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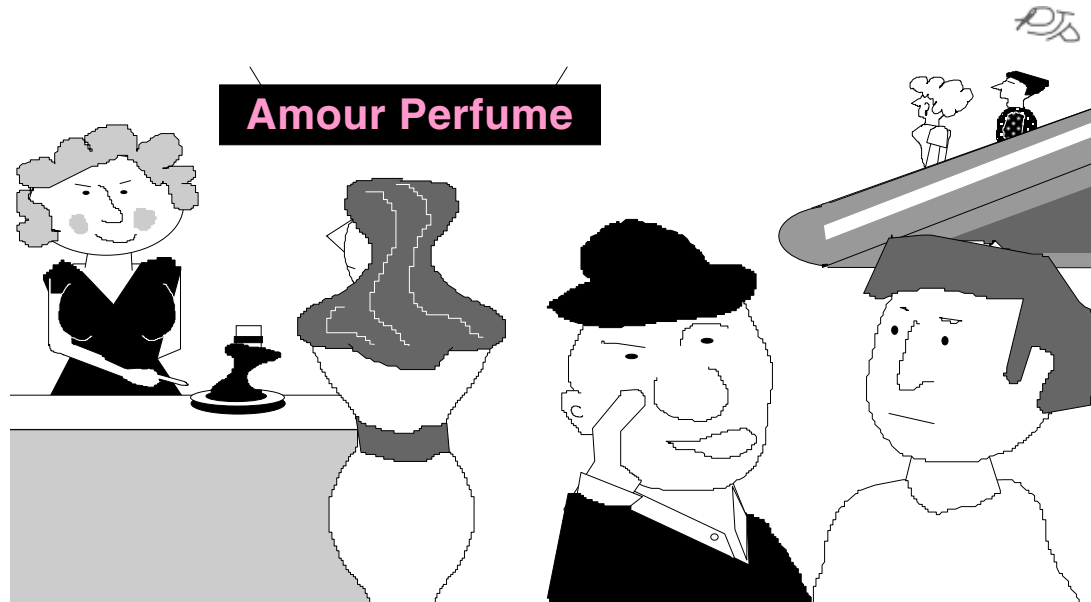
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“Actually, my niece says the stuff stinks but she thinks the bottle will make a great candle holder!”

Smallbusinessstown.com

DESIGNING PACKAGING

PUTTING a widget in a box, covering the box with a few pictures and labels, and calling it *packaging*, is **DANGEROUS**. Packaging is much more than that.

Packaging has protective and distributive functions. It makes product contents convenient to use, safe to use and easy to store. It also performs an integral role in all advertising, promotion, and marketing efforts, and more than any other single factor is responsible for creating a company's image.

In fact, some people prefer to think of packaging as an exact science.

EIGHT STEPS TO DESIGNING THE PERFECT PACKAGE

PACKAGE DESIGN centers around meeting two primary purposes: packaging must be both functional and promotional.

Functional packaging protects your product while being shipped and handled until the customer is ready to buy and use it. Promotional packaging is a competitive tool to help influence your customer's buying decisions – it helps make your product stand out from others, identify and create a company image, and act as a silent salesperson to all those who pass by.

In the U.S. alone packaging is a greater than \$50 billion a year industry that employs more than 1 million people in 300,000 companies.
FUNFACT

However, to achieve all this, plus stay within your packaging budget and meet other essential requirements, as outlined in greater detail in the next section of this guidebook, is no easy task. It is thus recommended that to design and produce *the*

perfect package you first draft an overall package design strategy. An example of such a strategy is given in the following eight steps:

STEP 1 – Gather information.

As a package designer, you must do more than simply enclose a product in a container. You must create a package that is unique, aesthetically pleasing, helps sell the product, runs on existing packaging machinery, and meets other needs of your company. To do this you must first gather as much information as you can. In-store research can be

useful, along with information gleaned from books, periodicals and brochures. This is also the appropriate time to ask yourself questions like: Where will our product be sold? Who will buy it? How much will it cost? And how will these concerns affect our packaging decisions?

NOTE For more insights into all the factors you need to consider when designing your package, read “Factors that Influence *Packaging Design*” at the end of this section.

STEP 2 – Develop a preliminary concept. The second phase of package design, involves the development of a few preliminary ideas. To do

this, write out a packaging concept (see sidebar). Then make at least 10 to 25 roughs or sketches. Roughs and sketches are usually drawn on a 14 by 17 layout pad

Developing a Packaging Concept for Whole-wheat Mini-Buns

THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE of *Bradley’s Whole-wheat Mini-Buns* is that they are an all natural product that appeals to the health-conscious. Because of their quality, customers must see the mini-buns through the package. Therefore, *Bradley’s Whole-wheat Mini-Buns* should be boxed in clear material.

The positioning statements, “*For real bun eaters who know the difference*” and “*It’s all natural*” will appear on the face of the package. Across the left corner of the package will be a red slash that reads “*Keep the goodness. Keep us in the fridge.*”

in color. Clearly indicate timesteps and logos. Make sure your roughs and sketches are neat and clear and keep them in your portfolio for future reference and for use as presentation material.

STEP 3 – Prepare a comprehensive.

The third phase of package design involves the preparation of a comprehensive. This phase includes determining the structural design of the carton, box model, or prototype. Be sure to consider potential production and manufacturing problems. The package size and shape should make products easy to handle for employees, distributors, and customers. The construction material used must protect the products during shipping.

The package size and shape should make products easy to handle for employees, distributors, and customers.

STEP 4 – Design a box cover. The fourth phase of package design centers around developing a cover for your box. Using markers, prepare a layout showing what you would like the final box cover to

look like. Construct a mock-up of this layout and take a Polaroid of it. After studying the shot, see if you need to do several variations. When satisfied with your results, your next step is to have a preproduction meeting with your photographer. At this meeting, present your layout; describe your ideas about the set, lighting, mood, and the appearance of models (if required); and review your budget. Remember that film is cheap and time is money. Once the photo shoot is under way, let the photographer shoot as many rolls of films as are needed to cover

every possible situation and angle. After processing the film and choosing the best results, scan the photos into a computer (or turn them into photo CDs). Here, words logos and other information can be added. As well, the image can be re-touched, and imperfections removed.

NOTE In general, the wording and labels of the package should be simple and work well together with the prominent graphics on the box cover. The colors of the packaging and print style may be conservative or bold.

STEP 5 – Construct a prototype. The fifth phase of package design centers around building a prototype or mock-up as close a possible to the final design. This

prototype will then be used to test the viability of the design concept. To help you successfully complete this step, below is a list of packaging techniques and materials you should become familiar with:

Often, the difference between success and failure can be found in the design of a product's packaging.
SUPERTIP

Applying Photos to Packaging Material – The process of applying photos to packaging can be quite complicated and is better explained by an expert in the field. However, if mounting artwork and photographs on 24 point board, use rubber cement or spray.

Die Cutting – Every paperboard or paper product, whether three-dimensional or flat, has a shape or form that is produced by die-cutting. The process of die-cutting involves creating shapes of many kinds, using cutting, and stamping

dies, from papers, board, and plastics. There are three methods of die-cutting:

1. *Hollow die-cutting* is done with a hollow die, which looks like a cookie cutter. This method is used almost exclusively for labels and envelopes.
2. *Steel-rule die-cutting* is used when close register is required. Steel rules are bent to the desired shape and inserted or wedged into a 3/4 piece of plywood. The multiple dies are locked up in a chase on a plate of the die-cutting press. Several sheets can be cut at one time. A flat-bed cylinder press can also be used for this kind of die-cutting.
3. The *thread die-cutting* method uses laser beams. Laser beams can be con-

centrated on a small point and used for packaging processes such as drilling, cutting, and welding. All types of material, including paper, metal, plastics and wood, can be die cut with lasers. Since the laser beam is extremely sharp and precise, the cutting is very accurate. Therefore, the resulting edges do not have to be finished in any other way, such as filing or bluffing, as they do with other methods.

*You can't tell—
but you can
sell—a book by its
cover.*

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL**

Embossing – Embossing is achieved by pressing a sheet of paper between a press female die and a male bed or counter. This process makes a design or image to appear in relief. Paper and cardboard lend themselves well to embossing.

Scoring Cardboard – Cardboard can be easily folded to make a carton. However, to facilitate folding, a score, or crease, must be made on the cardboard. The tool used for scoring is a blunt-face (round edge) scoring rule. A press that can score and cut the paperboard in one impression is the most suitable for cutting out carton blanks and should be purchased or leased if you plan to make your own cartons.

NOTE When constructing a carton by hand, never score the paper with a sharp blade. Use a blunt edge, such as a paper clip, coin, or BallPoint pen, against a steel rule. Always bend against the score to produce an embossed, raised edge. Also, make note of the grain of the cardboard. In all papers and boards the fibers are aligned in one direction,

When constructing a carton by hand, never score the paper with a sharp blade.

called the grain. The paper or board will fold or score easily along the grain. If they are torn with the grain, their edges will be smooth; if they are torn against the grain, their edges will be ragged.

Using Aerosol Cans – An aerosol can is an airtight valved container made from metal, glass or plastic and filled with a formulation that consists of a propellant (a gas) and the active ingredient (the product). When the valve is operated, the pressure of the gas pushed both the propellant and the active ingredient through a small pinhole opening in the valve. A fine, misty spray is produced; the fineness of the spray depends on the nature of the product and propellant and the type of valve used.

NOTE Today, ozone damaging fluorocarbons are not used in aerosols. Safer propellants, such as the hydrocarbons: propane, butane and isobutane are preferred.

Using Construction Board – Construction board is made by laminating layers of paper together. If the board is more than 12 points thick it is called cardboard or paperboard. If it is between 18 and 24 points thick, it is called boxboard and is used in folding cartons. Illustration board is about 60 points thick. For displays or signs, 80-100 point board is generally used.

NOTE When making cartons out of construction boards, use white glue to join sides.

Using Corrugated Containers – According

In 1987, folding paperboard cartons was a \$3 billion industry.
FUNFACT

to the U.S. Department of Commerce 1987 figures, the construction of corrugated containers is a \$10 billion industry, employing 118,000 people in 1,427 plants. The structural characteristic of the corrugated medium are governed by four variables: the strength of the lines; the strength of the corrugated medium, the height and numbers of flutes per foot; and the type of walls (single double, triple).

Using Flexible Packaging Materials – There are three basic types of flexible packaging: wraps and overwraps, bags and envelopes, and foam filled pouches. Aseptic packaging which is used for apple juice and even milk can increase the shelf life of these products.

Using Folding Cartons – There are more

than 500 styles and variations of folding paperboard cartons, with more being added every year by skilled paper engineers. Folding cartons are suitable for all printing processes but are particularly adapted to offset lithography. Often a transparent film is glued over windows before the blanks are folded. During the printing operations, windows and die cuts can be added to the cartons. Special finishing and decorative treatments, such as embossing, varnishing, and texturing, can be applied before, during and after printing. In addition, wax, sealers, and laminations can be added to protect the carton's contents from moisture or from sticking to the inner surfaces.

Using Glass Containers – The popularity of using glass containers for packaging, in-

cluding bottles, jars, tumblers, jugs and vials, lies in the nature of glass itself. Glass is chemically inert. This means it does not affect or react to the taste or odor of products packaged in it. Moreover, its smooth, non-porous surface facilitates washing and sterilizing processes. A glass container can also be sealed so that it is airtight and be simply decorated with labels, pressings and castings.

NOTE Glass containers despite such drawbacks as frailty and excess weight, suggest that the product is of superior quality.

Using Plastic Materials – Today's plastics are synthesized from crude oil, coals, natural gas, air, water, limestone, salt, cotton, soybeans, corn and substances obtained from trees. In recent years, manufactures

Package design is function driven, image inspired and cost dependent.
POWERPOINT

have developed new plastics such as ABS, PET, Lexan, Resins, and high performance plastics, which are used for bottles and containers and can be recycled. In addition, chemical engineers can build many desirable features into plastics such as flexibility, strength, transparency, and biodegradability.

Using Shrink Wrap – Another method of packaging toys, housewares, and contoured products is to shrink-wrap them. Shrink-wrapping which involves sealing a layer of plastic around an object with the application of heat, is a good way to display as well as protect products.

Using Soldered Metal Cans – Soldered metal cans have for many years been used to safely store food and other items such

as tennis balls and even puzzles. Usually a paper label is glued on the outside of the can. However, modern high-speed printing processes now permit lithographic printing of graphic illustrations or photographs, in as many as six colors, directly on the can.

Another method of packaging toys, housewares, and contoured products is to shrink-wrap them.

STEP 6 – Test the prototype.

The sixth phase of package design involves testing the complete package from an engineering, visual, dealer, consumer, and cost effective point of view. If the packaging is not strong enough, appealing enough to attract customers, or too expensive, you will need to make the necessary changes to improve it, or scrap it entirely and start over again.

STEP 7 – Get a Universal Product Code. The Universal Product Code (UPC)

symbol is about 1 1/2 inches long. It consists of 30 vertical dark lines with 29 spaces and a 10 digit series of numbers. The first five numbers designate the manufacturer; the second five identify the product and the package size. Optical scanners are used to read the UPC symbol into a computer, which will indicate the price and provide a printed tape itemizing the products purchased and totaling the bill.

NOTE UPC codes are especially important if the packaged product is to be sold in a supermarket or department store.

STEP 8 – Prepare a production mechanical. The final phase of package design involves the preparation of a production mechanical. A production mechanical

incorporates all final art, photographs, illustrations and type onto one sheet, which will later be attached to the cardboard, glass or plastic container.



UPC codes are especially important if the packaged product is to be sold in a supermarket or department store.

Using Computer-aided Package Design (CAD) Systems

COMPUTER-AIDED PACKAGE design systems are the most significant development in modern packaging design since the felt marker, greatly reducing the amount of time required for revisions and modifications of drawing board art. They enable the designer to create or alter a package concept in minutes. Specifically, the designer can experiment with colors, background tones, shadows, or text and images that can be squeezed, stretched, rotated, superimposed on other images, zoomed in, or moved to another part of the design. Once most designers have used this system, the most common reaction is, "How did I ever get along without it?"

Here's how a CAD system for packaging works:

Using a flatbed scanner or video camera, images from drawings, photographs, printed materials, transparencies, or even three-dimensional objects are fed into the computer.

Once in the computer, the images can then be manipulated by the designer and combined with thousands of typefaces. In a matter of minutes, many different possibilities for a logo can be created. When the logo is finished, the designer can slap it onto any one of a number of boxes or containers, and along with various other images and text produce a finished design.

With the concept finished, the designer can then choose among several options to reproduce it: laser printer copy, an inkjet or thermal-printer copy, or even a 35 mm transparency.

The computer can also be used to simulate the environments in which the design will appear. For example, if you want to know how a design will look at a 7-11 outlet, you can input the interior of the store using a slide, and superimpose your design.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PACKAGING DESIGN

A SUCCESSFUL well planned packaging program consists of making use of expert input from graphic and product designers, marketing managers, salespeople, manufacturing representatives, distribution consultants and even consumer surveys.

Package design must also be in tune with demographic changes, new technologies, government regulations, ecological concerns, and numerous business functions that include marketing, advertising, and the production of point-of-purchase and other promotional materials.

Since people buy what they like the looks of, beauty of package design is essential.

These factors, as well as others, are explained in detail below.

Packaging Design is Influenced by . . .

1. **Art & Beauty Needs** – Since people buy what they like the looks of, beauty of package design is essential. Designers can increase the creativity in their approach by increasing range of their knowledge. They should become familiar with the history of art, especially artistic styles.

They should also read, observe, and expand their understanding of art through theater, cinema, music and dance. A designer should also regularly visit galleries and museums.

NOTE Even in packaging, keep in mind that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. In other words, a package that is beautiful to an auto mechanic may not be so beautiful to a hair salon owner.

2. Available Access to Packaging Equipment

– When designing a package you need to consider what packaging and filling equipment you have or have access to in your area.

When designing a package you need to consider what packaging and filling equipment you have or have access to in your area.

3. Company Image –

When designing a package you need to consider how the packaging will add or detract from your company image. Effective packaging can connect your company to the buying public or market in

a way that attracts customers and keeps them coming back. Strive to develop packaging that people will accept, relate to and be drawn to. The most important image to create is the image of high quality and being the best.

Well-designed packaging can also create the image of excellent service, friendly service, high value for the money, satisfaction guaranteed, and lowest prices anywhere.

NOTE The five top ways to develop a company image other than advertising, marketing and promoting, is with your company name, product names, logo, slogan and *packaging*.

4. Competitive Pressures –

Your packaging concept will be influenced

by its need to stand out from the competition. Remember that your product will be surrounded by other people's products. 75 percent of all goods purchased by consumers in the United States are distributed in packages, all of them vying for consumer attention.

5. **Consumer Needs –**

Your package design will also be molded by the needs, preferences, tastes, purchasing power and buying habits of your consumers. Information of this kind can be found by conducting marketing surveys and demographic studies. Ultimately, it may influence for example, how easy it is to dispense

Biodegradable plastic costs about \$2 a pound while ordinary polyethylene costs about 50 cents a pound. Biodegradable plastics will begin to crumble after three or four weeks of exposure to sunlight.

FUNFACT

your product from its container or package. Knowing the buying habits of consumers can also be a great help in planning the graphic and structural design of a package or POP display.

NOTE Product packaging has a lot to do with creating brand loyalty. Put a defective valve on an aerosol can and you may lose a loyal customer.

6. **Distribution & Shipping needs –** Design packages so they can fit on top of each other to allow for more compact shipping. Also, design

packaging to be as light as possible to reduce shipping costs. This is especially necessary if the product is to be

mailed.

- 7. Environmental Concerns** – It is only until recently that most of us have become aware of some of the consequences of the vast accumulation of trash produced in our throw away society. Among these consequences are shrinking forests, polluted air, undrinkable water, and dying animals. In fact, the volume of plastic production is almost beyond belief. More than 20 million tons of plastic a year is produced in the United States alone. Indeed, the cubic volume of plastics has surpassed that of steel, copper and aluminum combined. The problem is that all the plastic material

The Marine Science Research Center has estimated that 30 percent of the fish in the world's oceans have pieces of plastic in their stomachs that interfere with digestion.
FUNFACT

currently in use will take up to five centuries to degrade.

With this in mind, it is no wonder that more and more companies are seriously looking at how their packaging is disposed of, whether its biodegradable, reusable (as is the case of high-performance thermoplastics) or environmentally green. They also debate about whether they should use recycled paper or perhaps switch to biodegradable protective filler (like popcorn) instead of using environmentally hazardous Styrofoam chips.

NOTE The Japanese lead the way in burning plastics safely without pollution.

- 8. Future Trends in Marketing** – The

competent package designer knows that creative marketing is based on anticipating future trends. This is especially important when new production and distribution techniques are developed as well as marketing techniques and procedures.

9. Government Regulations –

Packaging attracts a great deal of government attention. Regulatory agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which has strict procedures for the labeling of items falling within its jurisdiction, and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) through its Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, regularly enforce strict safety and strength standards on all packaging.

Packaging attracts a great deal of government attention.

NOTE Packaging guidelines can be obtained from the FDA or found in the library. In Canada, you will need to consider: The Food and Drug Act, Consumer Packaging and Labeling Act, Hazardous Product Act, and perhaps the Quebec Language Bill 101 (see sidebar at the end of this guide).

U.S. Packaging Standards

North American Packaging Federation

c/o The Packaging Institute
342 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10017

American National Standards Institute

1430 Broadway
New York, NY 10018
(212) 354-3300

American Institute of Weights and Measure
P.O. Box 1122

Erie, Pennsylvania 16512
(814) 833-7455

10. Industry Standards – Industry standards are designed to protect users of a carton. They are based on government regulations and laws pertaining to shipment methods e.g., rail, airfreight, truck and regular parcel post; and testing procedures. Procedures for testing packaging center around subjecting them to the same conditions to which a product is subjected to in the course of normal handling; these include drops, jolts, shock, and vibration. These tests are designed to select the right box for a product, as well as the right master carton in which to ship the boxed product, without costly packaging, over-

Government regulations and industry standards are designed to protect users of a carton.

packaging, or under packaging. If you decide to manufacture your packaging yourself, before your packaging meets approval, you may need to perform all or some of the following tests:

- a tensile and elongation test (for plastic bags and covering films)
- an impact test (to test the strength of films)
- a tear test (for paper or film)
- a stiffness test (for packaging materials)
- a water-vapor transmission test
- a gas transmission test
- a bursting strength test
- a flat crush test (testing the compression of corrugated board)

- a fold endurance test
- a grease penetration test
- a special gloss test

11. Input from Professional Package Designers

– If you hire outside help to design your package, which you most likely will do, the expertise of the package designer will greatly influence your final concept. The package designer can also help you with graphic and structural design concerns as well as package production, printing and the modeling proc-

In 1970, the Canadian Federal parliament unanimously endorsed the White paper on Metric Conversion whereby length, weight, quantity, mass, temperature and other units of measurement were changed to the metric system. Well over 95% of the world's population is using or converting to the metric system. Metrication is very important to businesses which plan to export outside of North America.

FUNFACT

ess.

12. Labeling Requirements – Packag-

ing must be labeled following certain guidelines. On your principle display panel (which should be more than 40% of the total front display area), you must include the product's name, manufacturer, and packer or distributor. The manufacturer's name and address, including city, state and zip code, may appear anywhere on the package. However, the street may be omitted if the ad-

dress is in a current city or telephone directory. The packer's or distributor's

name must be qualified, e.g., “Distributed by . . .”

Quantity statements, descriptions of contents and safety warnings must also appear somewhere within the lower 30% of the label, be parallel to the base of the package or commodity and be separated above and below from other printed matter.

If your product is further packaged in numerous quantities in a corrugated shipping box, the shipping box must include a “Box Certificate” or “Packaging Construction Statement”

for shipping (see diagram). This certificate should include weight, paper content, puncture and bursting test strength, and gross width.

Packaging Construction Statement



13. Marketing Needs –

Company logos and brand names, play an import role in product identification and recognition, and must be prominently displayed on your package.

Package design must also be tied in effectively with newspaper, magazine and television advertising. Ads

that effectively depict the package enable consumers to identify the product by its packaging.

14. Message Desired – When designing your package you must give special attention to the nature and content of the sales message you want to deliver. Packaging can deliver messages about your product, brand, product category, typical customers, or benefits offered by the product. The package can also project uniqueness, create an image, or increase the impact of other promotional tools and even send subliminal messages (e.g., color, shape, size and texture can be used to suggest luxury).

Well-designed packaging is like a billboard that attracts customer attention and sales.
SUPERTIP

15. Packaging Budget – Packaging design is always limited by budget concerns. For most products, packaging should not add more than 5% to the total cost of your product.

16. Production Techniques – The design of your package will be influenced by available packaging machinery and production techniques. Package designers must therefore keep up with industry developments by reading related trade publications and talking to packaging suppliers, who are always well informed on the latest techniques and materials.

17. Product needs – The influence of a product's packaging needs, its size, weight, shape and fragility, are obvious design concerns. You shouldn't put perfume in a plastic container if you can afford glass, nor shrink wrap expensive china. You may also need to consider how easy or difficult it is to dispense your

product from its container and whether this is an important consideration.

NOTE Make your packaging durable enough so people will think of other uses for it. For example, sell your cookies in a metal container, so that after the cookies are gone your metal container will be used to store something else. Every time the person opens the container to get whatever they stored inside of it, they will see your company logo.

18. Wholesaler & Retailer

Needs – Before a packaging concept can be complete, you must consider the needs of the people who will sell and distribute your products. You may need special promotional materials to complement your packaging

design for supermarkets, department stores, boutiques and so on. To get this information, study the market by visiting retail stores and interviewing manager, sales personnel and if possible consumers.

Make your packaging durable enough so people will think of other uses for it.

NOTE A key influence on packaging design is the expansion of supermarkets and retailing chains. These enterprises have demanded a new look at the methods of selling, packaging and new-product introduction. Supermarkets, for example, offer up to 10,000 items of which 20 percent are loss leaders, that is, sold at or below cost to bring shoppers into a store. Once in the store, shoppers need to be enticed to buy up to 50 percent more on impulse. Special offerings, such as premiums and samples, encourage impulse buying.

But package designers can also influence such buying with strong, exciting graphic designs, and POP displays, where the packages that fit inside them seem to jump out and say “buy me.”



You can't have quality with mass production. You don't want it because it lasts too long. So you substitute styling, which is a commercial swindle intended to produce artificial obsolescence. Mass production couldn't sell its goods next year unless it made what it sold this year look unfashionable a year from now . . . We make the finest packages in the world, Mr. Marlow. The stuff inside is mostly junk.

RAYMOND CHANDLER

The Long Good-bye, 1953

Packaging & Labeling in Canada

THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT of Commerce and Corporate Affairs regulates packaging information on all prepackaged consumers products in Canada. The following information, in both French and English, must be clearly visible on the label of prepackaged products:

- The identity of the product
- The product's net quantity in metric units or Canadian units of measure
- The identity and principle place of business of the manufacturer or the person for whom the product was manufactured.

Precious Metals Marketing Act – The Precious Metals Marketing Act regulates articles made wholly or partly of precious metals such as jewelry, silverware, watches and pens.

Hazardous Products Act – All hazardous or dangerous products must be marked according to the Hazardous Products Act.

Textile Labeling Act – The Textile Labeling Act requires that textiles be labeled with the fibre content for wearing apparel, fabrics sold by the piece, and household textiles. This act also regulates the advertising, sale and import of all consumer textile fabric products.

For further information regarding packaging contact the Federal Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs