Relationship between Cereal packaging characteristics & consumer brand preference

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Can’t live with it, and can’t live without it. No matter how much negativity you hear, how much sugar the cereal contains, or how unhealthy it is for your family. To be clear, you will end up in the cereal isle in the end (ugly truth!)...

So, in our report we will be talking about the impact on cereal when it comes to different people’s decision. As cereal lovers are self, we thought what better way to express or love with studying the packaging characteristics, and what they do to achieve customer’s satisfaction to become the consumers choice. we will be talking more about that, and what’s the relationship between them.

1st, lets talk about the brains behind discovering the cereal, Dr. John Kellogg made an accident, that turned him to a millionaire. Corn flakes was founded in 1985. Dr. John was vegetarian, and at that time having a piece of steak considered a daily breakfast, he was trying to figure out something to sell, that’s light, and can suite a lot of people including himself.

Being the first market leader, makes him a pioneer and got the advantage of making people call cereal under the name “Corn Flakes” - Mega branding has been achieved.
Everyone knows that advertising is visual and that the product that looks nicer, and more organized will attract customers. Especially when it comes to cereal, being in that harsh isle in the supermarket, and wanting to be noticed. A study shows that you only have 3 seconds to catch the customer's attention. And of course how will you achieve that? here are the basic Brand Packaging:

1. Color
2. Shape
3. Symbols
4. Words.

You might think, symbols is the most important because of the characters, sorry to break it to you, it’s color. The packaging color is the deal breaker. Don’t underestimate the color, a study by Layola Maryland shows that color can increase brand recognition by 80%. Plus since when have you seen a kid fall in love with a white cereal box?

Each color helps to convey the message or the meaning intended, and here are the colors:

**Red:**
The color red represents aggressiveness, fear, and most important APPETITE, also it’s backed up by a bit of science as well, seeing the color red has actually been shown to result in a rise in blood pressure and an increase in metabolism. Plus whenever you see the color red you instantly think rainbow cereal! Because Kellogg’s has been the market leader for many years, they had the control over color, and as followers they went by the same color, so they wont confuse the customer.

**Yellow:**
the color yellow is great for promoting excitement around a product. It can be used to create eye catching logos, also is very good when used in children’s learning products. The fact that it is so vibrant, yellow is also a very attention grabbing color. When you combine this color with toned down colors to implement is the perfect combination, because too much color can distract you, and that’s not good! finally since this
color reminds you of the sunshine, and bright that makes you smile, the color is associated with health as well, which is a smart move, for some reason you feel connected, that indeed this is a healthy cereal.

Blue:
Frosted flakes. Again a market leader’s color (Kellogg’s brand recognition) Although the color blue is perfect as a toned down color to help implement heavy symbols and works perfectly when you want the symbol to pop! neutral, and calm.

Green:
APPLES! The color green represents earth and health. Did you notice all the cereals are walking Kellogg’s foot prints? Apple jack Cereal’s color, that of course all the apple flavored cereals are green!

Brown:
simple, and short. Chocolate. we’re talking cereal, if we were to talk granola or oatmeal then it’s another story, but cereal. it only represents the taste, which again is a toned down color so it can implement the character perfectly.

Purple:
Raisins, as you can see, A report indicates that the color is about “trying to be healthy, but too lazy to read the Nutrition Value” Since the color is so toned down, they use it more for adults, who are trying to look for “healthy” alternatives. Little did they know, they contain more sugar than fruit loops, and cheerios combined.

As we talked about the most important colors, you can see everyone has a different meaning behind it. We focused a lot on colors because they are the most important. It will help dramatically in sending the message. The human brain is formatted to locate each color to the meaning without knowing, so why manipulate?
Next, we will be talking about the Shape, which is the least effective (again, we are talking about cereals here) a kid wouldn't care less if the cereal was round or flat, in the end it will end in his tummy with a smile. But, an interesting case is cheerios, they focused heavily on the hoop, or as they say the O, which in fact was stolen from Froot Loops that was founded before Cheerios by a decade.

Now, Cheerios wont even think of changing the shape, because simply they can't! while Froot Loops? is ok. Trix changed their cereal shape from fruit shapes to rainbow balls. No one noticed.... Cheerios on the other hand, everyone will notice! They can change the color, the tagline, the packaging design, but not the shape.

Symbols:
Can help in conveying the meaning behind the cereal, also in segmenting, the kids is for the kids, and the adults are for the adults. The famous characters on cereal boxes are a type of symbol, and Health guaranteed check, that for some reason will make you feel comfortable to buy.

Words:
The title of the cereal, the tagline, the nutrition value, the recipes on the back. Some cereals try to make the font as small as possible, with too many words, that will make the consumer say: “whatever too many words, i’ll just buy it” feeling. Or the sneaky but smart in the same way, search for the smallest font in the cereal and it will be that the product inside is not the exact shape as the one in the picture, to prevent any legal cases.
OK, here comes old boring cereals we call them “Adult Cereal”. As you can see adults are more rational, don’t care much about the character or if it’s a bright red rainbow cereal, as much as they want it healthy.

Adults focus more on the words, other than symbols. Add the correct words of the cereal being healthy, and contains more than 3 Vitamins and you got yourself a loyal customer. You have Fitness by Kellogg’s is a pure example. Promotes health, and diet gives you the illusion that eating cereal everyday will make you thinner.

As you can see, the colors are basic and adding those values!
- Whole grain ✓
- Healthy brand name ✓
- Whole grain granted ✓
- Low calories (shown above) ✓
- The wheat picture shows earthy and not processed straight from the plant to making the product ✓

Kids!

kids segment is our focus here. It all makes sense why the corn flakes is tucked inside a cute and colorful box with a cartoon character with cheery smile. Majority of studies indicates that kids thought foods packaged in a pretty wrapper with their favorite cartoon character tasted best, compared to identical food presented in a plain or boring package.

Based on Rudd Center’s study for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University. The study, published in Pediatrics, shows a causal relationship between licensed characters on food packaging and children’s taste and snack preferences. The children were between 4 and 6 years old tasted three types of identical foods given in different packages with or without a popular cartoon character. They tasted both food items in each pair and indicated whether the two tasted the same, or if one tasted better, then they choose which of the foods they would prefer to eat for a snack. The result shows that the kids were more likely to prefer the taste of the low-nutrient, high-energy foods when
a popular cartoon character appeared on the package. The study also indicates that children were the majority of the children select the popular character-branded food items for snacks than those in packages without characters. Therefore marketers use attractive imagery, popular characters, color and design all these packaging attributes to make sure that their product will catch children’s attention, they are trying to lure our kids by the cute wrapped and cartoon character.

According from a recent study by Brian Wansink and colleagues at Cornell’s Food and Brand Lab, shows the different segmenting strategies when it comes to adults and kids, and how they can do that.

Kids:
Shows that Spokes-characters on cereal boxes are staring downward at a 9.6 degree. Lower boxes with cartoon characters with large inviting eyes, the gaze is focused slightly downward, to create eye contact with children also, as an icing on the cake they are placed about 23 inches off the ground just about the child’s height to make it easier to grab and get going.

Adults:
While adults on the other hand are different, Spokes-characters on adult cereal look almost straight ahead to make eye contact with adults. Also those aimed at adults 48 inches high, which makes them the same as the adult’s height.

There was another study, asking 63 individuals from a private northeastern university were telling them to view a Trix box and rate their feelings of trust and connection to the brand. Giving two types of trix, one looking at them straight in the eye, and the other staring downward (the original packaging)
As a result, spokes-characters that make eye contact may increase positive feelings towards the product and encourage consumers to buy it. When it comes to the brand trust it was 16% higher and the Feeling of connection to the brand was 28% higher. Look them straight in the eye and hypnotize them. it works in the end!

As a conclusion, we want to say nowadays packaging plays important role as a brand element regardless of the traditional role of packaging. Also it performs an important tool to marketing communications, especially in the point of sale and could be treated as one of the most important factors influencing consumer’s brand preferences. Marketers exploit the packaging element, which is the last hope for them to convince customers to buy their products. They put into their consideration the target segment and based on their target audience they choose the color, shape, label and character that stand out on their product.

While doing this research we got to know and learn a lot, some we liked, some we didn’t. But what bothered us the most was Kellogg’s, briefly to say, they were the market leaders, every step they take competitors follow. Now? sadly to say they are reminding us of (the Nokia example). Reaching the mature stage, does not and will never mean you can stop and enjoy. Because of that, because of stoping the promotions and advertisements, general mills took over making them the market leaders of 2013, not just that, making Honey Nut Cheerios the number 1 best cereal worldwide. Now that’s hard to beat!

We assure you now you will never look at cereal the same way you did before.

Hello there!!
References


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