

Beyond Branding: The Logical Consequence of Packaging and Repackaging in Corporate Management Strategy

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Abstract- Packaging is made up of the non-physical, intangible or invisible parts and the physical, tangible or visible parts. Often, scholarly discourses have heavily dwelt on the physical or visible elements of packaging. This may have laid strong belief for majority of learners that packaging is almost only about how to house products. In recent time practitioners have paraded much about branding and re-branding than the supposed function that begets the brand and branding. Cognitively, packaging is the sense that gives direction to the brand. Beyond branding, packaging is, in fact, a continuous cycle, which includes product or brand maintenance even when the product is already on the shelf or in the market, and concerns with the final presentation of the brand to the customer or consumer. Thus, the package is the brand (P = B). This work is empirically conceptual, with arguments based on literature and observations which are open to provoke further thoughts.

Index Terms—packaging, repackaging, branding, package, re-branding, brand maintenance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Virtually, there is no brand until there are goods and or services. They are the nucleuses of the term “product”. Brand conception is in itself a function of packaging ($BC = (f) P$). Sanders (2010) argues that a brand is all about perception, and with the right focus, strategy and consistency, you can certainly influence how your personal brand is perceived by paying attention to what you are putting out there – everything from how you dress, how you communicate, what activities you participate in and who you choose to work and socialize with, contribute to your overall brand image.

Much has been paraded in recent time by practitioners about branding and re-branding than the supposed function that begets the brand and branding – packaging; meaning that packaging comes first before branding, while the brand is an embodiment of packaging, or to put it another way, brand packaging starts from when the brand idea is being conceived. The argument here lays in concept foundation and logical thinking process (CF and LTP). Concept foundation here, expresses an important aspect of creative thinking addressed in the psychometric tradition by means of divergent thinking, (Guilford, 1971; Guilford, Christensen, Merrifield & Wilson, 1978) which can generate as many alternative solutions as possible, to a problem (Plucker & Renzulli, 1999). Divergent thinking can therefore, involve “*personal-psychological creativity*”, i.e., producing an idea that is new to the person who produces it, irrespective of how many people have had that idea before (Boden, 2004). Accordingly, personal-

psychological thinking translates into constructive logical thinking process, presented in business process management, which includes concepts, methods, and techniques to support the design, administration, configuration, enactment, and analysis of business processes (Weske, 2007; Ikujiro Nonaka & Hirotaka Takeuchi, 1995).

Consequently, cultivating brands largely follows an ideation (Johnson, 2005), which means the creative process of generating, developing, and communicating new thoughts by investing time, effort and eventually money into determining what should be communicated and how to communicate it. Once there is clarity, content and a plan of action, it is easy to implement it. This informs a contextualized view of packaging. Thus, only organizations with strong packaging ideas have strong brands to offer and manage. The strategic management of a brand starts from the time the brand is thought of through when it actually becomes an offer to the marketplace. Implicitly, what makes an organization stands thick in competition is its ability in strategically packaging its brand and not just the branding of the product. Correspondingly, consumers who buy a brand are in reality paying for the organization’s packaging or the total brand idea offered to them from which they underpin their values of the product.

II. BRANDING AND PACKAGING

Branding and packaging are respective processes in the birth of a product. The follow up questions are: (1) at what point does the branding process kicks off? (2) At what other point does packaging process starts? Concept constructs would appreciate the fact that “branding” does not mean the same thing as the “brand”. While a brand is the finished product that can be offered to the market by an organization, branding is on the other hand the processes involved in getting the brand stand out in the market, distinct from others of its type. As a set of process, branding entails the ideation and selection of names, symbols, colors, graphics, etc. to distinguish a product. This simply implies that branding is thought of at the point it is clear to the organization or producer that a brand will be introduced to the market.

Also, “packaging” differs from the “package”. The interrogation: is the brand the package? Or the package is the brand? A package is the total, final presentation and appearances of a product, which conveys an image of a brand that can be offered to the customer. In converse, packaging depicts an in-depth thought of the total processes involved in

bringing out the package that the organization offers to the market. It is literally, 'putting things together'. For instance, service brands, corporate brands, personality brand, can be put together or packaged. These processes involve the product ideation, idea screening, prototype building and model development, design, shaping, styling, plus all other processes connected with developing and branding a product. It is widely acknowledged that packaging is not only a communication vehicle for transmitting symbolism (Keller, 1993), but is also important for its own symbolic contribution to the total understanding of the brand (Underwood, 2003). Cognitively, packaging is the sense that gives direction to the brand. Beyond branding, packaging is, in fact, a continuous cycle, which includes product or brand maintenance even when the product is already on the shelf or in the market, and concerns with the final presentation of the brand to the customer or consumer. Thus, the package is the brand (P = B).

III. CHARACTERIZING PACKAGING AND BRANDING

The product life cycle symbiotically describes the human life cycle. Following the human birth process, every product can compressibly develop through four basic stages of life cycle namely, introduction, growth, maturity and death.

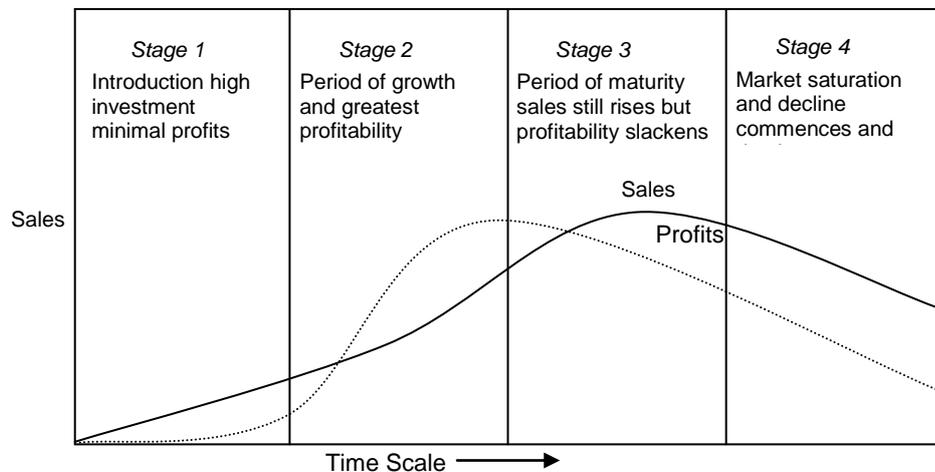


Figure 1: The Product Life
 Source: Elvy B. H (1982) Marketing Made Simple
 London: William Heinemann Limited

preoccupies the mother and father is how to ensure that the pregnancy stays unharmed. Thus, the mother visits the hospital, seeks medical advices and support to ensure strong development of the baby through the fertilized egg and the foetus.

Simulating the birth of a child, which this model depicts, the introduction stage explains the conception or pregnancy from zero age. At this point no parent yet thought of what name the child bears if eventually given birth to, (even when this runs in the mind it is not made public) rather what

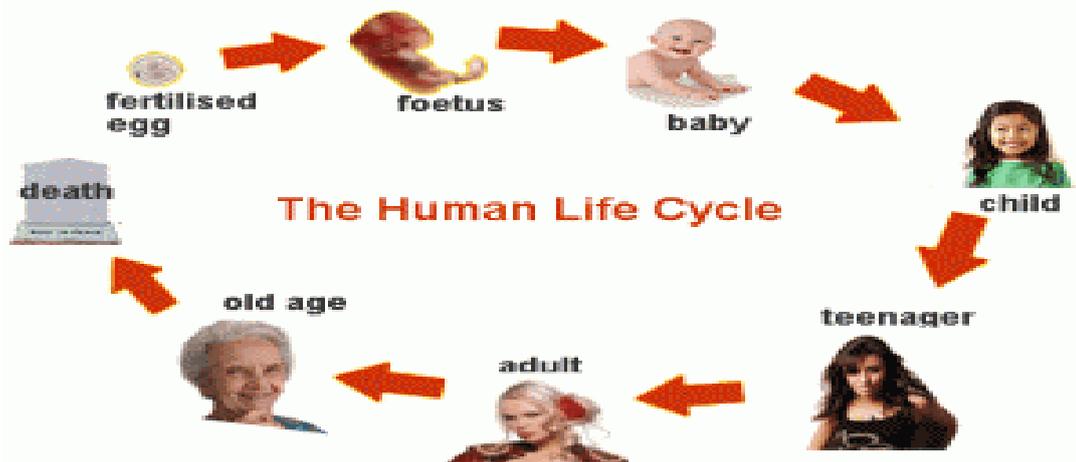


Figure 2. The Human Life Cycle

Source: <http://claudias123.global2.vic.edu.au/files/2013/11/old-age-2hg/79e.gif>

This is when packaging starts and no branding yet. The brand is still typologically generic – baby, male or female. At birth, the child becomes a specific unique brand with a name plus all other describable personalized features, marking the actual branding. Through the growth and maturity periods what parents are typically doing, again, is packaging by continuously keeping the brand in a presentably, sustained state of appearance; with painstaking investments in bathing, cosmetics, dressing, enrolment at different levels of education, etc. The individual continues with the packaging of him/herself from teenage into adult till old age (saturation and decline). As the person slopes down the cycle of age, death sets in and burial takes place, putting an end to life meaning the completion of the life cycle. Again, what characteristically happens at burial is packaging and not branding, hence, the family of a deceased seeks a “befitting burial” and even memorial ceremonies.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF PACKAGING

In the context of this discourse, the following among other specific objectives are justifications for packaging as a corporate strategy:

- **Competitive advantage.** An organization thinks competitively when it could produce at lower costs and offer prices lower than rivalries, thus, seeking a cost leadership position. This strategic thinking as part of putting the product together for the consumer to afford is a crucial packaging effort.
- **Increased market share.** A company who seeks or secures the highest and improved proportion of sales for its brand in a particular market compared to others of its type is said to be enjoying increased market share. Achieving this feat calls for a series of strategic and tactical plans with follow-up meetings, surveys, reviews – all amounting to a competitive packaging.
- **Visibility and shelf security.** Packaging is a total marketing effort that makes a product presentable and available to the consumer. Consequently, shelving visibility is a key tactic directed at securing consumer attention, inquiry and purchase action. A brand that secures strong shelf space dissuades other competing

brands. The implication is that the product could be made available to service recurring demands.

- **Protective coverage.** Every packaged product is a symbol of identity. Two benefits accrue to the producer; first, the wrapper or container keeps the brand away from the quick reach of dust and moisture. Second, the significant registered trademark and/or such other legally secured sign, protects the producer from usage abuse by competitors or at least, gives a producer the legal rights to challenge any infringer.

V. COMPOSITS OF PACKAGING

Packaging is made up of the non-physical, intangible or invisible parts and the physical, tangible or visible parts, all with many sub-parts. The non-physical aspect of packaging goes beyond full comprehension, it perhaps, only leads the consumer into a mere imagination about the brand but majorly set the stage for developing the product. Some of its sub-parts include series of ideas, planning, meetings, surveys, consultations, reviews, software, people-ware, benchmarking and sometimes wishes and prayers of the brand owner. Although they are part of the product development processes, they remain invisible to the consumers but bear testimony to the product’s physicality or presentation.

On the other hand, the physical parts of packaging deals with the outer design and description of the package including the housing unit to communicate in vivid terms to the consumers the product’s functional and aesthetic promises. Most time consumers are spoiled for choice in terms of the available product range, and they rely on product externalities as signals of perceived quality (Rundh 2005). These physical components of the product include the product compound, packet or container, colour, graphologies or letterings, shape, and size among others. The composition presents marketing with a challenge to depend heavily on the visual communication of packaging to inform and persuade consumers, both at the point of purchase - POP - and at the point of consumption - POC - (McNeal & Ji 2003). Clearly, scholarly discourses have heavily dwelt on the physical or visible elements of packaging. This may have laid strong belief for majority of learners that packaging is almost only about how to house products.

VI. PACKAGING AND BRAND EMOTION

The customer's feel and desire for a brand is not just elicited by the brand's functional status but essentially by how the product is packaged or put together. Sadeghi and Tabrizi (2011) agree that decisions shaped by feelings and emotions are made by the consumers according to what they feel; in fact the consumer visualizes and imagines the product (good or service) and estimates and assesses the feeling gained from it. This clarifies and further illuminates the fact that brand emotion is an output of packaging. Cognitive psychology has the capacity to precisely map the functional and emotional components, which form brand perceptions in the customer's mind (Keller, 2003). Consequently brand managers can monitor any functional and emotional changes in the customers' perceptions of the brand and launch or amend strategic plans in response, with the aim of again, maximizing brand equity. To maintain brand equity over time the unique bundle of functional and emotional or aesthetic attractions of the brand should be developed not only to create value for customers, but also to offer *added* values that cater for the continuously refined functional and emotional needs of customers in order to maximize satisfaction and hence equity (De Chernatony, 2002). In consonance, brand sincerity; excitement; competence; sophistication and ruggedness (Aaker, 1997) are conveyors of effective packaging, which make consumers get emotionally disposed towards the brand.

VII. STEPS IN THE PACKAGING PRODUCTION PROCESS

According to Esko (2012), there are a number of steps involved in the packaging of a product brand:

- i. Idea: Here, the brand manager identifies the need for packaging (a new product, an update, some promotion...)
- ii. Structure: This involves developing the physical structure concepts
- iii. Design: Incorporate graphics on to structures
- iv. Mock-up: Create visualizations of the packaged product
- v. Sample Making: Create physical representations of packaged product
- vi. Prepress: Prepare design for volume production
- vii. Proofing: Confirm correct color reproduction
- viii. Sheet layout: Create the optimal layout of the print sheet
- ix. Die-cut tools: Prepare the tools to cut out the package after printing
- x. Print: Print text and graphics on packaging
- xi. Finish: Cut, fold and apply finishing to individual packages
- xii. Filler Packer: Fill package with product
- xiii. Logistics: Transport packaged product to store
- xiv. Retail: Place on store shelf ready for sale

The foregoing suggests that packaging a new product or repackaging an existing one for effective promotion is a key to the conception of a brand idea with the aim of selling same to the end-user through the retail shop. The key depictive learning point is that packaging is made up of both the cognitive or intangible components and the physical or tangible

components. Most of the packaging decisions affect how consumers associate themselves with a firm's products (Del Rio, Vazquez & Iglesias 2001; Dhurup, Mafini, & Dumasi 2014). However, with the passage of time some of the visible elements begin to attain diminution to the point that consumers little or no more recognize them, hence the need for a competitive repackaging.

VIII. COMPETITIVE REPACKAGING

Indubitably, as with every market offer and/or existential corporate entity, when the product is experiencing saturation and decline there might be need to revive it. This action in itself is a further packaging, meaning repackaging with the aim of re-presenting the product to the market with a new appearance. Thus, competitive repackaging seeks to make the brand (good, service and/or corporate entity), attain a stronger place in the minds of existing and potential users getting them restless until they effect, demand of the product. It is a kind of packaging to repositioning the product brand.

IX. DECISION TO REPACKAGE

Many reasons account for the repackaging of a product brand or a corporate being, these may include: poor RIO, weak or dull appearance, loss of public confidence and investment trust, problematic or difficult vocalization, competitive inferiority, obsolescence among others. The key objective for a repackaging decision is to make the brand achieve consumer loyalty, competitive superiority and high market share. Dongardive, (2013) viewing repackaging from the ambit of information in library services argues that the aim of repackaging is to enhance the acceptance and use of (information) products. Herein, the major strategic decision point lies between partial repackaging and full repackaging. Partial repackaging occasions when a brand is beginning to experience declined patronage due to loss of some of its recognizable features or characteristics in the marketplace. For instance, change in taste, confused appearance resulting from passing-off, adulteration /or faking. Similarly, an organization may engage in full repackaging when the brand has actually lost all of the ingredients or features that can make it offer desired values to the consumer and profit to the owner or producer, which means that the brand has been swallowed up by competition.

X. STAGES IN BRAND REPACKAGING

Empirical studies have shown that brand repackaging transits series of steps, which include: impulsion, researching, factor analysis, modification, opinion pulling and testing, campaigning, performance monitoring and evaluation, and review.

- i. *Impulsion*. Every brand has its own experience in the marketplace. The market experience of a brand tells the impact of competition faced by the brand in the market. This actually reflects in how much patronage and thus revenue inflow garnered during a market or sales cycle. A brand's market or sales cycles is the measure of the period in which it competes in a particular market region. During this period, it is incumbent on the brand manager to be sensitive as to whether the brand is generating low or high revenue. This is the stage

at which attention is particularly paid to changes or trends in the marketplace.

ii. *Research.* The birth and death of every product (including the human) is occasioned by research. The essence is to investigate the ‘what, why, how, where, when, who’, and again ‘what, why, how, when, where, who’? This cyclical query levels makes it incumbent to find out what is wrong or has gone wrong with the brand garnering low patronage, and revenue, why and how did it happen, in which market region or sales territory, when did it occur, who is responsible? Continuously, the question cycle seeks to know what next to do, why should the action be taken, how to go about it, when, and where should the action be launched, and who is or are responsible?

iii. *Factor analysis.* It’s a given conclusion that a brand that is not doing well is partially sick. Therefore, there is the need to diagnose the cause of sickness and deal with it. This might be found in any part of the product or around it – the composition or ingredient compounds, wrapper, label, coloration, graphology or lettering, communication, pricing, distribution, shelving, or even managerial priority and attention among others. This analytical result is derived significantly from the research effort.

iv. *Modification.* A brand is modified solely to heal the sick part(s). This action is called for from the outcome of the factor analysis. Hence, utmost carefulness is desired not to over-modify or under modify. Over-modification may lead to or create a symptom for another sickness, and under modification may also leave the originally diagnosed sickness improperly cured. The warning signal is that either case, may lead to the brand’s death. The point of care, here, is that the research outcome must be very accurate, and factor analysis must not be embellished.

v. *Opinion pulling / testing.* The fact should and must not be outplayed that a modified product is putting up a new appearance. A brand that has just undergone modification is like an athlete who just finished surgery, hence it is very important to conduct a test experience to determine the degree of healing attained or achieved, before going into the game again. Without engaging in the full effort of test marketing, the Delphi technique may be very useful in this instance. The Delphi technique calls for the views of experts, which is ab initio, a sine qua non, in all the steps of repackaging.

vi. *Campaign / communication.* A campaign is a sensitization exercise designed to communicate some effect to a target (existing and potential) consumer audience or stakeholder group, with the aim of getting them behaved in a certain desired manner. This is essentially when the modified effect in the whole repackaging effort is presented to the target publics with some emphasis. This stride is ideally a repositioning one. A campaign or communication of this nature should be managed by experts, fully involving the brand manager.

vii. *Performance monitoring and evaluation.* This refers to the measurement and ranking of the extent a brand is doing – well or poor – around the window of competition. A well-performing brand among others of its type is one, which offers both to the users and producer moral, functional, aesthetic, social and financial satisfactions. On the other hand, a poor performing brand is one beaten in competition. Accordingly, it is mandatory that a brand manager conducts brand performance evaluation periodically again, after investing hugely on the repackaging of the brand. This will help in knowing whether, and the extent to which, the overall repackaging strategy is effective or defective.

viii. *Review.* This aspect of the repackaging steps divorces from mere evaluation or measurement, in that it takes cognizance of the total strategic effort, asking such questions as why “the success”? Or, why and/or where is “the failure”? It is not just concerned with checking or matching the goal and objectives against outcomes or achievements but more critically about the tactics, assignment of responsibilities, deployment of resources, scheduling of tasks and time management, among others in achieving the desired outcomes or results.

XI. CONCLUSIONS

Packaging is made up of both the cognitive or intangible components and the physical or tangible components. Most of the packaging decisions affect how consumers associate themselves with a firm’s products (Del Rio, Vazquez & Iglesias 2001; Dhurup, Mafini, & Dumasi 2014). A brand’s market or sales cycle is the measure of the period in which it competes in a particular market region. There is the need to diagnose the cause of sickness and deal with it. This might be found in any part of the product or around it – the brand thoughts or ideas that give birth to it, composition or ingredient compounds, wrapper, label, coloration, graphology or lettering, communication, pricing, distribution, shelving, or even managerial priority and attention among others. A brand is modified or repackaged solely to heal the sick part(s). Over-modification may lead to or create a symptom for another sickness, and under modification may also leave the originally diagnosed sickness improperly cured. The warning signal is that either case, may lead to the brand’s death. The brand manager should be sensitive as to whether the brand is generating low or high revenue. Accordingly, it is mandatory that brand managers conduct brand performance evaluation periodically again, after investing hugely on the repackaging of the brand. This will help in knowing whether, and the extent to which, the overall repackaging strategy is effective or defective.

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