

4.4 Packaging & labelling

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Packaging

Most food comes in some kind of package with some sort of identifier. These can be very simple or they can add value to the product, helping to position the product in the consumers mind as budget, icon or somewhere in between. Don't leave this to chance—invest in the package and label, to ensure consistency with your total marketing package.

Packaging is the container or wrapper for any food product. Labelling is part of the packaging with printed material to appear on the package.

Packaging is an important marketing tool. Packaging is also a sales tool; it can sell your product without you being there, by the way it looks (by attracting attention), describing the actual product and making the product easily accessible. Packaging can help in the instant recognition of the product. Spending a little bit more on packaging may increase the selling price of the product considerably. Packaging is also part of food safety. When buying food we look for packaging that is still sealed.

Your packaging will evolve and is just as much part of the product development process as the development and scaling up of your recipes. It is important to trial different packaging in different shapes, sizes and materials to assess how this meets consumers' needs. Packaging is also an important sales tool to retailers. Retailers want products that are easy to display, easy to stack and are eye catching.

It is also important to think about transport to your markets. If your product will go via pallets, ensure that packaging is robust, and a suitable size and shape for boxing and palletisation. Fancy packaging may not look so good at the end of the journey if it is not robust enough to withstand handling and transport.

You can try and develop your own packaging from off the shelf packaging products, but eventually, most people get assistance from a graphic designer.

Your thinking should be incorporated in a clear, simple brief for the designer. The brief should include:

- > What the package should be or do for the product. Is it primarily to protect the product or is it part of a sales gimmick? Do you want people to be able to heat the product in the microwave in the packaging? Is the packaging a form of preservation (e.g. keeps the product fresh)?
- > Specific elements of the package—size, shape, materials, colour, text and brand mark. These must work with your positioning statement, brand values and marketing strategies.

It must be consistent and reflect what ever promotion you are considering.

- > Consider how easy it is to open, how it packs into larger containers/boxes and how it well it transports.
- > What tamper proof element will your packaging have? (i.e. pop up jar lid, lid that breaks in half once open, etc.)
- > If you are planning to upscale and will require products to move along a conveyor belt make sure they have stable bases and can pack up next to each other (e.g. triangle based bottles will not be appropriate).
- > Quality standards—for example, you want labels that are easy to apply smoothly and align without buckling.

Think about getting the designer to work on more than one possible packaging solution so that you can test the various versions for possible responses. Once you have settled on a package, and launched it, continue to revisit it, as packages will invariably go out of date.



The Packaging Covenant

As the management of our environment grows in our awareness, it is important to recognize the environmental impact of the disposal of packaging. Industry in Australia and New Zealand, in conjunction with the national government and some local governments, have developed a self-regulatory agreement, in an effort to minimize the environmental impacts of consumer packaging waste. For more information follow this link www.deh.gov.au/industry/waste/covenant/

Labelling

Labelling is not only an important marketing tool, it is now by law a requirement for many food businesses. A label performs several functions:

- > It identifies the product (through name/brand)
- > It can position the product in the consumers mind
- > It can describe the product
- > It may promote the product if it is eye catching enough

The Australian and New Zealand Food Standards Code defines food labeling laws. See the following link for a comprehensive guide as to what does and does not require labelling and what must be on the labels: <http://www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs/Food/food-labelling-guide.pdf>

What must be on the label?

- > The name of the food
- > The premises where the food was packed or prepared
- > The lot (or batch) number
- > The name of the business
- > The business address (not a PO Box number)
- > Mandatory warning and advisory information
- > Ingredient labelling
- > Date mark (best before)
- > Health and safety advice
- > Nutrition information panel
- > Characteristic ingredients
- > The country of origin

The above website gives a comprehensive overview of all of the above requirements and is an excellent resource.

It might be wise to have a lawyer review your labelling to ensure that it complies with local and international legislation. It is much easier and less expensive to change the labelling before production than after production.

Barcodes

If you are considering selling your product through any kind of retail outlet that uses scanning you will require a bar code. Bar codes (or EAN Numbers) are issued by EAN Australia. There is an initial and an ongoing annual fee. www.ean.com.au

When designing your label, it is important to take into account all the information you are required by law to have, balanced with making the label eye catching, easy to read and informative. Remember, ensure that your brand stands out on the label.

Websites

www.nutritionaustralia.org/Food_Facts/Fact_Sheets/reading%20food%20labels.pdf

www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs/Food/food-labelling.htm

Nutritional Panel Calculator www.foodstandards.gov.au/mediareleasespublications/nutritionpanelcalculator/

Case study

King Island Dairy Packaging and Labeling
www.kidairy.com.au/products.asp