1866 2010

THE HISTORY OF PACKAGING – CHAPTER TWO

the birth of PACKAGING DESIGN

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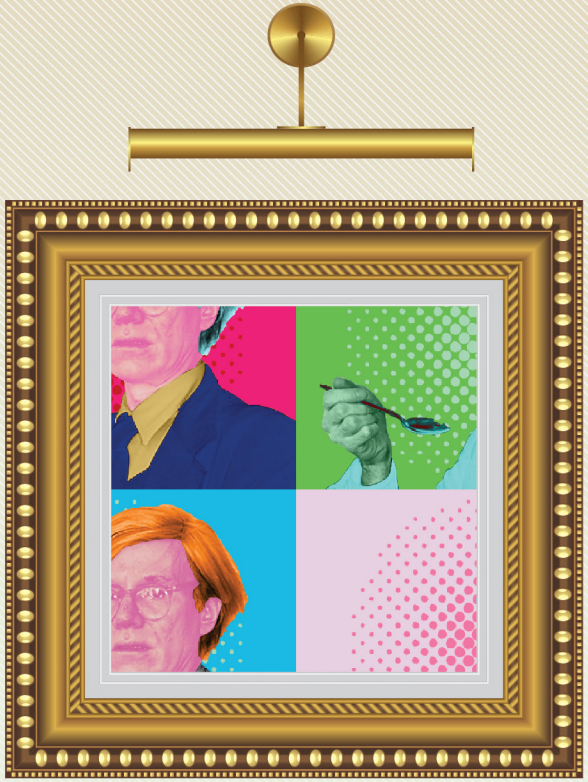
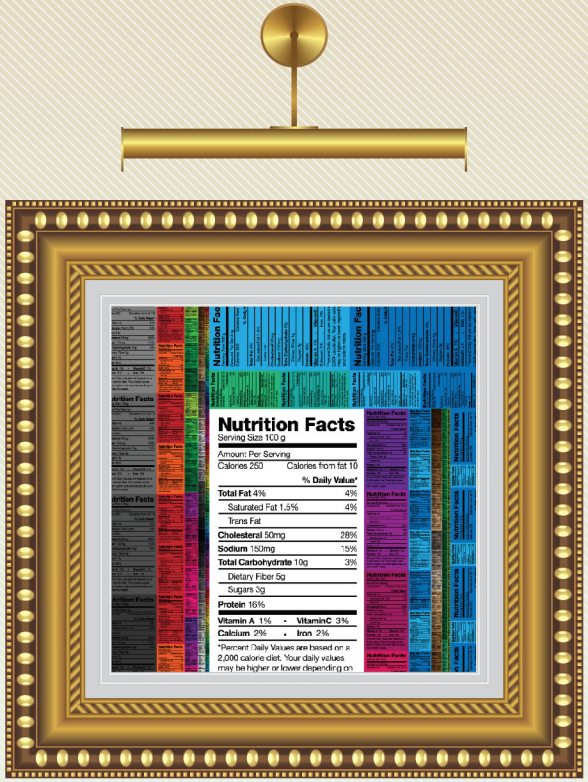




PACKAGING HISTORY:

FROM WOOD CRATES TO HIGH ART

We all live and work in a society of billboards, online ads and sophisticated product marketing. Branding is so ubiquitous it is difficult to imagine product containers without branding or design elements. But for centuries, food, beverages and other consumer goods were largely sold in nameless glass jugs, wood crates, steel cans and cloth bags. It wasn't until the late 19th Century that tin and paperboard products became cheap enough for manufacturers to utilize them on a wide scale.

In the 20th Century packaging materials and packaging design merged to become one. The contour glass Coca-Cola bottle is a substrate, brand and package design all in one. The same holds for iconic food packaging like the Pringles potato chip can and the Tootsie Roll package. In many cases, substrates drive design. The advent of clear cellophane in the 1960s enabled a generation of children to see the delicious OREO cookies inside.

In the 1970s, private label packaging went generic, while package designers began working with the black lines of the new UPC barcode and later, in the 1990s, with the new Nutrition Facts label.

1860's

In the Beginning...

Until the late 1800s, packaging (containers) was largely an expensive either/or proposition: practical and durable for storage or reserved for luxury goods, such as jewelry or premium foods. These were not disposable items, and some manufacturers recognized an opportunity to promote an "after use."

The Dixie Queen company began designing its punch-cut tobacco tins to resemble picnic baskets (and later lunch boxes). Its name was stamped on the tin "basket' and these items remained popular into the early 1900s. The rise of dual-use packaging in the late 19th Century provides some of the earliest examples of branded consumer packaging. The tradition continues today with, among many examples, consumers using recyclable, branded tote bags from their favorite grocery stores.

THE TAKEAWAY

Today, multi-use packaging has a new multidimensional meaning. Because of innovative barcodes, "connected packaging" not only protects the product, and can be recycled, but also can trigger ongoing conversations with consumers.

1866

Cough Drop Knockoffs Lead To Branding

The two-bearded brothers on Smith Brothers Cough Drops packaging are real brothers. Their image first appeared in 1866. The cough drops were popular and competitors began hawking cough drops in the streets under similar names. The brothers decided to mark products by putting their pictures on product packaging. It was arguably the first use of branding on consumer packaging, in its most simplified form, i.e., placing a name/image on the product to denote ownership.

A year later, Dr. Lyon's tooth powder printed its name and simple design elements directly on metal (tin) boxes. It was the first example of this application and brands such as Saltine crackers and Cracker Jack utilized tin well into the middle of the 20th Century. Today, such dry goods are sold almost exclusively in folded paperboard cartons.

THE TAKEAWAY

Although toothpaste has largely replaced tooth powder, the personal care products segment is going strong and is dominated today by plastic packaging. Plastic is king and accounts for 60% of the market, and is expected to grow 12% by 2019.*

**Association for Packaging and Processing Technologies*

1896

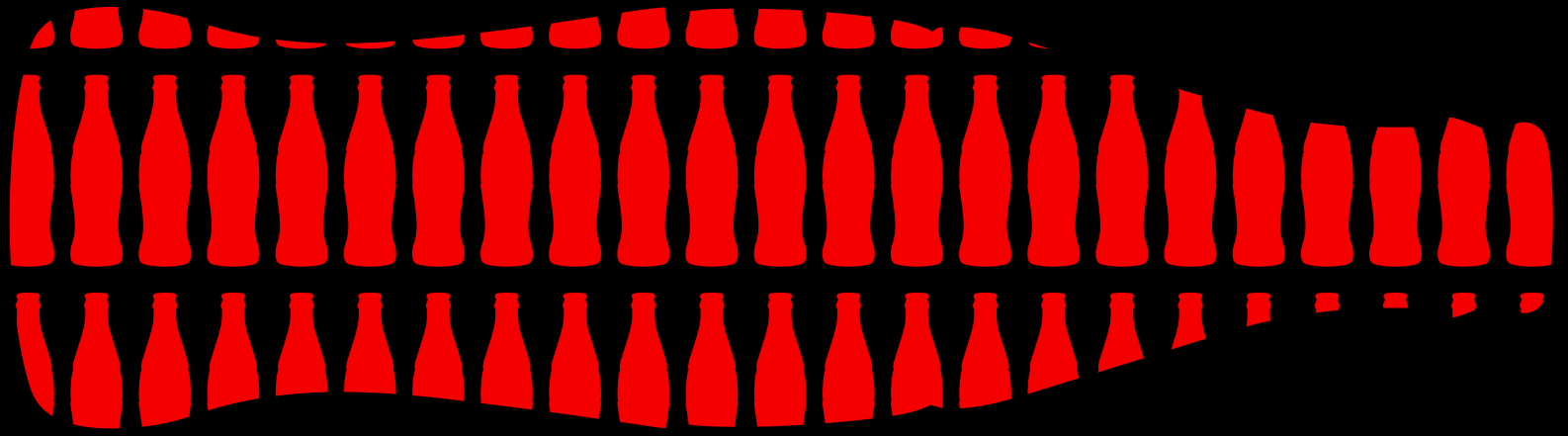
Designed, Branded, Nationally Promoted

One of history's first, fully-designed, branded and nationally-marketed consumer packaged goods was NABISCO's Uneeda biscuits' 1896 launch with the famed little boy in the yellow raincoat. There had likely been regional examples of such efforts, but no manufacturers until then had had the resources and ambition to reach the entire country.

NABISCO was in a fierce snack war with Cracker Jack and believed its waxed paper liner was its unique selling proposition. NABISCO invested $1 million in advertising and branding, and the experts decided the boy in a raincoat would personify the wax paper protection. The marketing campaign and branded packaging were a success, and the Uneeda brand thrived until 2008 when it was discontinued.

THE TAKEAWAY

A national ad campaign today isn't enough to be successful. Consumers are no longer passive receptors. They want control and information. Brands need to think digital, and add advanced codes to its packaging, such as Digimarc Barcode, to make it easy for consumers to scan and get the info they want.



1915

The Curve Seen Around the World

The Coca-Cola contour glass bottle is beyond-iconic, it's epic. Coca-Cola had been a popular soda fountain drink beginning in the 1880s. Coca-Cola began bottling its soda in 1900 in straight-sided bottles, but competitors soon began imitating its distinctive brand script, and using names like "Koka-Nola." In 1914, Coca-Cola went to its bottling suppliers and asked for a distinctive design.

Coca-Coca filed the patent for the contour glass bottle in 1915. In the ensuing decades, the contour bottle essentially became the brand. In 1961, the U.S. Patent Office officially recognized this bottle as a trademark. It was virtually unheard for a commercial package to be given such status.

THE TAKEAWAY

Many of Coca-Cola's glass suppliers protested the shape. The new bottles were expensive and required a change in process. But Coca-Cola convinced them. Today, brands may have suppliers unfamiliar or resistant to digital packaging options. The benefits of an innovative change can be huge.

1946

P&G Bets on a Tidal Wave of Color

Many factors make package design memorable, but it's hard to argue with strong color, imagery, fonts, copy and the right substrate. Procter & Gamble certainly got it right with Tide detergent in 1946. It was designed by a famed architect and designer and is considered the first national product to use bright colors.

According to *AdAge*, "The dominant orange and yellow used for the Tide box were intended to alarm and convey a sense of heavy-duty power...The bold lettering of the word 'Tide' was in blue and intended to offset the possible dangers implied in the orange and yellow with a safer, reassuring emotional message." Good design is always good messaging.

THE TAKEAWAY

Embracing disruptive technology can pay off big time. Tide detergent was based on synthetic compounds, not soap chemicals. It was a major breakthrough in soap making practices. It was a risk, but sales exploded, and positioned Procter & Gamble for years of growth.

1949

Designers Find Freedom with Flexography

Up until the 1930s, package designers were hamstrung by letterpress printing technology, which limited substrate options and design capabilities. The invention of flexographic (flexo) printing (aniline dye on flexible plates made of rubber/plastic) solved this. Printers could print on a variety of substrates, such as metallic films, milk cartons and folded cartons, and designers could ensure sophisticated image/color accuracy.

The first aniline dyes were made with coal by-products and by the 1940s the FDA had banned the ink for use with food packaging. Until then, flexo was known as "aniline printing." In 1949, a new, safe ink was created and, to remove the aniline-stigma, the printing process was renamed flexographic printing.

THE TAKEAWAY

Today flexo printing is still vital to packaging. The increasing popularity of pouches has migrated more and more packaging from offset printing to flexo. Pasta sauce labels, for example, once printed on offset for glass jars, are giving ground to flexo as brands move toward pasta in microwavable pouches.

1962

Package Design Inspires Pop Art

The Campbell's® Tomato Soup Can was famous well before Andy Warhol. The original design dates to 1897. It had three strong design elements: red-and-white colors (orange and blue for a year), the Campbell's cursive script and the gold medallion in the center of the design. A clear and simple presentation—a lesson for designers today.

In 1962, the pop artist Andy Warhol created 32 silk-screened paintings of all Campbell's flavors, turning this commercial design into fine art. Warhol's early career was as commercial/advertising artist and he understood the power of an iconic brand in a consumer culture. Today, the lines between the art world and marketing/design are often blurred.

THE TAKEAWAY

Top brands are not afraid to evolve and embrace new technologies, substrates or designs. In 2017 Campbell's® introduced its Campbell's Well Yes! They look entirely different from the classic Campbell's label and were meant to represent whole foods and all natural ingredients.

1970s

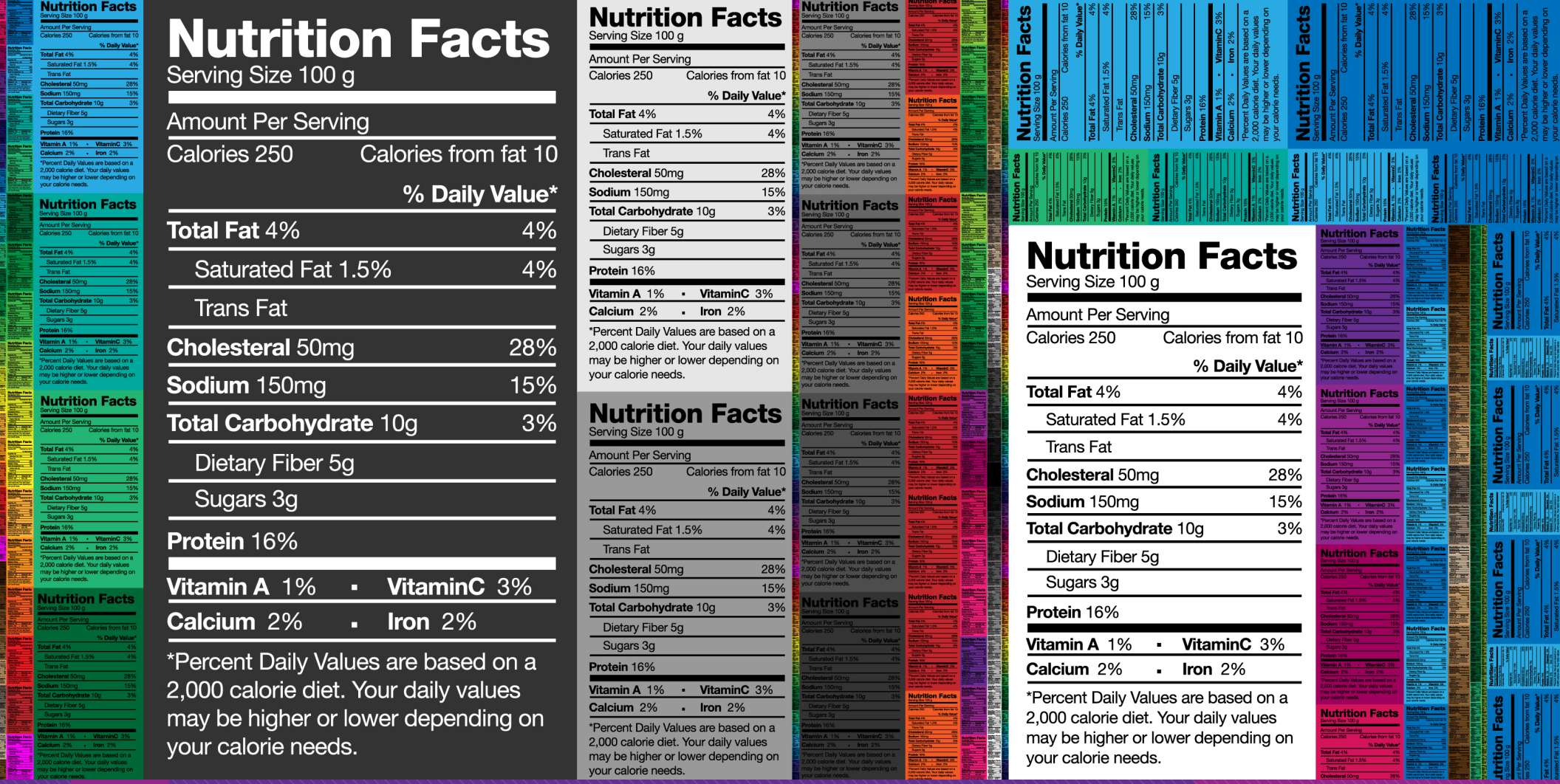
Private Brands: From Plain to Premium

Private brands packaging got an undeserved bad rap in the 1970s during a period “stagflation,” high prices and slow growth. The “generics” with their plain-white packaging and non-branded script with “BEER” or “MILK,” conveyed an impression of low-quality goods and this stuck for years.

Over time, retailers transformed generics into premium store brands. Walmart introduced the Great Value brand in 1993 and Costco introduced Kirkland Signature™ in 1995. Their products utilized the same contemporary scripts, colors, substrates and imagery as national brand products.

THE TAKEAWAY

Private brand sales are expected to keep growing. The Private Label Manufacturers Association expects market share could grow as much as 10% through 2027.



1990s

The Most Famous Label of Them All

The Nutrition Facts panel first began appearing on food packaging in the early 1990s (implementation deadline was 1994). The label quickly become famous in its own right. It is arguably the most reproduced graphic of the 20th Century, having appeared on more than 6.5 billion packages.

The FDA allowed for some leeway when prescribing how the panel should look. Designers can use any font size, use any single font color in the panel (the background must be white or neutral) and put the panel on the front or to the right of the front. The label designers created a flexible framework for the panel so it could expand in the future as new categories were added.

THE TAKEAWAY

In 2016, the FDA announced the first update to the label in 20 years. The compliance deadline for most brands ($10+ million in annual sales) is January 1, 2020. Now is the time brands can capitalize on this required FDA change to redesign its packaging and make it more dynamic, and connected.

2010

The Barcode Gets a 21st Century Makeover

In 1974 the first product with a UPC barcode—a package of Wrigley gum—passed over a scanner at Marsh Supermarkets in Troy, Ohio. A product package was no longer a static box on a shelf, but a communicator of valuable sales data to the retailer, and later—with the advent of QR codes and smartphones—as way for brands to engage with consumers in the aisles and at home.

Until 2010, designers had no alternatives to working with visual codes on packaging. That year an advanced barcode, Digimarc Barcode, appeared on the market. It utilizes the same data found in the UPC (GTIN, for example) and is created by adjusting the brightness and intensity of colors in package artwork. This makes large portions of the package scannable to phones, retail scanners and other machines.

THE TAKEAWAY

Tech adoption doesn't happen overnight. In the mid-1970s, retailers and brands waited on one another to invest in barcode technology. Retailers didn't want to buy retail scanner equipment and brands hesitated to redesign packaging.

To be continued.

Today we live in a complex digital marketplace with new drivers of consumer choice, and a changing retail landscape. Find out how packaging is evolving to meet these needs in **Chapter Three: The State of Packaging Today.**

Watch **Chapter One: "*The Evolution of Packaging Materials*"**
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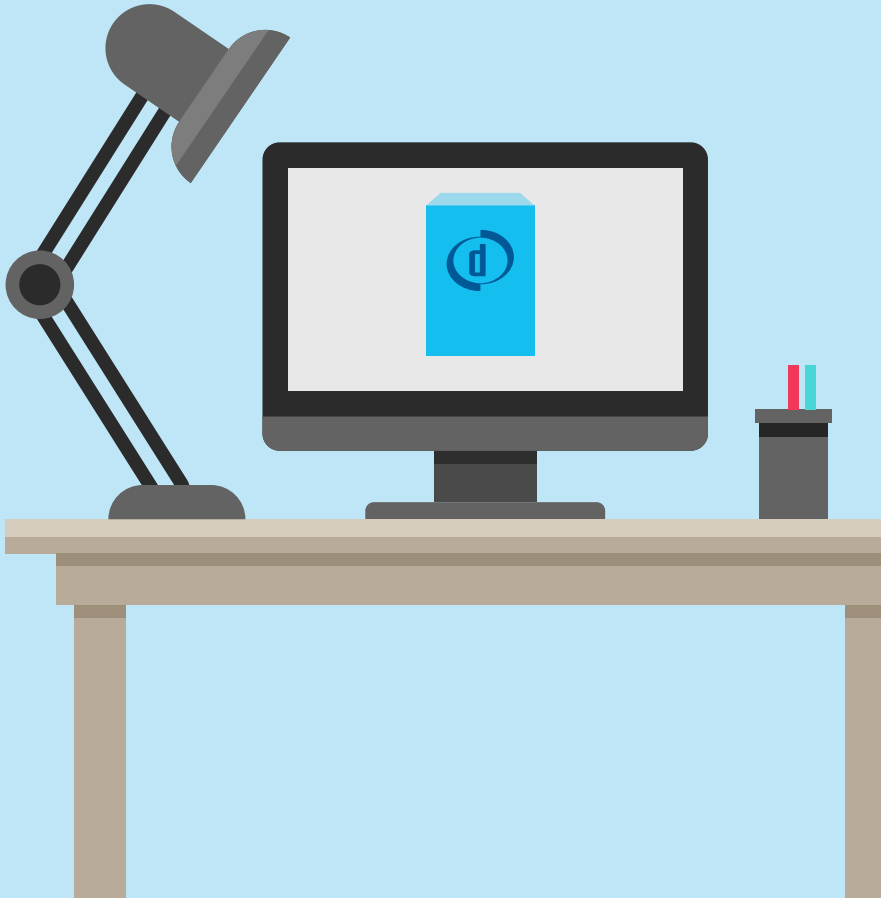

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