

# **Sustainable Multi-Cultural Packaging**

By

Michelle Onizuka

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Graphic Communication Department

Advisor: Kenneth Macro

College of Liberal Arts

California Polytechnic State University

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to determine how companies can become more sustainable by creating a simpler layout of a packaged product that is purposed for different countries and cultures through means of language and design. This study will help solve the ways in which companies work collaboratively with the design and language of a package that can be more effective and appeal throughout several target markets.

The emergence of innovative packaging and increase in globalization are two significant factors in which the packaging industry has been concerned with for the past decade. Because demand is increasing within the global market, the supply of packaged products is simultaneously increasing. This leaves companies struggling to outsource and design packaged products that can be appealing and identifiable to consumers of all areas without exceeding the time and money allocated for.

This study used several methods of research to gain insight into how simplistic packaging can help companies become more sustainable and at the same time, instill more profound communication with the consumer. Through historical research, elite and specialized interviews and content analysis, this study was able to draw several significant conclusions regarding how simple packaging can help consumers from different countries and cultures better adapt to a given product and in the end, save time and money for the company who creates it.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The advent of innovative packaging has sparked a growing trend in consumer's tastes and interests in products of all arenas. Moving alongside the public's gravitation towards the most innovative of packaged products is also the quest to fulfill consumer's needs. Because the distribution of packaged products has become increasingly universal throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the vitality of marketers adapting their products cross culturally is growing at the same time. Packaging is not only about containing a product, but more importantly the ways in which a product is conveyed to a consumer. One of these aspects includes the use of language. While the language must be informative, content truthful and distinctive to the consumer, it is also vital to conform to the certain culture or demographic that are being targeted. It is a necessity for packaging to display multiple forms of languages in order for consumers from different countries to have an understanding of what is written on the package, including the product's description and the legally required information. Along with the use of language, aesthetic principles also play a large role in distinguishing a product. Because packaging performs as the "silent salesman," which means a package acts as a medium for advertising and sales promotion messages, the outside display of a product must instantly catch the consumer's eye with its design, logo and layout so the consumer can easily identify and recognize a given product. This exhibits a successful package due to the fact that some consumers are at times more attracted to aesthetic qualities of a package, rather than the product's actual description.

Since products are being increasingly distributed worldwide to simultaneously fulfill the heightened demand of consumers, it has become an issue for the packaging industry to create essentially one layout that can attract a span of cultures in a solitary notion. Within this layout includes both language and design principles. The issue is that because marketing and packaging teams spend countless time, effort and money on research to develop a logo and package that will be accepted universally across different countries and cultures, the industry must come up with an answer as to how to meet such intricate demands. This study will prove that by simplifying packaging it will be more effective to consumers. It is hypothesized that packaging companies that create packages with simplistic quality along with well-executed marketing campaigns succeed in global recognition.

It is important for the target market to identify themselves with the design and logo of a product to easily adapt to the brand's appeal, promotion of corporate identity and attractive visual display. As a result of instilling brand recognition with consumers of all backgrounds, the packaging industry will hopefully see a reduction in costs and save time by appealing to a diverse international market for financial gain. The purpose of this study is to determine how companies can become more sustainable by creating one layout of a packaged product that is purposed for different countries and cultures through means of simplistic language and design. Therefore, this study will help solve the ways in which companies work collaboratively with the design and language of a package that can be more effective and appeal throughout several target markets.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Before the use of packaging, people were self-sufficient and had no reliance on packaged goods. The only form of protecting and transporting goods came from a variety of objects collected from nature such as shells, leaves, wood, grass and even animal organs. As society became more sophisticated however, the means for packaging became an important aspect in the society and an industry for packaged goods started to form.

The Industrial Revolution sparked the distribution of packaging during the mid-1800s. An online source called, “The Reference for Businesses Encyclopedia Online on Packaging” gives an account on the derivation of packaging at its most fundamental level. The main use of packaging during this time was to better transport, store and distribute the increasing number of goods produced. The market for packaged goods transitioned from solely being able to contain a product to one that has aesthetic value surrounding it. According the article, after World War II “companies became more interested in marketing and promotion as a means for enticing customers to purchase their products” (The Reference for Businesses Encyclopedia Online on Packaging). Therefore, the drive to create aesthetically pleasing packages influenced the way in which marketers distributed products, giving more attention to consumer response. Rather than advertising solely the purpose of a package, marketers and manufacturers placed heavy emphasis on the attraction of a package as a way to gain consumer’s attention. As time progressed into the mid-1900s, packaging gradually integrated into the marketing industry, becoming a paramount vehicle for promoting a brand’s product. During this

progression, consumer's education and expectations of packaging also increased. Consumers started to draw distinctions between what is the most functional package accessible to them, whether it is design based or even recyclable (The Reference for Businesses Encyclopedia Online on Packaging). An article called, "The Future of Packaging Printing to 2013", published by Pira International LTD, discusses the subject of contemporary packaging and what is to be expected in the near future. Rather than performing as solely product-based as evidenced in the Industrial Revolution, packaging today serves additionally for time-starved and cost-sensitive customers. Creating innovative packaging solutions and instilling better graphics to gain competitive edge and enhance shelf appeal are the steps that manufacturers and brand owners are making to meet the pressures in such a supply-demand economy (Pira International LTD). Packaging will never go out of existence as the necessity for holding a product as a means for protection and transportation will always be in high demand. While package printing will remain in demand by the consumer market it will also be in constant innovation, transitioning to the ideals of the every day consumer.

The functional requirements of packaging must be addressed in order to gain a clearer interpretation of a product. One of the most important groups of functional criteria that a package must meet relates to legislation. Because legal requirements are most important to the consumer's safety, health and knowledge, several key laws have been passed in the industry to keep consumers better informed on the products they are buying. For example, one law requires that containers for potentially dangerous goods, such as gasoline or drugs, be stored in specially constructed containers, while another law forbids producers from misrepresenting the product quality or quantity through misleading

packaging (The Reference for Businesses Encyclopedia Online on Packaging). These legal requirements not only provide the benefits of safety to the consumer but also present a clearer line of communication with the consumer. By using a communication method that is understandable to the consumer, the legal information can be interpreted in a more effective manner.

Since the packaging world is seeing more interest and demand globally, the vitality of establishing an effective form of communication to achieve customer satisfaction has been on the forefront of manufacturers priorities. Clarity, convenience and brand protection are the main aspects that the industry is emphasizing in order to target specific consumer demographics (The Future of Packaging Printing). Because globalization is increasing, it is important to establish clear communication methods so that every demographic can understand a product's message. According to "Consumer Packaging Megatrends", wealthier nations such as China and India, demographics where buying power is present, do not equally stand with developing nations in their ability to recognize a given product based on the outside display of a package or afford a product. Since this "inequity influences consumption trends, production and logistics," as stated by Consumer Packaging Megatrends, it is the responsibility of the packaging industry and marketing teams to develop a way to adapt cross-culturally without exceeding the costs and time available to both them and the consumer.

The idea of sustainability, which means lessening the cost of production as a result of waste reduction, has been a growing interest for not only consumers but also manufacturers alike. Because time and cost are issues that the packaging industry experiences, finding solutions to combat these matters are paramount. As noted earlier,



with the increase of globalization and the distribution of packaged products worldwide, it is important to find an answer as to how the industry can become more sustainable by creating one simple design for multiple cultures in order to avoid any misinterpretation or have any communication barriers. Further research into this question has provided information as to how the packaging industry teamed with marketing can achieve such standards.

It is hypothesized that the more simple the package design is, the more success a packaged product will have in gaining both recognition with the consumer and sustainability with the manufacturer. A packaged product is made “simple” by having basically an overall simplicity in form, influencing the consumer’s feeling toward the product. If a product is simple, not only will the consumer feel more comfortable in using the product but this also benefits the company that distributed it. The specific company will gain further brand equity by “developing brand loyalty through the practice of product design and the use of product design methods,” according to John Takamura on his account of “The Simplicity Mantra: A Paradigm Shift in Consumer Response to Branding.” By instilling this sense of brand equity, companies do not have to exert more time and money into making multiple product designs for different target markets.

Takamura continues to note on simplicity and gives an example of a company that has used simplistic form to gain an advantage within the industry in both recognition and sustainable practices. The company that Takamura addresses is Apple. The company uses forms, colors, and details that display simplicity. For example, all of Apple’s products are packaged in a similar media; a simple white box that holds either an iPod, laptop, iPhone or any other Apple product. An interview that Takamura conducted proves

that the simplistic form of Apple's product and package, results in consumer satisfaction. In an interview that Takamura conducted, the interviewee states "the top surface of this machine is in particular a simple flat surface with the logo on it. The logo is flush, it's not raised or lowered, and it's simple. And the sides, the same way, they're simple. The hinge mechanism from what I understand is a little more complicated than the newer ones but just overall it's just a nice simple package." Therefore the simpler a packaged product is, the more positively the consumer will respond, creating a sense of loyalty with the brand in the end result. Simplicity in design essentially "contributes to the overall brand image of the Apple as being 'simple' to use," stated by Takamura.

Aside from packaging, another important element in which Apple uses simplicity is within its logo. A simple icon of an Apple has become a national phenomenon; one that almost every technology driven consumer can identify and recognize. By having a simple icon, Apple has sustained and distinguished its brand loyalty with consumers all over the globe. In addition to attracting consumers with a fresh and clean layout, Apple has figured out another way on how to increase their sales when adapting to different cultures and transforming the content of their messaging for certain audiences.

An article, "Apple's Secret to Booming International Sales" discusses a process called "transcreation" that "allows companies the freedom to address cultural gaps by moving beyond translation to create something that captures the essence and spirit of a message, transforming it into one that is locally relevant and meaningful." This idea was demonstrated during Apple's iPod shuffle campaign. Apple chose one image that could be slightly shifted when targeting a specific demographic. For example, the original English version, displays solely a hand holding an iPod Shuffle with the text "The New

iPod Shuffle. The first music player that talks to you.” By occupying such minimal text, it makes it that much easier to shift the wording when transcreating to the relevant target market. The article continues to address that when adapting to other countries such as France, Russia, China and Japan, the simple phrase and wordplay that Apple uses in their ad campaigns “usually does not require too many words in other languages to express a similar idea.” This helpful tactic has proven the company profound success and has shown their understanding of successfully translating their messaging and content cross-culturally.

While Apple has seen much success in gaining global recognition, some companies however have faltered in this sector. An online article in Ad sale Publications named, “Packaging: A Global Marketplace”, discusses companies such as Snapple and Ben & Jerrys who have not achieved the success expected in demographics such as in Continental Europe. The main reason for Snapple and Ben & Jerrys failure to successfully market themselves globally, is due to the fact that their packaging was “unsuitable” as stated by the article. The decoration in their packaging did not “keep with the local gourmand codes to outside-the-market sizes: individual glass bottles in too large sizes” (Ad Sale Publications). Although these companies do not address the actual design and logo of their brand in which Apple has seen success in, Snapple and Ben & Jerrys lack the fundamental elements of structure and legal elements that drive accessibility and success in a packaged product. Therefore, the more the manufacturer of a company is organized, structured and modernized, the greater the impact brands will have on the consumer.

The article continues to note the idea of simplification, more specifically towards

product processing. It explains that “a reduction in the cost price and the desire to have products distributed in the greatest possible number of geographical markets drive the need for simplification of production processing and brand packaging policies.” The more simple the production processing is, the less materials and concepts manufacturers will have to use for each different culture. Therefore companies must stray away from complicated layouts in order to save time and money and essentially create a more sustainable culture within the distribution of their packaged products, just like Apple has performed.

The consensus of this research has found that the more simple the design of a package is the more success it will have with different cultures gaining acceptance and recognition. By acquiring such acknowledgement, this in the end helps manufacturers save time and money in the creation process of a package. Companies such as Apple who maintain a simple iconic logo with the counterpart of ad campaigning through “transcreation,” find themselves increasing their brand loyalty with consumer markets all over the world. In a society where the demand for products is increasing globally, manufacturers must conform to this shift and create simplistic adaptations within their brands and packaging forms for more effective communication. In doing so, both consumers and manufacturers gain something valuable out of it; consumers securing a sense of loyalty with a company and manufacturers attaining a more cost-effective atmosphere within their production process.

### Chapter 3: Research Methods

The purpose of this study is to determine how companies can become more sustainable by creating one layout of a packaged product that is purposed for different countries and cultures through means of language and design. Because the market for products is increasing globally, it is important to consider the ways in which the packaging industry can meet these demands without increasing the cost. In order to determine the ways in which companies can save time and money through creating a simpler layout for consumers cross culturally, it is important to employ several methods of research. In this study the research that was conducted was through elite and specialized interviewing, historical research and content analysis.

Elite and specialized interviewing encourages the practice of asking open-ended questions to executives within the industry. Harvey Levenson defines this type of interviewing in his account, *Some Ideas about Doing Research in Graphic Communication*, to not only consist of open-ended questions, but also “questions that are open to refinement as the research and interview continue.” In other words, in order to conduct this research efficiently, it is necessary to have a strong foundation of background knowledge of the topic presented so that the interviewee “becomes part of the research ‘team’, and can then “establish rapport with ‘elite’ respondents” (Levenson). According to Lewis A. Dexter, a famous communication theorist, because professionals and executives see themselves as more important than your average individual, they “must be viewed differently than the average person on the street” in maximizing the collection of useful information in applied research. Therefore, it is important to conduct this specific research in a respectful and organized manner (Levenson).

Historical research according to Levenson can be best described as “an attempt to establish facts and arrive at conclusions concerning past events.” Therefore, the historical researcher must systematically and objectively locate, evaluate, and interpret evidence available for understanding the past (Levenson). I will be able to address the industry’s past, present and future with this specific outlet of research.

Content analysis is best defined as a method for quantifying qualitative information gathered from elite and specialized interviewing, historical research, and descriptive research (Levenson). As one of the most popular types of research methods, content analysis will allow me to quantify my already gathered qualitative data. The purpose of content analysis according to Levenson is to basically use it in conjunction with other research methods in developing results and drawing conclusions (Levenson).

The first method of research that was employed was through gaining interviews from professionals within the packaging industry. Through interviews, I derived significant information to substantiate the answer to my research question. An informative start to this type of research was to ask specific professionals in the industries the importance of design and language and the roles each play in determining the influence of packaging. Specific professionals included marketing coordinators within the consumer product industries, professors with background knowledge in the packaging industry and longtime employees within the retail and technological field who distribute their products both in the U.S. and worldwide. I took a proactive approach in speaking with the individuals that I had the chance to meet with. With this in mind, I interviewed marketing coordinator, Ashley Sharma who works at a natural care consumer product company, *Yes To Inc.* In addition, I interviewed with Jay Singh, a professor at Cal Poly

San Luis Obispo who carries extensive background knowledge in the packaging industry. Finally, I interviewed with Christine Chun, Senior Manager in Marketing Planning from Levi Strauss and Company, a renowned clothing company recognized globally for its Levi's brand of denim jeans. For each interview, I asked broad and open-ended questions to extract as much information as possible to solidify the purpose of my study. The following questions included:

- How has the execution of simplicity with your brand and packaged products affected your consumer market?
- In what ways do you get a message across to different cultures and demographics in the most cost effective manner?
- In what ways does your company practice sustainability with regards to packaging?
- How might consumers from different demographics be able to benefit from simplistic packaging?
- How might your company benefit from the production of more simplistic packaging?
- In general, what do you see as the positive impact of simple packaging and design?

The second method used to research the topic of sustainable multicultural packaging was through historical research. This type of research allowed me to get a more substantial perspective on the packaging industry. I acquired articles and publications that contain both historical and recent accounts on the topics of sustainable multi-cultural packaging. In order to locate publications and articles, I used online search

engines to retrieve the relative information. The articles that I used as a part of this historical research included, “Where Brand Identity Meets Economics of Scale: Sustainability Goals and the Communication of those Goals to Consumers can be Achieved through Packaging, Design and the Retail Supply Chain,” by Elizabeth Abrams, “Pack it in-a New Look at Packaging: with Consumers Re-igniting their Loyalty to Brands and Increasingly Demanding Sustainable Products, the Time is Ripe to Evaluate Packaging and how Products Get to the Retailers” by Elizabeth Boch, “Downplaying Linguistic Ability can Sometimes be to your Advantage in Business “ by Adam Wooten and “Some Brand Names Don’t Translate Well” by Adam Wooten. With these sources, I learned that simplicity and sustainability are becoming one of the main trends impacting design for packaging, that using simplicity as a cost-effective means for packaging and marketing campaigns is increasing and brands with global presence use simple packaging and design to expand international awareness.

The third method of research I used was content analysis. Content analysis allowed me to quantify the qualitative information gathered from elite and specialized interviewing and historical research. The process of elite and specialized interviewing followed with the formulation of a table of tabulations for the answers provided by those that I interviewed. This simple table of tabulations provided a specific trend of the professional stances on sustainable multicultural packaging. In order to quantify my historical research based on the articles and publications analyzed, I tallied the way in which simplicity is defined. From here, these tallies indicated which aspect of simplicity has the most impact on fulfilling customer satisfaction and practicing sustainability. Specifically, I charted whether simplicity relates to design, language, and iconography, to



either some or all of these aspects. As a result from using this method, I was able to construct a numerical account on the importance of simplicity with packaging to both the consumer and the company producing the package. By using this systematic form of content analysis with the collection of my research, it provided more meaningful and accountable results in proving my research question.

## Chapter 4: Results

A growing concern that has resulted from the increase in globalization is the ability for companies to produce packaged products in the most cost-effective and perceptible manner. The purpose of this study is to specify how companies can execute and create a package that is identifiable by a broad range of consumers with different viewpoints and backgrounds and at the same time, saving companies the time and money that would otherwise be spent on constructing a more complex package. The several research methods employed included an analysis of historical data from professional articles as well as interviewing professionals within the industry. Following these research methods, I conducted a careful content analysis, which enabled me to quantify my findings. From conducting these research methods, it was identified the ways in which companies work collaboratively with the design and language of a package that can be more effective and appeal throughout several target markets.

I was able to attain significant information in supporting my hypothesis that packaging companies that create packages with simplistic quality through both language and design succeed in global recognition and sustainability.

Professionals from the packaging and marketing industries are beginning to acknowledge the power of simplicity; specifically it's influence on consumer purchasing preferences. The use historical data gave significant insight in researching my study. In the article, "Where Brand Identity Meets Economies of Scale: Sustainability Goals and the Communication of those Goals to Consumers can be Achieved Through Packaging," Elizabeth Abrams, marketing associate at CaseStack, highlights the benefits that

simplicity has to the customer and also how it influences more sustainable packaging specifically in the beauty industry. Abrams writes, “If [packaging] is done correctly, beauty, sustainability and cost can all be accounted for to create a beautiful and affordable green product that also saves brand owners money and increases sales” (Abrams). In addition, she adds that simple packaging such as MAC and Nars cosmetics with “simple, white logos on black packaging make for a professional and therefore, high-end look that rivals that of more expensive brands. Customers equate simplicity with good taste and high quality” (Abrams).

Another important point that Abrams adds to the subject of the iconography/logos on a package is, “labels and even logos are making the transition from demonstrative to demure in an effort to project a clean, fresh and more economical image.” Furthermore, Abrams concludes her discussion on simplistic and sustainable packaging with the core beliefs that “becoming sustainable has marketing benefits, the more elaborate the packaging, the more difficult it can be for consumers to discern what it is they are buying and by retooling packaging’s look, structure and delivery, the consumer’s first impression, money savings and sales gains can be simultaneously improved” (Abrams).

Elizabeth Boch is the marketing manager at CaseStack, where she handles the public relations, advertising, marketing and business intelligence strategies for the growing provider of sustainable logistics solutions. In the article, “Pack it in – a New Look at Packaging: With Consumers Re-Igniting their Loyalty to Brands and Increasingly Demanding Sustainable Products, the Time is Ripe to Evaluate Packaging and How Products get to the Retailers,” Elizabeth Boch explains further the consumer preferences with regards to the design and functionality of a package. She insists that

packaging companies “keep it simple. The simpler the packaging and the design is, the cleaner the look. The cleaner the look the easier it is for consumers to determine what they are buying. How many times have you been turned off by packaging that’s too involved? Consumers equate simplicity with high quality and are more apt to see the claims as credible. Let the product speak for itself” (Boch). Additionally the article continues to present that consumers want brand owners to do more with less and show they have a personal stake in their product’s lifestyle, and in addition to brand benefits such as building consumer loyalty, updating packaging to a more sustainable, eco-friendly alternative may result in higher ratings on retailers’ sustainability scorecards” (Boch).

Furthermore, Adam Wooten, Vice President at the translation and localization company, Globalization Group Inc., describes the impact that language inscribed on packaging has on the communication with the consumer. He explains this in two articles that were collected as a part of the Historical research. In his first article, “Some Brand Names Don’t Translate well,” he discusses certain companies that have struggled with conceptualizing a brand name that can be globally and internationally accepted. For example, Wooten gives a situational example where the well-known consumer product company, Proctor and Gamble once considered launching a new soap in the United States as “Dreck.” He explains that shortly before the company introduced the soap to U.S. consumers, it discovered “Dreck” sounded like German and Yiddish words for dirt, garbage and body waste. Because Proctor and Gamble did its homework, it had time to change the detergent name to “Dreft” and has since sold it successfully in the U.S. and many other countries (Wooten, “Some Brand Names”).

In contrast, Wooten gives an example of a company that has displayed a successful brand name that has experienced little controversy or confusion with international consumers. He states “Kodak exemplifies the benefits of linguistic research in brand name development. A team chose the name Kodak after it determined that the word had no negative meanings or connotations in the countries targeted. In fact the name had no meaning at all, but it was easy to pronounce in every country tested” (Wooten, “Some Brand Names”). Wooten continues to explain the importance of choosing a more globally neutral brand name and use of language and how exactly companies can reach out and communicate more effectively with a global audience rather than limiting a brand’s international market. He presents the suggestion that the best decisions about brand names are informed decisions. “Companies can collect all the information needed to choose the best global brand names by surveying linguists and country-specific brand checkers in various potential markets” (Wooten, “Some Brand Names”). In the other article that Wooten has published named, “Downplaying Linguistic Ability can Sometimes be to your Advantage,” he provides a deeper discussion on the issues of language and the impact it has on communicating with a consumer. He states a situation in which a German public relations company unknowingly devised an offensive brand name for Audi, called “Audi RS6 White Power.” Although these stated qualities did apply to the true characteristics of the model of the car, any English speaker would assume a different meaning, one where a historically racist meaning of “white power” was utilized. Wooten’s response in combating any type of communication barrier that deals with language is to “Know our limitations. Sometimes, especially in international business, we must not attempt to do everything ourselves. A modest

acceptance and acknowledgement of our own linguistic limitations can be strategically beneficial” (Wooten, “Downplaying Linguistic Ability”).

Elite and Specialized interviews provide a deeper understanding and more realistic perspective into the impact of simple and sustainable packaging. Several professionals were interviewed about their stances on how simplicity and sustainable packaging affects not only the consumer market, but companies as well. Although this research consisted of interviews with varying professionals specializing in different positions in the industry, the content of the answers proved to be consistent and displayed a similar pattern throughout the process.

This study, expected to interview with Anna Larson, Carrier Marketing Manager or Sarah Chandler, New Products Manager at Apple Inc. I was unable to get in touch with these individuals however, I did get a hold of Jen Madison, Photo Producer/Art Buyer at Apple Inc., and she forwarded my questions to Apple’s Packaging Team, stating they might be more helpful and appropriate for my interview questions. However in the interest of confidentiality, the Packaging Team was not able to answer any of the questions I had since it is against Apple Policy to discuss.

I was able to interview with Christine Chun who is the current Senior Marketing Manager at Levi Strauss and Company based in San Francisco, CA. Christine has been working with Levi’s for four years so far and was able to provide me with relevant information of Levi’s strategic process in marketing towards several global demographics.

I asked Christine about Levi’s target consumer market and how the company attains their best interests with simplicity in their brand, packaged products and

marketing campaigns. To which she relied simply, “Levi’s does not have one sophisticated model, because with any marketing change or program –signage, packaging or campaign included, there are so many things going on at one time. It’s important for the company to have a consistent approach so consumers can be provided with a more consistent experience.” She continued to discuss that the target market for Levi’s is a younger, consumer market ranging from 18 – 30 year olds. She described the target market specifically as “progressives interested in style and perception” (Chun). When asked about the specific ways that Levi’s gets a message across to different cultures and demographics in the most cost effective manner, she replied that the company is still trying to figure this out. However, Chun gave an example of how Levi’s needed to take in account the communication across different demographics with their new women’s Curve ID brand line. With the creation of “Curve ID”, the company took a more global approach with the goal of being “more consistent with one image and brand voice around the world” (Chun). Being a revolutionary way to buy a pair of jeans, the company needed to make sure to take in account all the different body types of women, and build products built on that body type. By taking a more global approach with this project, the company strived to make sure that “the look and the feel of packaging was the same globally in helping cost efficiencies” (Chun). I also asked how Levi’s uses language and design in a simplistic manner and if they use multiple languages within their packaging. Chun replied that this has in fact “been an issue over the past year. We are still trying to figure out how to express the Curve ID system for example to be interesting and understandable to everyone globally, but it’s been hard because there are different ways to appeal to women around the world” (Chun).

She also told me about a few processes that Levi's used in creating the different sizes and name styles for the Curve ID line. She discussed that they went through a naming exercise. Issues that needed to be considered were language and graphics. "Graphics were chosen as visual drawings with brush strokes to explain the body types so you can see more noticeable curves rather than using photography. Language consisted of the words 'slight, demi, bold' for the Curve ID line" (Chun). She explained that these words are used in the countries that they sell Levi's to however the only translations used are for the descriptions. Such descriptions include, "how does your body celebrate your waist?" In addition, she discussed that "In Asian countries they do not do translations, only transliterations, where they solely transliterate a description to sound like English. In other countries they also have laws and check if there are legal constraints and have to test with consumers; is there anything negative that our company is communicating or are we confusing the consumers in anyway?" (Chun). In combating the problem of weak communication with the consumer, Levi's worked with a naming agency to help with the instillation of the Curve ID system. They used this research team "to see what consumers aren't understanding" (Chun). When asked about how Levi practices sustainability with regards to packaging, she simply answered "the intentions are there but there are some limitations from accounts. It's hard because retail stores require more pieces to be delivered than desired. As a result, Levi's has been and is using recycled paper, promotes awareness of sustainability and even launched a new waterless jean for men" (Chun). I asked how might consumers from different demographics be able to benefit from more simplistic packaging and Chun answered, "the more simple form of packaging, the less busy and therefore can be helpful in attaining what the consumer is looking for. It's more



attractive, easier to buy and the more likely the consumer will engage in the actual product –from reading the description to buying it, if it is more simple” (Chun). When asked how much Levi’s benefit from the production of more simplistic packaging, Chun answered, “at the end of the day our company would benefit by getting better pricing time and production. Because it takes so long for people to agree and negotiate, it produces a very high resource cost on people’s time. The benefit isn’t necessarily about just saving money for your company, but making sure you are providing a consistent consumer experience; have consumers know what your brand is about and what it is standing for” (Chun).

This study also interviewed with Ashley Sharma, Marketing Coordinator at *Yes To Inc.* The company is a consumer-inspired line of hair and skin products that are all natural, organic and paraben free. Being in the consumer goods industry for the past four years, the brand has grown to hold the second spot in the industry after Burt’s Bees. A rebranding has recently taken place within the company to a more simple and modern logo, which has consequently enabled a re-launch of new products, increasing their products’ presence in new stores all around the globe. I asked Ashley the ways in which their marketing and packaging team addresses consumers globally with their recent logos and packaged products. When asked how the execution of simplicity with *Yes To Inc.*’s new brand and packaged products affects the consumer market and what does the company see as their main target market, she responded, “I think *Yes To Inc.*, has found a very innovative way to reach its target markets through its packaging. We call out the importance and benefits of the main ingredients in the product and also make it a point to keep all the copy on the packaging fun, yet informative. *Yes To Inc.* can reach a variety of

different markets – because of all the different lines we have within the brand. The grid (See Appendix A) gives an insight of how each brand can serve a different part of the market” (Sharma).

I asked Sharma the specific ways in which *Yes To Inc.* gets a message across to different cultures and demographics in the most cost effective manner in light of globalization and higher demand from other countries and she responded, “We actually have three different labels that serve three different markets. We have, of course, the ‘United States’ label for all products that are sold here. Then we have the ‘Canada’ label that has both English/French on it. And finally, we have the ‘International’ version that is geared towards our ‘European’ market. These labels are actually really interesting because they have the name of the product translated into seventeen different languages ranging from Spanish to even Greek” (Sharma).

The next question I asked was how the company practices sustainability with regards to packaging. Sharma responded, “On all our packaging you will find the recycled symbol. [We also use] FSC certified where possible, currently on all laminate and [on a] majority of cartons. On tubes made from LDPE, [the package is labeled] recycle number ‘4’ [and on many bottles with] HDPE, [the package is labeled] recycled ‘2’. There is also a call out about our 'Yes to Seed Fund' - which states that a portion of proceeds from every *Yes To Inc.* product goes towards helping kids and schools find a way to connect with Mother Nature” (Sharma).

Furthermore, I asked Sharma how might consumers from different demographics are able to benefit from simplistic packaging and she answered, “The packaging is fun and corky, yet still gets the message across. The main points that we want the customer to

know when shopping for *Yes To Inc.* products, are the benefits, importance of fruits and veggies. We like to think that you shouldn't have to sacrifice anything when shopping for skin and hair care – we like to meet every need at a great price, while also providing products that work and make you feel fabulous” (Sharma). Due to time constraints, I was unable to receive answers for the rest of the questions, however the responses I did attain from Sharma proved to be of significance to this study.

Another professional that this study interviewed was Professor Jay Singh, Associate Professor of Industrial Technology at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Package design, distribution environment measurement and simulation, material and package testing are a few of Singh's specialties. When asked how he believes the execution of simplicity with company's brands and packaged products affects their consumer market, he responded, “simplicity it key. The more complex the package is, the harder it is to understand. Here, we are educated but in developing countries it is harder for them to understand” (Singh).

I asked in what ways do companies gets a message across to different cultures and demographics in the most cost-effective manner and Singh simply responded, “in order to reach markets, you have to communicate efficiently in their language of demographics. It's important to understand their culture” (Singh). When asked how companies practice sustainability with regards to packaging, he responded that companies such as Coca Cola have been really leading the way with sustainability with their packaging. He explained more about their green caps and how they consist of “30% non petroleum. Although this might cost more, it is at the same time, promoting consumer awareness and increasing

consumer recognition.” Packaging he emphasized is about sustainability and branding, without these you will not have a successful package (Singh).

After asking how might consumers from different demographics be able to benefit from simplistic packaging, he responded, “It creates lesser chaos when shopping. The consumer won’t be puzzled. A clearer line of communication is established from simplistic packaging with the company trying to get the message across to the consumer” (Singh). When asked how might companies be able to benefit from the production of more simplistic packaging, he answered, “Overall it is much cheaper, easier to assemble and to fill, when creating a more simple package.” Because production tends to complicate things, if any change is made in one label for example, it needs to be changed for the rest of production. Therefore, if utilizing a more simple form and design, it is much easier for production purposes (Singh). Lastly, after asking what he sees as the positive impact of simple packaging and design, he responded, “simple packaging provides better branding and establishes a greater consumer experience. The simpler the design, this means removing more material that could cost companies more, therefore if it is simple, it is better for sustainability” (Singh).

In an effort to better understand the responses collected from these interviews, I conducted a content analysis and created a table (See Appendix B) that pinpoints the main responses from each question. As dictated by the patterns of the different varying responses, it can be drawn that there is a specific trend concerning simplistic and sustainable packaging to consumers from different cultures and demographics as well as for companies. In addition, I created another table (See Appendix C) indicating the number of times each aspect of packaging (iconography, design or language) was utilized

more effectively for simplicity. The most valuable information that can be taken from the responses is the ways in which simplistic packaging benefits consumers and companies within the industry. This will be discussed further in the conclusions exhibited in Chapter Five.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

Throughout the progression of society, it is inevitable for shifts and trends in consumers' interests to occur. One of the biggest areas this impacts the most happens to be the consumer packaging industry. Because the packaging market serves products that perform as the "silent salesman," it is worthy to understand what drives clear communication between companies and consumers, specifically of different demographics so they can promote and market their products in the most effective and cost driven manner. New innovations are created which adjusts the tastes in people's preferences in a given technology or package in this case. Because the world is changing and the demand for convenience and more readily available information are becoming stronger, this changes the way consumers view information and has given the packaging industry a new perspective on the way they deliver packaged products. To identify certain trends that occur in the consumer market, it's important to take the necessary steps in pursuing this knowledge. By obtaining a sense of this direction, companies can offer their consumers what they want and what they need.

The biggest challenge that has hit consumer-packaging companies today is the increase in globalization. Not only has the demand for consumer packaged products increased just within the United States over the past decade, but this has also seen to be increasing worldwide. Because packaging companies must utilize their time and money to produce the best results and bring in the highest revenue, it's interesting to question how they align themselves with the increase in demand by the global market.

In conducting this study, the intention was to find out how companies can become more sustainable by creating a simpler layout of a packaged product that is purposed for

different countries and cultures through means of language and design. Through historical research and elite and specialized interviews, there appears to be specific ways in which companies can fulfill this need, which is through the shift to simplistic packaging.

Through historical research, articles have shown that simplicity plays a key role in gaining recognition from the consumer market. This recognition consists of elements such as the consumer satisfaction, brand loyalty and emotional connection with the product that result from the creation of a simple package. Through the tabulations that were calculated, I was able to determine what aspects of simplicity drive consumer's preferences the most. The conclusions founded from the articles I analyzed were review of iconography, logo, design of the package and language, and learning that each attribute equally to the success of a simple package. It's proven with this research that simplistic packaging is not only a vehicle for driving consumer recognition and establishing a clear line of communication, but also establishing a sense of professionalism and high-end look that many consumers, even from different demographics appeal to.

Through elite and specialized interviews, this research proved similar however more emphasis was placed on how exactly simple packaging benefits consumers from different countries and cultures and how might companies see advantages as well. It is concluded that from the highest number of tabulations in the table I created, the more simple the package is, the better it communicates to the consumer and the more productive it is for companies as they become more sustainable by using less amounts of materials and time that otherwise wouldn't be successfully accomplished through a complex and elaborate/busy package. As a result from the professionals in the industry

that I spoke with, it is evident that companies save more time and money by developing a very simplistic brand logo or package design that will be accepted and communicated universally across different countries and cultures.

Society is never static and will forever shift based on the current trends present at that given time. The creation of innovative packaging has stimulated a growing trend in consumers' interests, influencing packaging companies to follow in the direction of their concerns. Since consumer packaging is reaching audiences worldwide, it's an even bigger challenge to create a package that any demographic can understand and relate to. As this study showed, there are several ways in which companies can accomplish such intricate demands while saving both time and money, and in the end becoming more sustainable. The simpler the package, essentially the more successful it will be. Packaging will always remain a vital part in not only selling, transporting and distributing consumer products but also in meeting the demands of consumers, therefore it's important for companies to develop a packaged product that is intrinsic to convenience, value and high quality.



## Appendix

### *Appendix A. Yes To Inc. Consumer Market Grid*

<p><b>YES TO BABY CARROTS</b></p>	<p><b>YES TO TOMATOES CLEAR SKIN</b></p>	<p><b>YES TO CUCUMBERS SOOTHING</b></p>	<p><b>YES TO CARROTS NOURISHING</b></p>	<p><b>YES TO BLUEBERRIES AGE REFRESH</b></p>
<p>This 100% Natural, tear-free collection nurtures, soothes and softens your cuddly little one, with organic carrots, aloe vera, and sweet melon.</p>	<p>Formulated for combination-to-oily and acne-prone skin, these products treat and prevent breakouts with tomatoes, salicylic acid and witch hazel. The hair collection contains nectarines, that help volumize limp locks</p>	<p>Formulated with organic cucumbers, aloe vera, and green tea, this is our line for sensitive skin; soothes and hydrates skin, and the hair collection contains Centaurea Extract to naturally protect color-treated hair.</p>	<p>Formulated for normal-to-dry skin and hair types, this collection is made with carrots, shea butter and sweet almond oil to moisturize, nourish, and soften skin and hair.</p>	<p>Formulated with blueberries, cotton thistle, and paracress flower, this collection improves skin firmness, repairs age-damaged skin, and diminishes fine lines.</p>

### *Appendix B. Elite and Specialized Interview Questions and Answers*

<b>Question 1: How has the execution of simplicity with your brand and packaged products affected your consumer market?</b>	<b># Of times referred to</b>
It has helped our company gain more recognition from the consumer market	<b>9</b>
It has had no effect in the consumer market	<b>0</b>
It has decreased sales in the consumer market	<b>0</b>

<b>Question 2: In what ways do you get a message across to different cultures and countries in the most cost-effective manner?</b>	<b># Of times referred to</b>
Through language with translations catered to different demographics	<b>5</b>
Through simplistic design	<b>11</b>
Through other forms of marketing campaigns and promotion	<b>4</b>
We haven't been able to find the most cost-effective manner of getting a message across to consumers of different backgrounds	<b>0</b>

<b>Question 3: In what ways does your company practice sustainability with regards to packaging?</b>	<b># Of times referred to</b>
We use alternative materials to packaging that are more sustainable	<b>12</b>
We promote the practice of sustainability to consumers through	<b>10</b>

marketing campaigns	
We use a more simple package design, therefore we acquire less materials and exertion into producing our packaged products	<b>13</b>
We don't practice sustainability with regards to packaging	<b>0</b>

<b>Question 4: How might consumers be able to benefit from simplistic packaging?</b>	<b># Of times referred to</b>
It will create a more user-friendly experience	<b>15</b>
Consumers can better understand the package and brand therefore creating more awareness with the consumer	<b>23</b>
Consumers will develop brand loyalty as a result of customer satisfaction	<b>9</b>
Consumers do not benefit from simplistic packaging	<b>0</b>

<b>Question 5: How might your company benefit from the production of more simplistic packaging?</b>	<b># Of times referred to</b>
It draws more attention to consumers, therefore creating more recognition with our brand and products	<b>6</b>
Saves time and money- we don't have to exert more time and cost into making multiple forms of packaging for different demographics	<b>7</b>
Doesn't have any effect on our company	<b>0</b>

<b>Question 6: In general, what do you see as the positive impact of simple packaging and design?</b>	<b># Of times referred to</b>
Less expensive. The cost to create a more simple package design and logo will cost less money	<b>8</b>
Ease. It not only makes it easier for the consumer but easier for our company to produce	<b>9</b>
Accessibility. The fact that a package can be viewed and better understood with simplicity makes it more accessible to consumers	<b>3</b>

*Appendix C. Tabulations from Historical Research*

<b>Article</b>	<b>Iconography/Logo</b>	<b>Design</b>	<b>Language</b>
“Where Brand Identity Meets Economies of Sale...” by Elizabeth Abrams	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	
“Pack it in- A New Look at Packaging...” by Elizabeth Boch		<b>2</b>	
“Downplaying Linguistic Ability Can Sometimes be to your Advantage in Business” by Adam Wooten			<b>2</b>
“Some Brand Names Don’t Translate Well” by Adam Wooten			<b>2</b>

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