

## Guide to Private Label Branding and Packaging Design

### Introduction

The world of consumer brands is going through a time of change that is opening the door for private label brands to recognize advantages they never had before. Consumers believe quality can come at any price point and are now open to considering private label brands in the same way they consider established, national brands. As specialists in a given category, retail brands offer the credibility many consumers rely on when it comes to understanding a product. As consumers look beyond price at factors, such as branding and packaging, as markers of quality, private label brands emerge as a viable option.

However, the advantages do not come easy. Consumer expectations of all brands are very high. Having a quality product is one part of the equation, making it imperative that new private label brands consider all aspects of the consumer's experience of their brand, including branding and packaging design.

For many retailers looking to develop a private label brand, the task of developing branding and packaging designs can be a daunting walk into uncharted territory. This guide is designed to help retailers as they develop their private label brands by highlighting the key components of brand building and packaging design that are necessary for any new brand to succeed. With a well thought out brand strategy and supporting packaging design in place, a new private label brand is set up to take full advantage of the opportunities emerging in the new marketplace.



Taeq Tea. [greenerpackage.com](http://greenerpackage.com)

### Building a Private Label Brand

Consumers do not fall in love with products, they fall in love with brands. "Brand" is a tangible expression of the intangible characteristics that consumers find attractive and keeps them coming back again and again. Brand ties together a product, with personality and purpose to create a unique experience that creates loyalty.

#### **The Three P's: Personality, Purpose, Product**

When developing a new private label brand, it is important to begin by identifying the brand's personality and purpose, as a complement to the product.

**Personality** – the characteristics and traits that bring life to the brand and help define how the brand behaves and acts.

*Consider:* If the brand were a person, what would they be like? What are the personality and character traits that make sense for the brand? Based on that personality, how should the brand act and behave?

**Purpose** - the motivation behind the brand that explains why it exists. Purpose helps to clarify the role of the brand in the relationship it has with the consumer.

*Consider: What is the motivation behind the brand? What role does this new brand play in the larger portfolio of the retail brand?*

**Product** – the tangible expression that the consumer consumes – the assortment, product features and benefits all add up to be the brand's product.

*Consider: What is the product assortment that the brand will offer? And what characteristics can be gleaned from the curation of the assortment?*

Together, the Three P's combine to create the foundation of a brand strategy. Personality, purpose and product are the guideposts for making decisions about the brand that will ensure a consistent consumer experience of the brand. As new decisions are made, the Three P's should be referenced to help ensure the brand remains authentic and consistent.

### Developing Private Label Packaging

The role of packaging design has evolved as consumer behavior changes in the era of ecommerce. In the past, packaging served a functional purpose in containing or protecting a product that sat on a store shelf. Over time, the functional purpose evolved to aid in identification of specific brands. Later, packaging became a tool of differentiation, making clear the uniqueness of each brand within a competitive set.

Today, packaging design has evolved to be one of the most powerful tools in a brand's arsenal. In addition to doing all of the things that it has done in the past, packaging today must create an experience for the consumer that brings to life the brand beyond the product.

All aspects of the packaging design must work in harmony to create a compelling experience of the brand. This includes both the structure the product is housed in, and the label graphics which communicate the brand to the consumer. When making decisions about packaging design, the Three P's should continue to be used as a reference point.



Steven Smith Tea Maker

### **Structure**

Choosing a structure for your product is an important decision. While the structure serves a clear functional purpose, one should never underestimate the power of a structure to create an emotional connection with the consumer.

Decisions on structure should balance the practical needs of protecting the product on the shelf and while in transit, with the opportunity to create an experience and tell a story to the consumer.

When choosing a structure think about:

### Practical/Functional

- What is the cost of goods?
- Do I want to use a stock structure (less expensive) or custom structure (more expensive)?
- What is the desired footprint for shipping and on-shelf display?
- How will the structure be packed?
- Does the structure easily ship?

### Emotional/Experiential

- How do the materials used (i.e. Paper, PET, glass, etc.) reflect my brand's personality?
- Does the structure help to differentiate my brand?
- Is there adequate space for labeling to tell my brand story?
- What does the shape say about my brand?
- Is it clear what my product is from the structure?

### Packaging Graphics

Packaging graphics are a critical component to building a strong private label brand, as more consumers look to the physical presentation of a product to determine its value. The packaging design need to be a clear expression of the brand personality and purpose, while at the same time clearly communicating what the product is.

Similar to packaging structure, packaging graphics must balance the functional communication needs that help a consumer navigate the store shelf, with the emotional communication that creates a memorable experience.



Bigelow Tea. Aleksandra Kotic Redesign

When developing packaging graphics think about:

### Practical/Functional

- What is an appropriate hierarchy of communications?
- What mandatory copy must be included, if any?
- Can secondary copy be relegated to a back or side panel?
- Does the design need to account for a window or clear area of packaging?
- Is a product image necessary for product identification?

### Emotional/Experiential

- How can color be used to differentiate the brand on shelf?
- How can color be used to express the brand's personality?
- Can a product image be used to communicate the product and create an experience for the consumer?
- How can the graphic style or imagery be used to express the brand personality?

Private Label brands present retailers with many opportunities to drive both foot traffic and sales. However, the bar has been raised on what consumers expect from private label brands making it important that retailer take a comprehensive approach to their private label program. Investing in a clear and simple strategy that defines the Three P's of product, personality and purpose, and expressing that strategy through well-designed packaging is a great first step.

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MR LABOT is a brand strategy and design consultancy established to help build and grow consumer brands. Throughout the course of her career Meghan has helped consumer brands navigate change and maintain a competitive advantage through thoughtful and actionable strategy and design. As an independent brand consultant, Meghan helps brands define new path forward. Whether it be a legacy brand looking for a way to re-invent itself, or a new brand seeking the footing to establish its place in the marketplace, she seeks out the opportunities by following clues found in culture. Meghan's perspective on how culture and consumer behavior can impact brand success has been featured in publications such as AdWeek, Brand Packaging, and The Dieline, as well as NPR Marketplace. In 2018, she was named to [GDUSA's 2018 People to Watch](#) list. For more information please contact Meghan Labot at [meghan@MRLABOT.com](mailto:meghan@MRLABOT.com) or 917-941-7609.

