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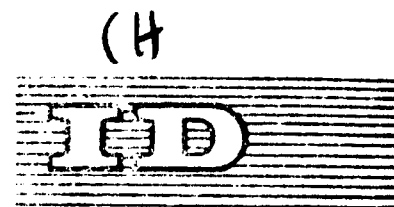
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05451



Distr.
LIMITED

ID/WG.171/20
6 May 1974

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

International Consultation on
Agro-Industrial Development

Belgrade, Yugoslavia, 13-18 May, 1974

CONTRIBUTION OF PACKAGING TO MARKETING^{1/}

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id.74.2/10

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF PACKAGING TO MARKETING

In recent years packaging has been recognised as an industry of some importance and in theory many people have accepted the increasing part it plays in the marketing of consumer goods. In spite of this, it is remarkable how low a proportion of good packaging appears on the supermarket shelves throughout the world and it is evident that, in practice, the organisations which produce packs still fail to appreciate the vital part which the container plays in the marketing and sales function.

This is probably because the physical structure, the appearance potential and the multiple interconnected functions of a pack are so complex as to be difficult to comprehend, let alone to integrate with a marketing plan.

It is important to understand that consumer packaging has two quite separate and equally important functions:

- (1) To contain and protect the product
- (2) To maximise sales.

The ideal pack fulfils both these functions satisfactorily at a minimum cost.

Protection

The quality of protection is important because the quality of the product inside the pack determines the number of repeat sales. The container itself must be instrumental in achieving the first sale and thereafter enabling the purchaser to identify the contents which have already pleased him. The longer the shelf-life, the greater the convenience and less the chance of disappointing quality. This question of shelf life depends on the structure of the package and the properties of the materials used in its construction. Some of the factors influencing the choice of raw material are summarised in Appendix A.

The following aspects are some of those which have to be borne in mind:-

- (a) Moisture or moisture vapour. For instance, a pack may have to prevent loss of moisture - particularly with frozen foods, prevent moisture from entering dry foods or pharmaceuticals, or facilitate an equilibrium as in the case of the perforated polythene bags used for packing fresh vegetables.
- (b) A pack may have to provide a gas barrier. This means preventing oxygen entering (in the case of milk powder or soup powder), preventing gas losses (e.g. in carbonated drinks) or preventing the loss of volatiles in products containing flavour or perfume - or, on the other hand, unpleasant odours.

- (c) The package and product must be compatible. For instance, it is important to avoid corrosion which could lead to contamination of the product by perforation and the entry of oxygen. Another example is the leaking of toxic products into food from a plastic container.
- (d) Closures must be efficient and provide effective barriers against bacteria in the case of food.
- (e) For some products a particularly strong raw material is required to give adequate protection. For others, a heat resistant container is necessary to permit hot filling or sterilisation.
- (f) All structures must comply with safety legislation. This can involve the careful specification of coatings and solders required for manufacturing cans, or additives included in the raw material of plastic containers.
- (g) Multiple handling is inevitable and will be a severe test of pack construction.

Sales Promotion

The following factors are important in achieving maximum sales

- (1) The pack must indicate the product, its quality and any unique selling features.
- (2) The pack must stand out and be immediately identifiable both as to the product it contains and as to the organisation which is marketing it. (It is important to remember that in supermarkets all packs are competing with other packs which may be equally supported by advertising and good design).
- (3) Any message on the pack must be sufficiently truthful not to disappoint and thereby discourage repeat sales.
- (4) The pack must appeal to
 - (a) the wholesaler who will be interested in cost and economic handling
 - (b) the retailer who will be interested in the ease with which it can be displayed on shelves, its appearance and its economy in the use of limited space
 - (c) the housewife (and her family) who will remember convenience, its ease of opening (and often its ease of reclosing), its tamperproofness and any other significant features.

The creation of a new pack

All the elements described above have to be assembled into each new successful pack and, while there is no precise recipe for success, it is possible to indicate the various activities which have to be combined in an endeavour to solve the problem satisfactorily and to achieve an adequate balance, these activities may be listed as follows:

Marketing

Market Research

Technical research and packing processes

Product Design

Label Design

The marketing function defines the objectives in terms of sales and provides briefs for the designers.

The market research function assists in finding out how best these objectives may be achieved and in what circumstances. Market research provides information regarding:

- (1) Competitive packs: their price, popularity, size and shape, surface design.
- (2) Retailer attitudes, including handling and display characteristics.
- (3) Consumer attitudes:
 - (a) in the supermarket under the general heading of attracting, informing and persuading to buy
 - (b) at home under the general heading of storing, opening, dispensing, reclosing and disposal.

The research and packing function need to ensure that any new pack fulfils the quality conditions and handling criteria called for in the packing operation.

The brief given to the Product Designer and the way in which he carries it out is perhaps the most important aspect of all. The brief has to cover the way in which the pack is to meet all the important requirements outlined above. The Product Designer's job is one of synthesis and of achieving the nearest approach to a perfect balance of many conflicting elements (including of course the closest possible attention to the ever present problem of cost.)

The Label Designer is responsible for creating the main selling message which is where the majority of unsuccessful packs fail. Far too few manufacturers appreciate that a high quality product packed in a functionally satisfactory container can fail to achieve sales solely due to the poor quality or design of the label. The label is the salesman; it must attract attention to obtain the first sale and, with a good quality product, it must establish the brand name which becomes important in the achievement of repeat sales.

The choice of raw materials for packaging

Advantages

Disadvantages

Glass

Stable and not affected by the product

Transparent

Relatively cheap

Affords variety of shape

Breakable

A poor space/volume ratio

Difficult to decorate attractively

Tinplate

Strong and unbreakable

Light

Easily decorated

Holds internal pressures and vacuum

Subject to corrosion

Relatively expensive raw material

Opaque

Little variety in shape

Aluminium

Light

Not subject to corrosion

Easily decorated

Often an expensive raw material

Relatively easily dented

Little variety of shape

Requires lacquer protection for certain products

Board

Light

Cheap

Easily decorated

Easily handled

Requires protection against water

Poor moisture vapour transmission properties

Little variety of shape

Plastics

Light

Versatile regarding shape and performance

Can be either transparent or opaque

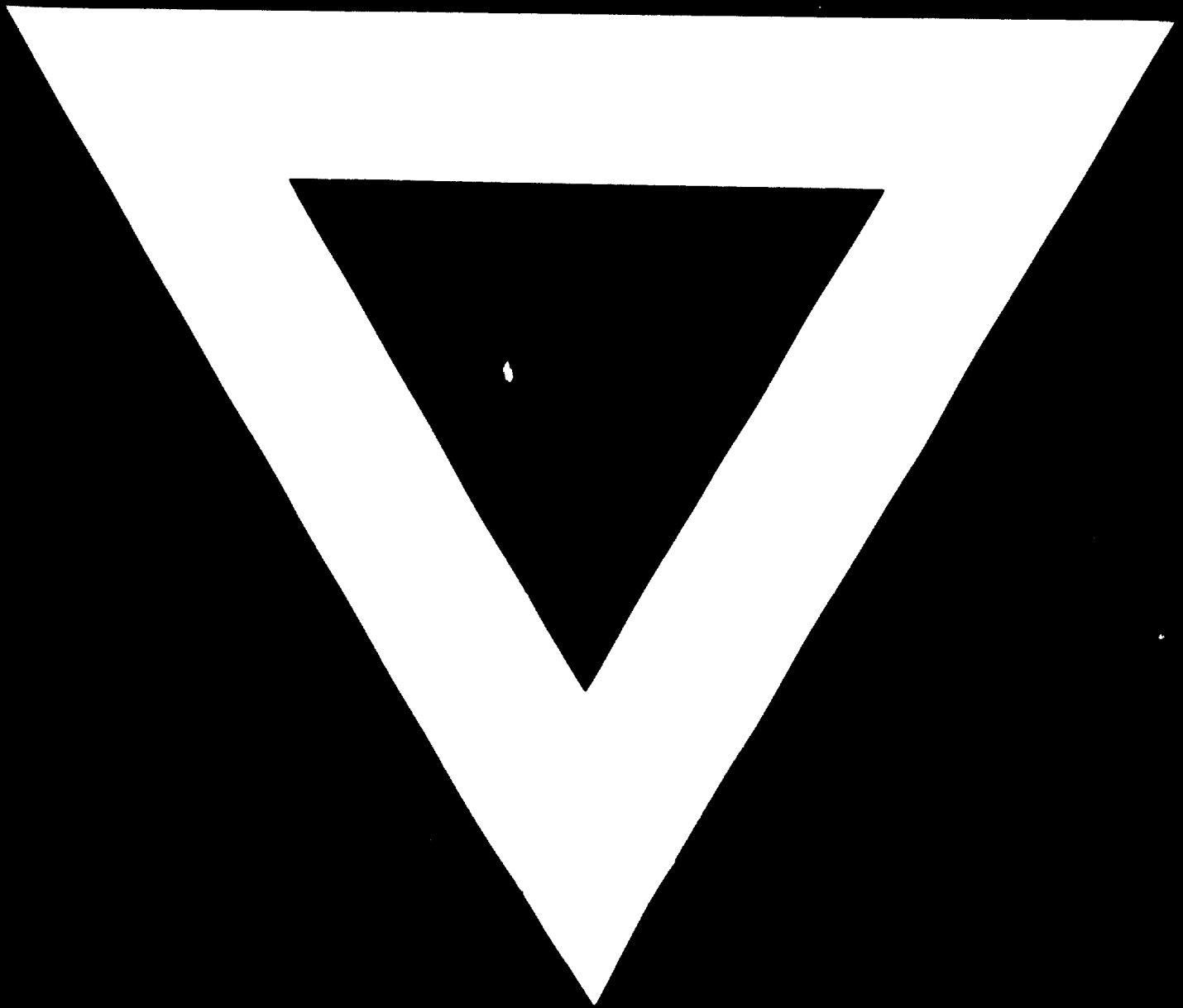
Often difficult to handle automatically at speed

Sometimes permeable to gasses

Sometimes toxic

Often slow to convert and therefore relatively expensive





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