

Growing the success of Irish food & horticulture

Bord Bia
Irish Food Board

Pocket-sized packaging guide



All you
need to know
inside!

www.bordbia.ie

Making your packaging work for you

Developing a new product and readying it for market can be an overwhelming task. There are so many hurdles to overcome before your brilliant idea reaches the consumer – the last thing you want to do is fall at the final fence and fail to get vital impact on the shelf. That’s where a carefully considered packaging strategy comes into its own. The following is a handy step-by-step walk through the packaging process, with hints and tips to guide you through, showing you how to enhance your product, boost your sales and save money too.

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Why is packaging so important?

Packaging is the single most important means of communicating with your customer. Many companies don't have the luxury of big marketing or advertising budgets and so their packaging has to work really hard on many levels to win the hearts and minds of customers. Here are just some of the roles packaging plays:

- **Functional role:** Protecting goods from getting damaged or contaminated, prolonging your product's shelf life and making sure the product doesn't spoil.
- **Legal role:** It also houses legal requirements such as ingredients, weight, nutritional and allergy information.
- **Standout:** Packaging can be hugely effective in helping to cut through the visual clutter consumers are faced with, helping your product to gain vital shelf standout.
- **Brand Building role:** Your packaging needs to reflect what you are all about. It should encompass your story, your personality, your values and beliefs. This will help to strike a chord with the consumer and create new fans for your brand.

Will the packaging protect against tampering or spillage?

Will it preserve the freshness?

Will the material tarnish the product within?

Does it communicate the company name and product descriptor?



Getting started

Before you get stuck into the exciting business of designing your pack you'll need to do some research. Here are some things to consider:

Suitability for transport and storage e.g. Durable? Fridge-friendly?

Will it communicate the personality of my brand?

How much will the chosen format cost?

Will it appeal to my target market?



Innocent and Glenisk are great examples of brands that consistently use every element of their packaging to communicate their unique personality.



Size Matters!
Don't forget to plan which pack sizes will work best for your product. This will save you time, money and lots of headaches:

- 
- Understand your customer**
Figure out what pack sizes are convenient to their lifestyle.
 - Do the maths!** Plan out what pack sizes will help you achieve maximum sales volume and profit.
 - Understand your retailer**
Consider what pack sizes and formats are the easiest and most convenient to handle and transport.
 - And remember, you're not alone! Your design agency will help you with all these tricky decisions.**



Choosing the Right Agency

Choosing the right design agency can literally make or break your packaging project. Remember, the agency needs to become part of your strategic team, getting to know every nook and cranny of your new product, so you'll need to build up a great working relationship right from the start. Here are some tips to help you pick an agency that's right for you:

A recipe for success

The success of any packaging design project depends on the clarity of the initial brief. You must be clear on your brand story – your reason for being, your personality, your goals and ambitions for the future. If you don't communicate all these elements then your agency won't be able to fulfil the brief – a 'lose lose' situation for everyone!



1.

Define the brief

Before you talk to anyone you'll need to draft up an initial written brief, stating clearly what you want (and what you don't want). Now you're ready to start talking to some agencies.

2.

Get acquainted

Have a look around. You could ask someone for a recommendation – word of mouth is a powerful thing! Do some research on potential partners to get a feel for their design style and experience. Agency websites are always a good source of info and case studies. Or you could check out www.designbusinessireland.org for a list of agencies who specialise in branding and packaging design.

3.

Make a shortlist

Shortlist a few agencies and set up an initial meeting – it's always better to meet face to face. Send your brief to them in advance so they can prepare for the meeting and answer any questions they might have. This will also help you to fine tune your brief.



4.

Whittle it down

Choose the agencies you feel most comfortable with. This will be your final shortlist. Now's a good time to make any tweaks to your brief, then you're all set to take it to the next level.

5.

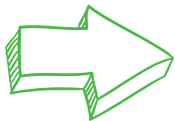
Briefing

Invite your chosen agencies to submit a proposal. Give them each a briefing document, relevant backup research and any other material you feel will help. You can post/email the brief or arrange a briefing meeting for each agency.

6.

Reviewing the goods

Review all the agency proposals in an equal and fair way. Why not set up a scoring matrix to help you choose. And remember, it's not just about price, it's about experience, personality and creativity too.



NOTE: If you want the agencies to do some initial design concepts, be prepared to part with some cash – nothing in life is free!



7.

Picking your new partner

Once you've picked the right design partner for you, give them a call to tell them the good news! (Confirm this in writing too.) Contact the unsuccessful agencies and explain why they didn't make the grade – this helps them to brush up for the next project and acts a great PR tool for your brand.

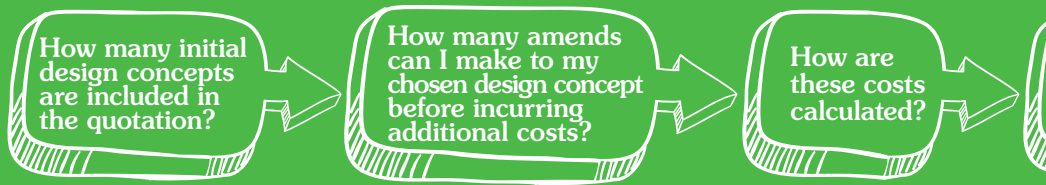


Pick your design agency with this in mind. If you're all on the same wavelength you'll get the best results. Simple as that.

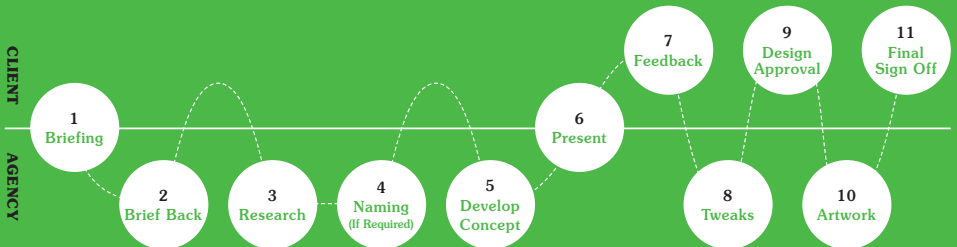
Don't forget you are in the driving seat. Take control, trust your instincts and choose a design direction that **you** feel best fits **your** brand.


Demystifying the Design Process...

The design process isn't rocket science but it's good to know the different stages in advance so there are no nasty surprises. A concise Project Roadmap will help keep everything (and everyone) on track. Here are a few points you should check:



A Project Roadmap...





Will I have to pay extra for photography or illustrations?

Tell it like it is

Testing Testing

Your feedback is key to the success of the design project, so don't be shy. Honesty is the best policy here – give direct and clear feedback on the work you receive. But don't forget to listen to the agency's advice too. They've worked on many packaging projects and know the problems and the pitfalls only too well.

Effective packaging design is built around market research. Once you've signed off on your design concept, it should be tested in the market before launch. Time and budget constraints don't always allow for this, but if it is possible, consumer feedback really helps to secure the success of the project.


You could do your own research/questionnaires - but don't just ask family and friends! Talk to your Sector Manager in Bord Bia for advice, perhaps you could participate in Bord Bia's foresight4food programme.



Design for Shelf Impact

A simple brand message
+
Clear and consistent design
=
A strong brand!

It's a jungle out there! Retail environments are fast-paced and cluttered. In fact, the average consumer is bombarded with literally thousands of sensory messages on an average shopping trip. So how can you make sure your packaging concept cuts through the clutter to achieve maximum shelf impact and optimum sales? That's easy....



The consumer's decision to buy is often made right at the shelf, so the pressure's on to make the right impression. Here's a quick checklist to make sure your pack is a winner on-shelf:

- Is your brand mark clear and visible on pack and at a distance?
- Can the consumer read the product name and descriptor easily without having to search for it?

Do your research, look at what your competitors are doing. Remember, you are not trying to fit in, you are trying to stand out!

- Are the different flavours and variants easily identifiable?
- Does the tone of voice on-pack make a connection with your target market?
- Are there any elements that the consumer expects in your given category?
- Does your product and pack stand out from its competitors? (No 'me-toos' please!)

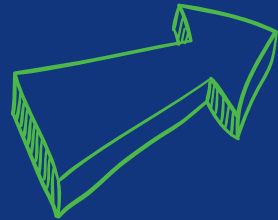


Consistency is King

Successful brands are consistent brands – that’s how they build strong brand loyalty. Consumers are creatures of habit. That’s why, when a brand starts giving out conflicting messages, customers get confused, leaving your brand wide open to competitive attack. But how do you ensure your brand remains consistent and your customer-base watertight?

Remember, your packaging is one of the most powerful touch points your customers will have with your brand - don't blow it!

1.



Be true to your brand values!

Your packaging needs to embody your brand values and personality. If you stay true to these and deliver them consistently across your packaging, you will build loyal consumers that won't jump ship.

2.

Keep a consistent brand presence on pack

Your brand is your hero – treat it with respect. Your pack architecture (brand mark size and positioning, product name positioning, image position and style) should be consistent right across your product range. The result? A uniform brand presence and maximum shelf impact.

4.

Celebrate your unique traits

Brand attributes such as quality, freshness and innovation can be highlighted in so many ways. From the type of material used to the shape and format of the packaging, dare to be different!

3.

Speak the same language as your customers

Develop a tone of voice for your brand and packaging that your customers can engage with. It should reflect your brand personality and represent the product within.

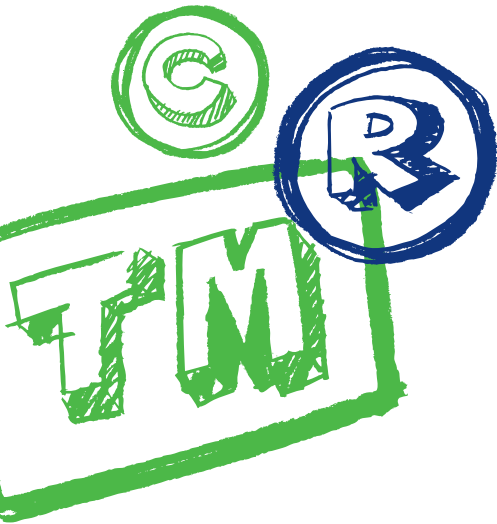
5.

Design for a reason

Pack design is not just pretty pictures, it's a reflection of your brand. Make sure new design concepts deliver meaningful messages to your customers. (Just because you like the picture of that cow, it doesn't mean it's right for your pack!)

Protecting your Assets

– the Trademark/ Patent Process



It might be a good idea to consider Trademark Registration. A registered trademark is a word, name, symbol or device that identifies the source of the goods and distinguishes them from competitor goods. It prevents your competitors from using a similar mark or logo, but can't stop them from selling the same product under another brand or name.

You'll need to register your trademark according to the legal classifications of your goods and services. These can be found at www.patentsoffice.ie. The more classifications you register your trademark in, the more expensive it is, but also the more protection you get.

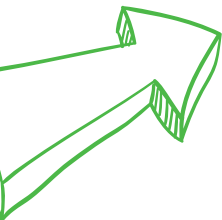
You can register your trademark for Ireland only, UK & Ireland or any other international state that you want. Just remember there are different costs depending on which territories you decide to register in. The process can take over a year, but once you've made your application you are in a position to trade using that name or mark.

There are Three Stages:

1.

Search (1-2 weeks)

To complete a thorough search you will need to choose the countries you will be trading the brand in. You can complete the search stage on all classifications at no additional cost.



2.

Registration (approx. 3 months)

Again you need to define the countries in which the brand will operate. Costs are based on a 'per class' basis. Once this registration has been filed the brand can then start operating. However, like planning permission, the registration can be objected to during this period.

3.

Filing (1 year from date of search)

This is usually completed after one year, if there are no objections. But be careful, this is not an exact science. The process can take longer and costs can increase, especially if there are objections and the process needs to start again.

You should consider hiring a patents attorney to guide you through the process and make sure you cover off all of your bases.

Essential On-Pack Info

The following is a quick checklist of what you need to include on your pack. You should consult with the FSAI (www.fsai.ie) to make sure your packaging meets all the legal requirements.

- Product Name
- Weight
- Net 'e' Symbol
- Best Before Date
- Ingredients
- Allergen Information
- Opening/Storage Instructions



- Serving Instructions/Suggestions
- Product of.../Made in...
- Organic/Kosher/Halal Symbols
- Barcode
- Green Dot/Litter Symbol
- Nutritional Information
- Freezing Instructions

...And of course your contact details!

Glossary of Terms

Bespoke packaging

a unique solution, e.g. a specific box or bottle shape.

Blocking

how individual packs work together to create the illusion of something much bigger.

Brand Architecture

how a company structures and names the brands within its portfolio.

Brand Personality

is defined by the values and vision of the brand, and should be expressed in all communications. It adds emotion, culture and myth to the brand identity through visual style, tone of voice etc.

Brand Positioning

the position that a brand adopts in the marketplace which allows people tell it apart from its competitors.

Brand Values

A unique set of benchmarks by which the brand lives. Everything a brand does is measured against these values – how it behaves, how it communicates etc.

CMYK

The four process colours (cyan, magenta, yellow and black) used in the print process.

DPP (direct product profitability)

a term used to describe the contribution to profit of an individual product line.

Foil

A thin gauge aluminium foil laminated to plastic films to provide maximum oxygen, aroma and water vapor barrier properties.

Off the shelf

a pre-existing (non bespoke) packaging structure.

Own brand/ own label/ private label

a retailer's own product range.

Palletisation

when the size of packaging is adjusted so that the maximum amount of packs fit on a wooden pallet for more efficient transportation.

Primary packaging

the wrapping or containers handled by the consumer.

Prototype

a model or mock-up of the proposed solution.

Secondary packaging

describes larger cases or boxes that are used to group quantities of primary packaged goods for distribution/display in shops.

Shelf standout

how a pack appears, at point of sale, against its competitors.

Shelf-ready packaging

packaging that goes straight from the factory to point of sale without being unwrapped.

Side-Gusset Bag

A bag with gussets on both sides, with a fin-seal running from top to bottom and sealed horizontally at the bottom and the top.

Sku (stock keeping unit)

an individual product line and size variant.

Substrate

material that the design is printed onto (e.g. carton, board, polypropylene, metallised film, etc.)

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