocking History of Advertising, (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1953), p. 5

The most important Federal regulations are presented in the accompanying exhibit, which lists the agencies involved in enforcement, the products regulated, and the sources of legislative authority. Most state codes are similar to one aspect or another of the Federal codes, differing usually where tax revenues are involved, such as, in the regulations concerning alcohol and tobacco. Usually the codes simply provide for intrastate commerce the same control that Federal regulations do for interstate commerce.

The goal of these regulations on packaging is to assure that packaged products will be legal, safe, and nondeceptive. Unfortunately, it is not easy for governmental agencies to define, or for manufacturers to comply with, the readily recognizable rules of conduct that will accomplish these goals. The Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare plays the most prominent role in defining and enforcing the application of packaging laws and regulations. It is aided in this role by the Federal Trade Commission and other departments of Government. The authority to act is derived from the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, as amended in 1938 in content and title to become the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. It was again amended in 1962 in the "Drug Amendments of 1962" revision.

The label is the immediate and obvious source of information about a packaged product. Since the label is frequently the sole source of information about a product, it has become the subject of many laws, regulations, and trade practices. A label in the packaging sense fulfills the requirements of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act of 1938 in that the requirements include any printed matter upon any container.

MAJOR FEDERAL PACKAGING REGULATIONS

Agency	Product Class			Authority
	Foods, including meat, poultry, & soft drinks	Alcoholic Products and tobacco	Drugs and cosmetics	Chemicals and related products
Department of Agriculture - Agriculture Research Service	Meat, meat products		Biologics for animals	Pesticides
Agriculture Marketing Service	Poultry, poultry products			
Dept. of Health Education and Welfare Food & Drug Admin.	Foods, including pet unless otherwise stated	Alcohol in drug products	Drugs, cosmetics	
Treasury Dept. Alcohol & Tobacco Div.		Alcoholic beverages, tobacco		
Federal Trade Commission	Empowered to prohibit unfair and deceptive acts, practices, and competition in commerce.			
Interstate Commerce Commission				Dangerous Articles
Post Office Department		Enforces various regulations regarding postal shipments.		

Source: Modern Packaging Encyclopedia, 1964, Vol. 38, No. 3A, p. 65.

Labeling may be referred to as grade labeling, descriptive labeling, or informative labeling. In practice today, however, labels generally include all of these elements, especially where the package is used primarily in self-service selling.

Grade labeling implies that the product contained meets certain standards of quality which have been established. This is usually attested to by the presence of a number, letter, stamp of approval, or other symbol. Grade labeling is based on the concept that certain standards of goodness exist and can be objectively measured so that products can be classified. This type of labeling is usually found in natural food products.

Descriptive labeling is probably less subject to misinterpretation than is grade labeling. The descriptive label contains information relating to the size, ingredients, quality, etc., of the product. Descriptive labels depend upon brand or trademark identification to convey the image of quality, rather than on a separate grade standard found in grade labeling. By referring to the printed information and by recalling past experience with the brand, the buyer is hopefully placed in possession of sufficient information to make a choice.

"The elements of a good label are:

1. The name of product
2. Name and address of manufacturer and distributor
3. Net contents
4. Variety, style of pack, packing medium
5. Statement of artificial coloring, flavoring, or preservative, if used
6. Statement of dietary properties, especially if special dietary uses are claimed
7. If below the basic standard of quality or below the standard of fill of container as set by the Food and Drug Administration, it must so state in prescribed manner.
8. English must be used for all pertinent information
9. Ingredients, unless a Government standard of identity has been set, as for ketchup and margarine

10. Picture of the product, accurate as to size, color, and appearance
11. Detail about quantity expressed there possible in terms of portions, cupsful, and so forth
12. Description of raw product with method of processing
13. Directions for use, including recipes
14. Brand name
15. Mention of recipe books and other available literature"¹⁰

Informative labeling goes beyond what is normally found in grade and descriptive labeling, although each of these is intended to inform. The informative label gives information about methods of end use in terms of instructions or alternatives available to the buyer. It might also warn the buyer of ill effects, in addition to meeting the minimum legal requirements for such warning, that could follow misuse of the product. Informative labels are only of value to the consumer if he can match the product to his requirements based upon accuracy and intelligibility of the information. The National Consumer-Retailer Council, Incorporated, has prepared a model of an informative label.

- "...Labels should conform, of course, to local, state, or Federal regulations where such exist in addition to:
1. What it will do (performance)
 2. What it is made of (composition)
 3. How it is made (construction)
 4. How to care for it
 5. Recommended uses
 6. Name and address of manufacturer or distributor"¹¹

As noted before, few labels fall solely in one class or another, although this is more likely to be the case with fresh food products, such as eggs, meats, and poultry. Generally, labels of processed goods

¹⁰D. M. Phelps, Packaging the Product" in Charles F. Phillips, Marketing by Manufacturers, (Homewood: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1955), p.160

¹¹Ibid, p. 161

usually have elements of all three kinds of labels, so that the end product meets the needs of self-service selling, where the consumer has no ready source of information.

Most packagers are interested in having their products meet the required standards, although they have traditionally tended to resist the imposition of new and more stringent standards. Government agencies and most consumers, however, tend to feel that more legislation is needed to protect the consumer.

Senator Phillip A. Hart stated in the opening session of a series of hearings on a proposed new bill to tighten controls on deceptive packaging that his bill, "recognizes the emergence of a relatively new form of nonprice competition, packaging and labeling....that industry has not been able to correct these conditions of ambiguity and dishonesty in packaging by itself, because of the complexity, diversity, and intense competition in the economic sector involved."¹³ During the hearings, Commissioner George P. Larrick of the Food and Drug Administration and Wilbur J. Cohen, assistant secretary for legislation of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, repeatedly stated that present legislation was inadequate to protect the consumer against unfair and deceptive packaging and that the industry could not of its nature perform this function voluntarily.

Rather than spending all their efforts attacking the proposed Hart Bill, packaging men have developed and are proposing a model code for state adoption which incorporates some of the elements of the Hart Bill,

¹³Packaging and Labeling Practices, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Antitrust and Monopoly, Committee of the Judiciary, U. S. Senate, S. Res. 258 (Feb. 13-15, March 20 and 28, April 2-3, 1962), Part I, p. 5

but without the extension of Federal control. The proposed Model State Law would, "be built upon a net-quality content figure prominently displayed on the principal display panel of the package and would set standards for the use of typeface for this purpose."¹⁴

It appears then that packaging is merely an act of faith on the part of both the seller and buyer. The seller must have faith that the package will sell his product without the need for misrepresentation. The buyer, of course, must have faith that the package truly represents the contents inside. When this faith on the part of the seller is betrayed, deliberately or inadvertently, the trust of the value enclosed in future packages will diminish. It appears that currently packaging enjoys considerable faith on both the seller and the buyer, weakened only by special circumstances.

Packaging is not yet, at least, in the position of advertising, where consumer receptiveness has often been dulled by overloud and unkeepable promises. The real cost to advertisers is that this increases the threshold level which must be reached to gain any attention at all. Although packaging has not yet reached this level, packagers should heed the increasing demand of consumers, and the government agencies that enforce this demand, for increased legislation to tighten packaging controls.

¹⁴"A New Approach to Package Regulation, " Modern Packaging, (Vol. 36, No. 12, August, 1963), p. 118

III

CONSUMER REACTION

I believe that this section depicts the most important aspect of packaging, the relationship of the package to the consumer.¹⁵ For most products on the shelves today, the package which contains a product is the sole salesman for that product. The package must not only protect the product and make shipping and storage easier, but must allow the consumer to make an identification with the product. In other words, the package must create a want in the consumer for the product and at the same time correspond with the social class, reference group, personality, etc., of the consumer.

The aspect of social stratification in marketing will be covered in a later section; however, it is important here to emphasize the difference between "wants" and "needs."

"Nearly all pioneering advertising seeks to associate a human need with a new kind of product that is better designed to satisfy that need. In a sense no advertisement or sales talk ever created a need, for a need originates in biological drives and social conditioning. However, advertising and selling can create a want---the latter is engendered by showing how a need may be fulfilled or satisfied better by the product in question. For example, the California Fruit Growers Exchange introduced oranges and lemons to the American public by appeals to health and vitality. Television was pioneered immediately after World War II as a new dimension in entertainment. Air travel was introduced as a way to save time for other useful activities."¹⁵

¹⁵Edward L. Brink and William T. Kelley, The Management of Promotion: Consumer-Behavior and Demand Stimulation, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 127

For many products, the package is the sole means of any sales talk; therefore, it is the responsibility of the package to create a "want" for the product. The effectiveness of "want creating" in the past can be observed in the increasing Federal regulations on packaging, which was discussed in an earlier section. Only when consumers feel the product did not live up to their expectations created by the package, is the Federal Government forced to place restrictions upon packaging. The influx of regulations on packaging merely emphasizes the effectiveness of the stimulation produced by packages.

Before discussing informational needs, convenience, consumer surveys, etc., it is important to grasp some understanding of the consumer as a human being. The only way to better understand people is to turn to the behavioral sciences, such as, psychology, sociology, and anthropology. There is a danger, of course, of trying to simplify certain findings which are in reality extremely complex. However, my purpose in this paper is only to point out a few of the basic concepts of human behavior in the belief that they will contribute to a better understanding of the relationship of packaging to the consumer.

From the field of anthropology, we find how culture influences the human being, or in our case the consumer. Through anthropology, it is possible to find the basic value structure of various classes in any society.

"The anthropologist is specifically trained to study national character, or the differences which distinguish one national group from another. He should be able to provide measures for distinguishing the subtle differences among a Swede, a Dane, and a Norwegian; or between a Frenchman and an Englishman; or a Brazilian and an Argentinian; or between a typical resident of Montreal and one of Toronto. The anthropologist is

also a specialist in the study of subcultures. He would be able, in a city like New York, to differentiate the patterns of living of such disparate but rapidly homogenizing groups as Puerto Ricans, Negroes, Italo-Americans, Jews, Polish-Americans, and Irish-Americans."¹⁶

Any society has certain values which are inherent in its culture and which differ from those of other societies. Values which may be esteemed highly in India may be laughed at in the United States and vice-versa. Although any society has certain values inherent in all classes within a society, there are many values which differ between classes in the same society. For example, here are some dominant cultural values of the American middle class:

"For the American middle class it is postulated that; (1) the universe is mechanistically conceived, (2) man is its master, (3) men are equal, and (4) men are perfectible. From these four basic premises alone many of the focal and specific values, as well as the directives, of the American value system can be derived."¹⁷

DuBois points out how these four premises influence many of the important values in American society. Work, for example, is a specific value in which man tries to reach his own perfectability and master his universe. For most middle-class Americans, work is a goal in itself and American life is preoccupied with activism. Many products take advantage of these values. For example, the waving lines on the Sea and Ski suntan lotion package connotes activity.

From the field of psychology, we find such factors as motivation, roles, learning, etc. It is from this field that we find the basic needs

¹⁶Charles Winick, "Anthropology's Contributions to Marketing," Philip R. Cateora and Lee Richardson, Readings in Marketing, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crafts, 1967), p. 137

¹⁷Cora DuBois, "The Dominant Value Profile of American Culture," Perry Bliss, Marketing and the Behavioral Sciences, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1977), p. 5

and drives of individuals and reasons why people react in a certain way to particular stimuli.

Often individuals will behave similarly in the same situations because of the similarity in their roles of life.

"A role is a pattern of behavior actually or expected to be associated with a position in a social setting. It is, for example, the organization of behavior related to a position in a family such as father or child, a position in a business organization such as president or secretary, or even a position in the chronological system of a social unit such as a seven-year-old or a teenager. Role behavior is simply those activities of a person performing in his capacity as occupant of some specific position."¹⁸

This similarity in role behavior is the result of expectations of group members regarding the behavior of each member of the group. There is, of course, a considerable amount of role overlap where more than one role influences the behavior of an individual. In this case the most dominant role or roles would have the most influence. Often the consumer role could be considered a dominant role for many individuals, particularly housewives. This is true because of time consumed in this role and also because the consumer role provides a means by which an individual may express himself. Martineau has noted that "everything we buy helps us to convey to others the kind of people we are, helps us to identify ourselves to the world at large."¹⁹

Another important aspect of psychology which is directly related to the consumer is motivation.

¹⁸James U. McNeal, Dimensions of Consumer Behavior, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965), p.8

¹⁹Pierre Martineau, Motivation in Advertising (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., Inc., 1957), p. 197

"Motivation arises out of tension-systems which create a state of disequilibrium for the individual. This triggers a sequence of psychological events directed toward the selection of a goal which the individual anticipates will bring about release from the tensions and the selection of patterns of action which he anticipates will bring him to the goal."²⁰

Of course, one of the major problems in motivation theory is developing a list of human needs. The biogenic needs, such as thirst, hunger, and sex, are generally pretty much agreed upon by psychologists. However, there is considerable disagreement as to which particular items should be on the list of psychogenic needs. Psychogenic needs are those which exist in the individual's subjective psychological state. Boyton, however, groups these psychogenic needs into three categories, affectional needs, ego-bolstering needs, and ego-defensive needs, which are accepted by most psychologists. He explains how any given consumer product can be defined in terms of the specific need-combinations involved and the relative strength of these needs.

From the field of sociology, we find such concepts as social stratification and reference groups. Sociologists feel human behavior can be related to the various class levels which individuals occupy in a society. One of the main social stratifications was devised by W. Lloyd Warner. The Warnerian idea is that there are six social classes in the American Society.

"Briefly characterized, the six classes are as follows, starting from the highest one and going down:

1. The upper-Upper or 'Social Register' Class is composed of locally prominent families, usually with at least second or third generation wealth. The

²⁰James A. Boyton, "Motivation, Cognition, Learning---Basic Factors in Consumer Behavior," Perry Bliss, Marketing and the Behavioral Sciences, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1967), p. 114

basic values of these people might be summarized in these phrases: living graciously, upholding the family reputation, reflecting the excellence of one's breeding, and displaying a sense of community responsibility.

2. The Lower-Upper or 'Nouveau Riche' Class is made up of the more recently arrived and never-quite-accepted wealthy families. Included in this class are members of each city's 'executive elite,' as well as founders of large businesses and the newly well-to-do doctors and lawyers. The goals of people at this particular level are a blend of the Upper-Upper pursuit of gracious living and the Upper-Middle Class's drive for success.
3. In the Upper-Middle Class are moderately successful professional men and women, owners of medium-sized businesses and 'organization men' at the managerial level; also included are those younger people in their twenties or very early thirties who are expected to arrive at this occupational status level---and possibly higher---by their middle or late thirties. The motivating concerns of people in this class are success at career (which is the husband's contribution to the family's status) and tastefully reflecting this success in social participation and home decor (which is the wife's primary responsibility).
4. At the top of the 'Average Man World' is the Lower-Middle Class. Approximately 30 percent or 35 percent of our citizenry can be considered members of this social class. For the most part they are drawn from the ranks of non-managerial office workers, small business owners, and those highly-paid blue-collar families who are concerned with being accepted and respected in white-collar dominated clubs, churches, and neighborhoods.
5. At the lower half of the 'Average Man World' is the Upper-Lower Class, sometimes referred to as 'The Ordinary Working Class.' Nearly 40 percent of all Americans are in this class, making it the biggest. The proto-typical member of this class is a semi-skilled worker on one of the nation's assembly lines. Many of these 'Ordinary Working Class' people make very good money, but do not bother with using it to become 'respectable' in a middle-class way. Whether they just 'get by' at work, or moonlight to make extra, Upper-Lowers are oriented more toward enjoying life and living well from day to day than saving for the future or caring what the middle class world thinks of them.
6. The Lower-Lower Class of unskilled workers, unassimilated ethnics, and the sporadically employed comprises about 15 percent of the population, but this class

has less than 7 or 8 percent of the purchasing power. Apathy, fatalism, and a point of view which justifies 'getting your kicks whenever you can' characterize the approach toward life, and toward spending money, found among the people of this class."²¹

Coleman breaks each of the six classes into two groups which he calls the "overprivileged" and the "underprivileged." He states that within each social class there are families and individuals whose incomes are above and below the average for their class. For example, a family may be "overprivileged" in the sense that their income is above average for their class, but they do not wish to spend money on items or activities which are requirements of a higher class. These people would have the equivalent of "discretionary income."

Pierre Martineau believes that individuals are very much aware of the informal social class system in America.

"...every individual senses that he is more at home with and more acceptable to certain groups than to others. In a study of department stores and shopping behavior, it was found that the Lower-Status woman is completely aware that, if she goes into High-Status department stores, the clerks and the other customers in the store will punish her in various subtle ways.

'The clerks treat you like a crumb,' one woman expressed it. After trying vainly to be waited on, another woman bitterly complained that she was laftily told, 'We thought you were a clerk.'

The woman who is socially mobile gives considerable thought to the external symbols of status, and she frequently tests her status by shopping in department stores which she thinks are commensurate with her changing position. She knows that, if she does not dress correctly, if she does not behave in a certain manner to the clerks, if she is awkward about the proper cues, then the other customers and the clerks will make it very clear that she does not belong.

²¹Richard P. Coleman, "The significance of Social Stratification in selling," Perry Bliss, Marketing and the Behavioral Sciences, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1967), p. 181-183

In a very real sense, everyone of us in his consumption patterns and style of life shows an awareness that there is some kind of a superiority-inferiority system operating, and that we must observe the symbolic patterns of our own class."²²

In order for packaging to be effective, packagers first must look at the consumer as a person. Packagers can only understand consumers if they first understand people and their behavior. From this brief sketch of the behavioral sciences, one can understand why such a tremendous amount of money and time is spent on research to make an effective package.

It must also be understood that all of the behavioral science fields overlap. Most of the particular concepts mentioned have been studied or examined by all of the behavioral sciences.

The distinction is sometimes made that buying motives are of two types: rational and emotional. Rational motives are usually concerned with such reasons as the dependability of the product, economy, and convenience. On the other hand, emotional motivations are of the class primarily concerned with such factors as prestige; the desire to conform to, or differ from other people; the desire for pleasure or comfort; the desire to be creative, etc. Actually, I feel that this distinction is meaningless if "rational" is defined as being any action which promotes an individual's well-being regardless of the motive. There is no reason to believe that an emotional motive is not a rational motive, or better still a rationalized motive. Actually, any motivations that affect buying decisions are equally valid, since the end result, to purchase or

²²Pierre Martineau, "Social Classes and Spending Behavior," Stewart Henderson Britt and Harper W. Boyd, Jr., Marketing Management and Administrative Action (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1963), p. 109

not to purchase, is an analysis of all factors, whether consciously or unconsciously considered.

Buying for any purpose, consumption, resale, or for use in a manufacturing process, involves certain steps. The buyer must determine the quality of available goods in terms meaningful to his need. The buyer must assess the sources of supply in terms of price, convenience, dependability, interest, and personal relationships. Packaging comes into play in many of these steps.

Both middleman and ultimate consumers need sufficient information to be able to make an intelligent choice. Information may be of many kinds: identification of contents, handling instructions, use instructions, ingredient composition, hazards, quantity, and price, etc. Buyers at different levels have different informational needs.

The wholesaler, industrial user, or retailer's warehouseman is most concerned with identification of contents and handling instructions. This user, however, also looks at the product from the point of view of the ultimate consumer. In other words, if the wholesaler or retailer does not feel that a particular package will sell the product to the ultimate consumer, then they will have nothing to do with the product. In reality, there is not much difference between selling to the middleman and selling to the ultimate consumer as they both have the same interests and needs.

Informational needs are, however, more complex at the consumer level, as the actual buying decision may well rest upon the information presented on the packages. The ultimate consumer, dealing with unit packages such as those on the supermarket shelf, is primarily concerned with ease of identification, quality, price, and use instructions. To be

meaningful for comparative shopping, price is usually related to quality and quantity. To be meaningful at all, the information presented must honestly reflect the contents.

That a package will not retard the salability of the goods is a buying requirement of those elements in the chain of distribution which must take the goods with the hope of passing them on later to others. For the retailer packaging can mean the difference between profit and loss. A good package must be self-selling, durable, practical, and attractive. In fact, retailers, such as supermarkets and variety stores, frequently make a buying decision on their expectation of the package's ability to sell itself.

Size is another important factor. The size of the package must be geared to the expected unit of demand and the desired sales price in order to satisfy the retailer. Another aspect of size is shelf-space limitation. The retailer does not look kindly upon packages which needlessly consume valuable shelf space.

Convenience is important to the manufacturer, the retailer, the wholesaler, and the end user. The need for convenience, especially at the consumer level, has been responsible for a high degree of innovation. These innovations have been in the form of new developments of materials and methods in packaging and in the development of several new industries, such as food processing.

A good discussion of convenience, some but not all of which deals with packaging, was presented by Charles G. Mortimer, then president and now chairman of General Foods Corporation, who listed ten concepts as primary:

- "1. Convenience of form - Soap for example is available as bars, liquids, powders, flakes
2. Convenience of time - extended availability of goods, offered by late shopping hours, by vending machines
3. Convenience of place - shopping centers, drive-in banks
4. Convenience of quantity or unit - matched to the need and rate of use
5. Convenience of packaging - throwaway containers, reusable containers, dispensing containers
6. Convenience of readiness - precooked foods
7. Convenience of combination - do-it-yourself kits, matching of logical products
8. Convenience of automatic operation - appliances
9. Convenience of selection - the variety of product types and supplies
10. Convenience of credit - available for almost all products and services from many sources."²³

The desire for convenience on the part of the consumer is probably the result of our nation's increasing prosperity. Increasingly, the ultimate consumer of unit packaging, most often the housewife, looks for convenience in the package as well as in the product. A large number of articles in current periodicals deal with specific examples of convenience and its growing attractiveness to the housewife, who is willing to pay more for a product or package which will save her time and effort. Part of her work, of course, has simply been pushed back to the factory, and this displacement, in effect a saving of time, is incorporated in the package.

There are innumerable ways to achieve convenience. Convenience to the buyer may mean convenience of size, since the consumption needs of individuals and families differ. It may mean the convenience of opening. The technical problem here is the balance between a package that is well protected against its environment and one that is so well protected that

²³Charles G. Mortimer, The Ten Forms of Convenience, Company Member Newsgram, American Marketing Association, Chicago, December 2, 1955, p.7

it cannot be opened by the purchaser. Tear-tapes, pull-tabs, flip-top boxes, and many variants of these have their places in serving the needs of the consumer and affecting his decision to buy.

Convenience may be in the form of associated products banded together, such as syrup and pancakes, or in multipacks of the same product, as with soft drinks or dog food. Convenience may be in the method of use made possible by packaging. This is especially true in the food field and is exemplified by frozen foods, boil-in-the-bag foods, foods which come in their own baking trays, and others. Convenience is frequently a matter of dispensing. Many packaging innovations involve new methods of dispensing the contents, such as, aerosol containers and built-in pouring spouts.

Since for the most part the protective and other mechanical attributes, of packaging, are taken for granted, the most familiar role assigned to it is that of silent salesman. But if packaging is to sell the customer, it must first stop him.

Recognition of the selling function of packages extends back into the nineteenth century, as illustrated in the previous section by the outstanding Uneeda Biscuit box of 1899. However, major growth of this idea did not bloom until the twentieth century. As early as 1928 marketing authors were able to say, "packaging has revolutionized modern merchandising, changed the buying habits of a nation, changed the appearance of stores, revolutionized window display,"²⁴ They had great authority to discuss almost all of the reasons for packaging's growth and its uses to the field of marketing.

²⁴Richard B. Franken and Carroll B. Larrabee, Packages that Sell, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928), p. 5

Packaging was to make "a product become a self-seller by changing a normally bulk item into a promotable specialty."²⁵ According to the same author, it would do this by being distinctly individual and of good design connoting its contents, telling its message simply and explicitly, and being practical.

The marketers of the 1930's had no hesitation in calling a spade a spade. "We are all interested in making the package essentially a sales package, as the retailers throughout the country are making their rooms not storerooms or display rooms, but sales rooms."²⁶ This early and to-the-point sales orientation for packaging has continued to characterize the industry.

Still the emphasis was on packaging as a selling aid, rather than on the package which must do the selling job at the point of sale alone and almost unsupported except by the recall of the purchaser. In other words, the true relationship of packaging to self service had not yet been established.

If a "good" package is operationally defined as that package which most favorably affects sales, then the basis of good packages is given in terms of design, color, size, shape, and graphics. If good packaging increases sales, then poor packaging will lose sales at retail and will cost the manufacturer of the product a position that he might have otherwise won. Gain or loss in sales, in market position, and in profits can

²⁵Ben Nash, "What Makes an Effective Package?" Packaging Series No. 10, American Management Association, New York, 1932, p. 7

²⁶Johnson Rogers, "The Open Display Method of Retailing and Its Impact Upon Packaging," Consumer Marketing Series No. 6. American Management Association, New York, 1931, p. 47

be in certain cases ascribed to the factor of packaging and thus can be changed by changing the package.

Designers have moved from the general field of industrial design into the specialized field of package design. In order to be able to define and so create a good package, it became necessary to learn a great deal about the purchasing habits and practices of retail customers, primarily women, in supermarkets. Such factors were studied as, "the length of time devoted to each shopping trip; the amount of time a woman would give to a product decision (about four seconds); how much pre-planning the shopper did for her purchases; how much she could perceive at a glance; the effect of different shapes, colors, typefaces, and juxtapositions of these; preferences for materials; and, preferences for product characteristics."²⁷ With all this in mind, the package designer must still be well versed in the technology of the product and its requirements for protection.

In designing packages that sell, designers must consider such factors as: "Should a package stand out in the position it is likely to have on the retail shelf? Should it blend in with or dominate its environment? Should it be blatant or dignified, exciting or restful, luxurious or thrifty? Should it have built-in convenience? Should it be multipacked or joint-packed? How shall it be made easy to handle, easy to see, and easy to buy?"²⁸

The marked degree of success designers have had in answering these questions is evident in any supermarket or self-service retail outlet.

²⁷Marketing Challenges the Packager," Printer's Ink, Vol, 280, No. 10, September 7, 1962, p. 59

²⁸Ibid, p. 60

Good packaging has recently shown a trend to subtle, more sophisticated, yet more incisive design. Blatant packaging has its own built-in retardant in the consumer's resistance ability, which seems to grow in direct measure to the degree of the challenge. Consumers have an ability to blank their minds in regard to what they consider blatant packaging as they do with blatant advertising. They do not see or hear what they do not want to see or hear.

A further word is in order about graphics in packaging. Unfortunately, it is not possible to convey in words the visual impact of a package which combines function and beauty, especially when the beauty is derived from an intelligent interpretation of function. Some designers have mastered their materials, the processes of art, color, print reproduction, and packaging, into a unit which fully meets the consumer's needs.

Graphics, which includes all the elements of visual impact other than the container itself, is increasingly technically perfect and frequently of a high esthetic standard of accomplishment in meeting the functional and symbolic requirements of the package. While a discussion of technique and process in graphics is beyond the scope of this paper, excellent compilations of outstanding designs can be found in Sutnar's Package Design: The Force of Visual Selling, Arts, Inc., New York, 1953.

Packaging has an immediacy about it that most other selling devices do not have. This immediacy is closely related to personal selling where the salesman must close the deal. Advertising and much of sales promotion usually work at a distance, whether that distance be time, space, psychology. For example, only in relatively minor instances as direct mail

campaigns with coupon response can advertising be said to have immediacy. But packaging works only at the point of sale. It may, of course, be reinforced by advertising, by point-of-sale promotion, by previous experience, or by need. But if packaging is to be considered as related to selling at all, it must be considered the tool that produces the sale at the last critical moment.

A concise discussion of packaging at the point of sale appeared as an editorial in Dun's Review and Modern Industry. The editorial states:

"Everything succeeds or fails at the point of sale. All the time, talent, and money invested in planning, research, raw materials, processing, and distributing reaches the payoff point when the goods are offered to the consumer. That is why the appearance of the product at the point of sale is of tremendous importance. Merchandising problems deal with intangibles. People buy what they want not always what they need. Good packaging appeals to the senses. The art of effective merchandising includes many elements, but the visual display of the product and the combined utility and beauty of the container are a powerful sales builder. The merchandising specialists using modern packaging are putting up a strong fight for the buyer's attention and action at the time and place where profits are made or lost."²⁹

If the package is such an important factor in selling goods, there should be numerous illustrations of success clearly assignable to the package or to package improvement. As early as the 1930's, those dealing with package design could cite instances where the redesigned packages were responsible for spurts in sales; Camel cigarettes, Canada Dry Ginger Ale, and Cut-Rite waxed paper are examples. More recent successes include those of Marlboro cigarettes, built upon a flip-top box and a tattoo; Johnson's Wax shoe polish kit-in-a-can; and Kaiser aluminum foil

²⁹"Point of Sale and the Product," Dun's Review and Modern Industry, September 1957, Vol. 70, No. 3, p. 87

in an easy dispensing box. There are, of course, an infinite number of examples.

Packaging is considered to be a major factor in impulse buying. This is the buying that occurs when a purchaser is attracted by a product, a display, a notice, or a package and makes an unplanned purchase. There is nothing new in the present concept of impulse buying, at least not since the growth and spread of self-service stores. End-aisle mass displays in supermarkets, special shelf space assignment, and related-product selling have long been used. However, impulse buying appears to be spreading, perhaps as more housewives neglect to make lists, depending upon the shelves of the supermarket to act as reminders and on their higher average incomes to compensate for any extra purchases that would otherwise inconvenience a budget.

Packaging, therefore, is widely recognized as a sales tool. Recently, recognition has been given to packaging as a marketing tool. The package, in this view, is required "to stimulate new product success, to put new life into existing products and, in so doing, to reinforce and help establish the validity of all the links in the distribution chain."³⁰

The emphasis of this section has been on consumer packaging, since it is in this context that the selling ability of the package is most meaningful. However, this is not to ignore the selling potential of the package in other areas. Packaging plays an increasingly important role in the selling of industrial goods by providing convenience and brand identity, eliminating waste, and making materials handling more efficient.

³⁰Walter P. Margulies, Packaging for the Markets of Tomorrow, (Boston: Twenty-ninth Boston Conference on Distribution, Retail Trade Board, Oct. 1957), p. 38

In some ways, industrial and consumer packaging have become much closer because of the similarity of objectives in providing identification, convenience, protection, and sales appeal.

The next function of packaging to be discussed is the creation of value. Mass distribution shifts goods from the manufacturer's loading docks to the shelves and warehouses of the retailers. This puts concentration on mass consumption, because without organized efforts to induce and support consumption of goods and the values inherent in goods, nothing has been accomplished.

Certain problems, however, of mass consumption remain. They involve new concepts of consumer income and consumer choice and new values regarding ownership of goods as opposed to the purchase of functions. As the consumer rises in importance over the producer, it is inevitable that the nature of our society will change as radically in the future as mass production and mass marketing concepts have caused it to change in the past. The difference between past and future has been stated by Earnest Dichter: "...Our economic system has to produce consumers, whereas previously we produced only goods."³¹

Consumption of values inherent in goods goes beyond the possession of the goods themselves and has become the focus of marketing. Such a focus concentrates on the utilities of convenience and possession of goods in a form and at a time and place most opportune for consumption. Packaging increases consumability. The emphasis on use values rather than product was forcefully stated by Walter P. Paepoke, chairman of the board of the Container

³¹Earnest Dichter, Handbook of Consumer Motivations (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 453

Corporation of America: "Nobody wants a paper box. You never see a man try to collect 300,000 paper boxes before he dies."³²

It has been stated that "the affluent citizen of the next century will be oriented to buying time rather than the product...As scarcity of product disappears, the scarcity of time ascends the value scale."³³

The question has been hotly debated whether packaging adds a value to the packaged product beyond the strictly measurable functions of storage and display or simply adds a cost which is an economic waste. Value itself is not an easy term to define. Values may be defined as the capabilities of goods and services to satisfy human wants and needs, but this definition makes no statement as to the legitimacy of these human wants or needs. Such a definition focuses on the economic utilities by which value is defined. It provides no basis for considering the truly subjective aspects of value. These go back to early economic thought, therein value is defined as "an expression of the varying esteem which man attaches to the different objects of his desire,"³⁴ with the esteem not having any rational basis.

Certain consumer groups and spokesmen for these groups have been most prominent in leveling charges of economic waste against packaging. Their views and the implications of these views are noted throughout the testimony given during the hearings on the "truth in packaging" bill:

³²Walter P. Paepoke, Packaging--A Special Report," Dun's Review and Modern Industry, November 1961, p. 17

³³Ferdinand F. Mauser, "Thinking Ahead," Harvard Business Review, November-December, 1963, p. 172

³⁴Charles Gide and Charles Rist, A History of Economic Doctrines, (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1947), p. 64

"The Consumers' Union would like to call to the committee's attention the economic impact of deceptive packaging... The Food and Drug Administration has received a great number of complaints about packaging abuses and merchandising gimmickry. Packaging costs are equal to almost half the total revenues of our state and local governments. The average family is taxed \$190 annually or \$16 monthly for containers which almost invariably end up in the garbage can...The consumer pays for the package. Nearly a fifth of the consumer staples outlay was spent on the package."³⁵

Most such comments and objections have in common the underlying viewpoint that all consumer values are, or should be, rational and measurable and, accordingly, should be based on a price that is the best indicator of worth. Inherent in many of the comments is the fact that the speaker's position is essentially based on value judgements of his own that are just as subjective and difficult to defend as value judgements that are not grounded in measures such as price per pound. These value judgements are usually the result of equating value with price. "Priceless," however, does **not** mean "Valueless," nor does price tell anything about an object but the degree of comfort one is willing to forego to acquire it.

The consumer knowingly purchases certain values over and above the most drab and obvious functionality. For example, in addition to the obvious utility values of form, time, place, and possession, there is the value of scarcity. Certain consumers value what is rare, the possession of which indicates to the world and to themselves the kind of taste they have and the means they have to satisfy their wants. When such a product is a packaged good, the packaging lends reinforcement to this idea. In contrast to this item is the product which offers as a prime and salable virtue its conformity with what other consumers desire and buy.

³⁵Op. Cit., Hearings, Part I, p. 53

The values of packaging in enhancing the purchaser's self-image have been the subject of study. Such factors are included as the

"sensual pleasure of handling a container; prestige; implications of considerateness (the manufacturer cares about the consumer); sanitation; and finally creativity, as when the package induces a purchase so that the consumer can duplicate or surpass the desired end result pictured on the container."³⁶

These values can be discounted only if one discounts the values of marketing in a free society. If one accepts the concept of consumer choice based on motivations best known to and evaluated by the consumer, one must accept the range of product offerings that cater to various consumers. The exception, of course, is that category of products which are harmful or fraudulent.

Packagers recognize that packaging and marketing are inseparable. This recognition accounts for some of the violence of their rejection of the Hart Bill, even of some aspects of it that appear desirable to those wishing to reduce fraud. Manufacturers fear that a bill too restrictive of packaging must inevitably conflict with present-day marketing methods.

If one subscribes to the theory that marketing focuses on the consumer and attempts to interpret his wants and needs in terms of the available and potential product, plant, and services mix, then one must accept the fact that consumer choice will vary and will be based on rationales to which everyone does not subscribe, yet all of which have equal merit in the marketplace.

Marketers do not seek to deny the wants of the affluent foolish and careless part of society the opportunity to exercise choices that

³⁶Leonard M. Guss, Packaging is Marketing, American Management Association, Inc., New York, 1967, p. 85

may not be open to the less affluent. Except in instances of fraud and extreme health hazard, marketers do not make moral judgements as to which purchases or purchasers are foolish or careless.

Packaging, then, adds values to goods beyond the physical attributes of containment. These are values which are marketable and for which consumers are willing to exchange other values.

The last aspect of packaging which will be covered is the relationship to the ultimate consumer. The choice of buying or not buying as the sole response is really a reflection of one-way communication from seller to buyer. Recent studies have explored the kinds of responses and conduct generated under conditions of one-way communication, communication with limited feedback, and communication with full feed back. As is logical, the results have shown that performance of both communicator and respondent is improved in regard to the desired goal when a two-way flow is established.

Where the manufacturer-seller opens no return path from the consumer but restricts the flow of information to the consumer, whether stimulated by the package, by advertising, or other forms of indirect selling, he will rarely be able to distinguish the impact of the package in the total sales mix. If sales are good, he will not be able to ascribe such success to any one element or combination of elements. Similarly, if sales are bad, he will be unable to explain the reason why.

Actually, a completely one-way system of information flow is rare. First, all marketing research is an attempt to translate facts, opinions, or behavior into information that will influence the conduct of the packager. Most firms with investments in the consumer-goods market

conduct some form of research, ranging from store audits to psychological testing of consumers. Second, even for the most disinterested manufacturer there is some spillover of information, if only from the occasional consumer who writes a letter expressing his grievances or appreciation. Also, there is no lack of information available in consumer and trade journals summarizing the results of consumer studies.

Analysis of the results of studies conducted several years ago reveals that a surprising number of packaging attributes that were a source of complaint have been modified or radically improved. Here are some of the observations elicited by a survey of consumers in regard to packaging that later found their way into creative modifications.³⁷ For one thing, a significant percentage of women rely on the packaging in their buying decisions. They requested "less advertising" and more information of the kind that accurately described the contents or gave specific directions for use. They appeared perfectly willing to trade some extra funds for convenience in opening, in use, in reclosure, and in storage. The younger housewife is experimental and demonstrates less brand loyalty. She has more of everything except time and leans toward packaging that conserves her time, yet enables her better to fulfill her multiple roles of wage earner, housewife, family purchasing agent, and mother.

The women surveyed had strong negative opinions on packaging that leaked or was of an awkward size or shape. Such opinions have been translated into packaging changes, such as the plastic-coated paperboard

³⁷"Food packages ad Housewives See Them," Sales Management, reprint of articles appearing in issues of Oct. 21, Nov. 4, and Nov. 18, 1960, See especially pp. 1-2, 6-7

milk container which rapidly displaced the wax coated one and the low, square cereal cartons that are rapidly gaining favor over the tall, thin ones.

Women seem to want packaging that is up-to-date and modern, and that reinforces their image of themselves. They tend to reject packaging that does not recognize that "we've changed but too many packages have not." Premeasured packages that reduce waste or reduce the chance of error in use are in strong favor. The desire for unbreakable packages and for modern materials was a forerunner of the strong acceptance of plastics in packaging. Similarly, the early indications of desire for convenience in dispensing, even at added cost, was an indication of the forthcoming spectacular growth of aerosol containers.

In order to comprehend the full impact of the consumer as the determinant of packaging, some idea must be gained concerning the dimensions of meaning of packaging to the buyer. These have been expressed by a psychological investigator in the field, Earnest Dichter, as three: "Packaging is a symbol of considerateness, it facilitates choice, and it can arouse emotions."³⁸

Packaging communicates to the potential purchaser the care and forethought that the manufacturer has taken to ensure that the product will be delivered in usable condition. If well done, it generates in the buyer a sense of security as to the quality of his purchase and increases his sense of prestige in the purchase. When on display, a good package "reaches out" to the consumer and provides an opportunity for the consumer to identify with the product.

³⁸Earnest Dichter, Handbook of Consumer Motivations (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 312

Packaging can arouse favorable or unfavorable associations which help or impede selection. The image afforded by the package should be consistent with the product and with the buyer's personal image of himself. Some products are specifically designed for masculine or feminine use. When the package reinforces that idea, the purchaser is more receptive to the product.

Products do have "sex," and packages should reflect this. They also have attributes of fragility or durability and quality or economy, temporary or enduring aspects, and so forth.

Research is a determinate of packaging in two senses. First, the flow of new materials, processes, and techniques permit the marketer to package in new ways not known before. The technology of packaging has a decided impact upon the spectrum of alternatives available. Second, consumer research provides a formal feedback, from the potential purchaser of goods, of information which can be incorporated in design, choice of colors, container shape, and other variables.

Most manufacturers of packaging materials, supplies, and machinery maintain continuing and extensive research efforts, at significant cost. An estimated \$150 million is spent annually in materials and systems research alone.³⁹ Further, major users of packaging maintain their own research efforts in laboratories where they test materials and packages in an effort to reduce cost while maintaining desired performance characteristics.

³⁹"Packaging: The Big Push Forward," Dun's Review and Modern Industry, November 1963, Part II, Special Supplement on Packaging, p. 165

Consumer research in packaging is not new. Much of the early work was in color research, to determine which colors were most attractive to potential buyers under which circumstances. Color is used to create an image, to attract attention, to conform to certain surroundings, to be consistent with the product content, to attract a certain class of customers, to arouse emotion, and for a variety of other related reasons. There is little question that certain colors are associated with certain sensations or moods. Red is a vibrant color; black, a sombre one. The same holds true for shapes. The triangle is said to be the shape with the highest degree of impact but, at the same time, is supposed to generate unfavorable associations in the minds of women.

On balance, packaging research, whether technical or consumer, does act as a determinant of packaging and has tended to produce better packaging, if "better" is defined as aiding the success of the product in achieving its marketing goals. The key is to have a packaging development program

"that is consistent and well integrated with stated marketing goals in such terms as the following:

1. What product characteristics are to be emphasized?
2. What correlative advertising and promotional media will be used?
3. What retail channel is being used?
4. What store displays?
5. At what group is the product aimed?
6. Are there special demands of the retail channel?
7. What unit quantity is required?
8. Are there special shelf-life demands?
9. Does the product have Multicomponent aspects?
10. Should a family relationship be maintained with other products?
11. What is the method and quantity of use?
12. What value (cost) does marketing allow for the package?"⁴⁰

⁴⁰"Marketing and Package Research: Profitable Togetherness?"
Consumer Packaging, August, 1961, p. 50

IV

SUMMARY

My purpose in writing this paper has been to discuss the several important functions of packaging and their relation to marketing. Whether packaging should be considered a marketing function depends on the narrowness of interpretation of the marketing concept, but there is no doubt that packaging can be so considered.

This is not to claim that packaging in the marketing sense, over and above the physical containment of goods, is a factor in each and every marketing transaction. It is not. But neither is this a test of every marketing function. Referring to the definition usually accepted, a marketing function must be a major economic activity, inherent, pervasive, and specialized. Packaging, therefore, has to meet the test of universality no more than do other functions.

I feel that a study of packaging is enlightening not only for its own sake but for the light it sheds on other aspects of marketing. For anyone who seeks understanding of the underlying causes of change as a basis for reasonable anticipations of the magnitude and direction of further change, this paper explores some of the interrelationships responsible for change and growth in marketing. Many institutions and processes which often appear to stand alone can be seen as depending at least in part upon packaging.

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