

**Sandspit Brewing Co.**

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GrC 462: Senior Project

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## **Project Overview**

For this project, I created a fictional local brewery called Sandspit Brewing Co. and designed the necessary branding for this company to function. To begin, I created a main logo as well as brand guidelines, including a color palette, secondary logos, graphics, etc. Using what I come up with in terms of brand guidelines, I will design a label for two beer cans and will design additional assets as well. These will include coasters, stickers, and a website home/landing page.

This fictional brewery will have been founded in Santa Barbara, and focus on catering mainly to the 805, with taprooms in both Ventura and San Luis Obispo. While there are several local breweries both in Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo respectively, to my knowledge there isn't one that caters to the entire central coast. For this project, I will be taking inspiration from some of my favorite local ones back home such as MadeWest Brewing, Topa Topa Brewing, and Figueroa Mountain Brewing. From my initial research, I noticed that most local breweries at least tend to stick with a recognizable wordmark logo (and maybe a simple graphic/shape) and then get creative with the actual can/label design itself. For my brewery, I planned on designing something in a similar format.

According to my basic research regarding beer labels, it has been proven that the design of a label on a beer bottle plays a significant role in consumer influence and purchasing power. As stated by a study published in 2018 titled "Influence of Beer Label Design on Making Decision About Choosing and Buying Product", it was found that while the number one influence on beer selection is taste and number two is price, the third highest influence was the appearance and functionality of the packaging. While taste again was the number one criterion in beer selection with 31%, price and appearance were almost tied with 28% and 27% respectively. It was found that the design of the packaging and appearance was especially important to people

who do not actually consume beer, but buy it for others. This makes sense to me personally as someone who doesn't really drink beer, but is easily influenced to try new things and make impulse decisions solely based on the design of a can or label.

What will help set this brewery apart will be their dedication to sustainability. Sandspit Brewing Co. will utilize shrink wrap labels that include a zip off perforation to allow the cans to be fully recyclable. According to an article by Jon Sicotte (2021) in *The Brewer Magazine*, as more and more small breweries start plastic sleeves and pressure sensitive labels, it is important that consumers are educated to remove the label before recycling. Sicotte says that as there is increased use of non-printed cans with labels, they can contaminate full bales of aluminum which then gets rejected at the reprocessor. Because of this, it is important to incorporate the zipper perforation line in the label design as well as call attention to it in marketing.

In order to complete this project in a timely manner, I am starting with the brand guideline design and logo iterations, in order to have some versions ready for surveys and feedback to see consumer preferences. Once I have the logo, color palette, and graphics finalized, I will be ready to implement these into the design of the actual labels themselves as well as turn the design into coasters, stickers, and glasses. Lastly, I will create the website landing page using a website builder service such as Wix or Squarespace most likely. Along the design process, I will ask for lots of feedback from a wide audience range to get a sense of what different consumers like to see when it comes to local brewery design. I will measure success as people see the brand I create as something they could see themselves supporting as well as if potential consumers prove to understand and like the idea of the zipper-pull label for the recyclable can. If consumers are willing to pay a couple cents more, for more sustainable packaging, I would say that the idea is a success.

## **Literature Review**

I used Goffman's idea of framing to support the importance of my project because how Sandspit Brewing Co. as a brand is presented to the general public and their target audience, can determine how successful they are as a company. The framing theory says that the manner in which something is presented to an audience, influences the choices people make about how to process that information ("Mass Communication Theory", 2014). This means that the presentation of your information actually matters and will in fact have an influence on your audience, which in my case it would be potential consumers. It is commonly said that framing is a concept that is commonly used to understand media effects and how the media can choose to present information to the public ("Communication Studies", 2012). While a lot of framing does have to do with the media, it can also be said that it goes hand in hand with marketing and is thus an important theory within the world of graphic communication.

According to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996), there are several different framing techniques people use. These techniques include "slogans, jargon, and catchphrases: to frame a subject in a memorable and familiar fashion" and "spin: to present a concept in such a way as to convey a value judgment (positive or negative)", both of which techniques can play a role in the world of marketing. Previous studies have shown mixed results when looking at message framing's effect on persuasion as some studies show that positively framed messages are more persuasive than negatively framed ones, while some studies show the opposite. This being said, a study conducted by Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy (1990) looked at whether or not these mixed results are due to how much a person has to engage in detailed message processing. They found that when there is less to process, positively framed messages may be more persuasive, but when

detailed processing is emphasized, negatively framed messages may be more persuasive. This is good to note when marketing something because if you want to positively frame your product or service, you should look at keeping your message simple and efficient.

In my eyes, I can see how framing goes hand in hand with both the ideas of perception as well as decision making. “Perception, in humans, [is] the process whereby sensory stimulation is translated into organized experience” (Jolyon West, Epstein, Dember, 2019). This basically translates into perception being the process of how you understand something based on the information gathered from your senses. How one perceives something definitely plays in how you make your decisions. According to *Psychology Today*, “when making a decision, we form opinions and choose actions via mental processes which are influenced by biases, reason, emotions, and memories” (“Psychology Today”, n.d). So all of these theories working in combination, make up and influence how we as consumers decide what to buy and what not to buy everytime we set foot in a store or browse a website. The first area of influence in terms of marketing comes from the framing theory as previously discussed which says that how something is presented to an audience, influences the choices people make about how to process that information. From here, depending on how a product is framed, people may perceive it in different manners, ultimately leading them to make a decision about whether or not to purchase the product.

## **Synthesis**

These theories are all highly relevant to my project when it comes to branding design, identity, and packaging. Because of this, it is important to make intentional decisions when it comes to designing for a brand such as Sandspit Brewing Co. All the choices such as what the

logo will look like, what the color palette should be, and what is the overall vibe of the labels majorly impacts your sales and overall success of a brand. According to a study conducted by Mai Ngoc Khuong and Vu Ngoc Bich Tram in Vietnam, purchase decisions were directly affected by brand recognition and the perceived quality of a product (Khuong and Tram, 2015). To me, this is something I often observe when shopping; people are usually drawn to brands they recognize and know or come across as higher quality just because of the packaging. So when it came to designing branding for Sandspit Brewing Co., I chose to keep these ideas in mind as I went about my design process.

Overall, I decided on a bright color palette as I felt it helped with both brand recognition as well as the perceived quality of the product. By choosing bright colors that aren't typically used in a beer branding (especially cheap beer which often uses such as red, blue, and yellow) I went with tropical colors that make the cans stand out on the shelves and also help differentiate the brand. In addition, I also chose to make sure to draw attention to the zip off label in order to help the recyclability of the can- sustainability being something that I find goes hand in hand with the perceived quality of the product. In today's day and age, sustainability is something many consumers value and many shoppers tend to want to support brands that also share their values and will tend to think of these brands as higher quality because of it. However, unfortunately, there are many misconceived notions about sustainable packaging and many companies that want to capitalize on the "trend" of sustainability by designing packaging that looks sustainable or using certain buzz words, when the company itself is in fact not sustainable. A study titled "Consumer Considerations for the Implementation of Sustainable Packaging: A Review" (2020) states that "research has demonstrated that sustainable packaging is not communicated well to the consumers. For example, surveys have shown that consumers could

not identify the sustainable packaging or did not have a clear idea of what sustainability packaging involves” ( Boz, Korhonen, and Koelsch Sand, 2020). Because consumers tend to be unaware of what makes packaging actually sustainable or what goes into creating sustainable packaging, this makes it easy for many companies to get away with greenwashing.

Greenwashing can be thought of as when green marketing claims do not accurately reflect a firm's environmental conduct (Szabo and Webster, 2020). For example, many companies today will often be quick to use phrases such as “100% natural”, “eco-friendly”, or “made sustainably” on their packaging, just because they know consumers will often buy it and not question if these vague terms actually mean anything. Unfortunately, this is the current reality with packaging because companies do not have to be transparent with their environmental practices although more and more businesses are deciding to take action and commit to sustainable practices.

Ultimately, when designing branding and packaging for a company, it is important to keep several things in mind in order to create a successful brand. How you market your brand is also often how your brand will be perceived and influence a potential consumer’s decision making process. Specifically, choosing to use emotional marketing to make design decisions will help increase potential purchases as will being transparent as a company about your sustainability practices.

## **Results**

For my finished project, I designed two can labels, stickers, coasters, and a website homepage as well as the corresponding mockups. In order to start the design process, I first created my brand guidelines for Sandspit Brewing Co. This contained the fonts I used, colors, as well as various logo versions.



Figure 1: Brand Guidelines

Although I created the brand guidelines early on in the process, I definitely continued to edit and revise it as I got further along in the design process. However, starting with these items was very useful when it came to designing the can labels themselves in terms of having a starting point. From here, I definitely had lots and lots of revisions when it came to word placements, color combinations, etc. as well as altering the scope of my project slightly too.



Figure 2: Can labels

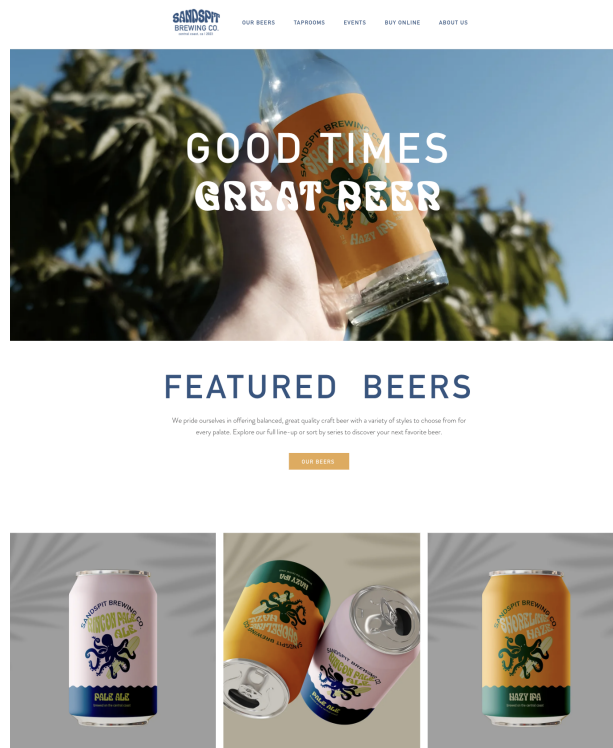


During this stage, I got lots of good feedback regarding the color combinations I was trying out as well as stylistic choices regarding my text design and other details. For this project, I used Illustrator to create my graphics and labels and Photoshop to make my mockups.



Figure 3: Mockups

Additionally, I used Wix to create my webpage for Sandspit Brewing Co. To create the brewery's homepage, I researched several other local breweries' websites in order to get a feel for how they're laid out and their navigation items. Based on what I found, I decided to design my homepage with a scrolling feature that featured sections such as current beers, about us, etc.



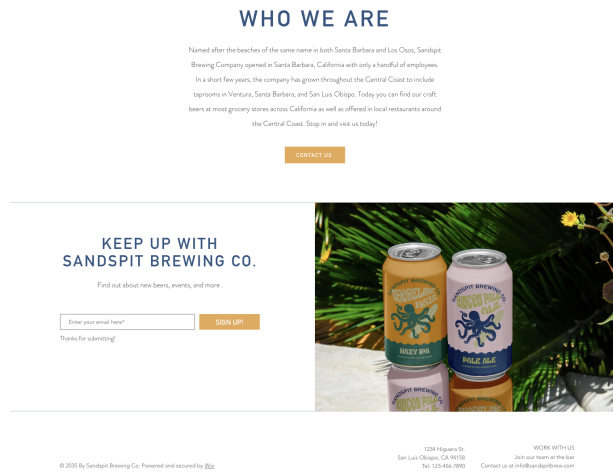


Figure 4: Website homepage

## Conclusion

While my project was for a fictional brewery, a lot of the design process could be applied to a real brewery in how they create their branding from scratch. When coming up with original designs for my labels, I took a lot of inspiration from existing can designs. A lot of a company's success can come from their brand identity and having a recognizable look and design, especially in an industry such a craft beer where labels are becoming more and more original and creative, it is important for a brand to stand out from their competition. For my project, since it was supposed to be a local brand with an authentic, central coast feel, I decided to incorporate that into my design as well by keeping the beer names relative to the location it was founded in, something that potential consumers could connect to. When designing for a brand, it is important to make intentional decisions when it comes to all details such as the logo, fonts, color palette etc. as these are all things that can overall impact your sales and your brand's success. Because of this, theories and ideas such as framing, perception, and decision making all play a large role

in the marketing of a product. These are all things marketers and designers need to think about when potentially bringing a new product to market, as they can all, intentionally or not, influence what a customer will think of your product and if they will want to purchase it. Keeping all of this in mind, I chose a bright, upbeat color palette as well as an organic, fun lettering style to match my interpretation of the central coast beach vibes and the types of consumers here.

### **Reflection & Limitations**

Overall, I am happy with how my project turned out, but there are definitely things I would expand upon given more time or if I were expanding this into a real brand. If I were turning this into a real potential brand, I would design a completely new separate line of beer labels with another original graphic to create some variety in the types of beer sold by Sandspit Brewing Co. Today, breweries are very creative with their label designs and packaging and being able to stand out on the shelves is important. Lots of bigger craft breweries such as Firestone Walker, have very different design styles for each of the individual beers they sell which would be something cool to explore. Additionally, I would ideally create a complete website for Sandspit Brewing Co. complete with an online shop and an events page among others.

Besides my design work for this project, I also enjoyed looking into sustainable packaging for small breweries and think that this is something existing breweries should look into. Finally, I am satisfied with the work I managed to get done on this project and am happy that multiple people at the end of it have asked me if it is a real brand that I was designing for. This just tells me that people could see these actual designs being used on beer being sold today which is something that stands out as a good measure of success to me. This project confirmed

that I would definitely enjoy working in the world of branding and I had a ton of fun looking into breweries which is an area of design I have been looking into for a while now.

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