**Chapter 4: Design Fundamentals**

******Basic Design Principles**

Knowledge of the fundamental principles of two-dimensional design is an essential component to any visual problem-solving assignment. Basic design principles, as they relate to the use of design elements such as line, shape, color, and texture, provide guidelines that shape visual communication and the ability to maneuver through the packaging design process.

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Two-dimensional design begins with an understanding of a layout, which is the purposeful arrangement of design elements to form the visual communication. The key objective of a layout is to create a visual organization that is satisfying, stimulating, thought-provoking, and pleasing to the eye. Some layouts follow a grid (a framework that provides a fixed system for the layout), while others are guided by analyzing the design elements and how they function in their respective positions. The first step toward this goal is to understand design principles, how design elements are affected by their relationship to one another, and how this impacts the overall visual communication.

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There are varying concepts relating to the basic principles of design. They can be specific as they relate to a distinct discipline or can be general as they refer to compositional guidelines. The principles defined here can significantly enhance the understanding of what makes one packaging design layout work while another seems unresolved.

* **Balance**

Balance is the convergence of elements or parts to create a design that makes the appearance of a “whole.” Visual balance can be created by symmetry or asymmetry.

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* **Contrast**

Contrast is created when elements are placed in a way that emphasizes their differences. Contrast can be in the form of weight, size, scale, color, value, or the positive and negative dynamics of space.

* **Tension**

Tension is the balance of opposing elements. A layout that utilizes the principle of tension can stimulate visual interest by giving one element greater stress or emphasis.

* **Positive and Negative**

Positive and negative refers to the opposing relationship of design elements in a composition. The object or element constitutes the positive, and the space or environment in which the element exists is the negative.

* **Value**

Value is created by lightness or darkness of color. Applying the principle of value is a useful way to control the viewer’s attention through contrasts of light and dark.

* **Weight**

Weight refers to the size, shape, and color of a visual in relation to other elements.

* **Position**

Position is the placement of elements in relation to one another within the visual format. Position creates a focal point that in turn guides the viewer’s eye.

* [**Alignment**](http://library.books24x7.com.ezproxy1.apus.edu/assetviewer.aspx?bkid=17151&destid=704#704)

Alignment is the arrangement of visual elements in logical groupings that are comfortable to human perception and visually support the flow of information.

* **Hierarchy**

Hierarchy is created by the organization of visual elements in steps or ranks by their order of importance. The level of dominance given to elements can be visually communicated by size, weight, value, position, alignment, and scale.

* **Texture**

A two-dimensional composition can communicate texture through the use of design styles. Texture can give a composition depth or can simulate physical qualities such as smooth, coarse, or grainy.


Illustrations of basic design principles

**Packaging Design Principles**

In packaging design the basic design principles are customized to meet the objectives of each design assignment. These guidelines help to define how color, typography, structure, and imagery are applied within a design layout to create the right sense of balance, tension, proportion, and appeal. This is what makes the design elements form the communicative attributes of the packaging design.

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There are numerous variables that affect how and why packaging design attracts consumers. Consumer researchers spend countless hours analyzing these variables. From a purely design perspective (removing other marketing variables such as price, location, and brand loyalty) there are significant elements that best capture consumer attention and break through the visual clutter of the retail environment.

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**Top Four Attention Grabbers:**

* Color
* Physical Structure or Shape
* Symbols and Numbers
* Typography

**The attraction of design elements is based on:**

Basic principles of design + clear marketing objectives + effective use of top four attention grabbers = well-designed consumer packaging design

**Packaging design that serves the intended target market should be:**

* Culturally appropriate
* Linguistically accurate
* Visually logical
* Competitively designed

**The Primary Display Panel**

No matter what the structure of the packaging design is or what material it is made from (a bottle, jar, cylinder, tube, bag, pouch, or box), there is an area reserved for the brand identity and the primary communication elements. This area, called the principle or Primary Display Panel (PDP), is considered the front of the packaging design. The size and shape of the PDP constitutes the display area for the most important visual aspect of the packaging design: the visual communication of the marketing and brand strategy. The PDP holds a significant share of the responsibility in selling the packaging design in the crowded retail environment.

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Tahitian Noni TePoema
Client: Tahitian Noni
Design Firm: Hornall Anderson Design Works
Designers: Jack Anderson, Lisa Cerveny, James Tee, Tiffany Place, Leo Raymundo, Jana Nishi, Elmer dela Cruz, Bruce Branson-Meyer
Hierarchy is the emphasis or dominance of elements or typography to show order of communication. When hierarchy is correct, the eye follows the design through a comfortable logical sequence.


Kashi TLC Crackers
Client: Kashi Company
Design Firm: Addis Design
Creative Director/Designer: Joanne Hom
The personality of this well-designed, playful PDP effectively captures attention and communicates the product’s benefits.


Venus
Client: The Gillette Company
Design Firm: Wallace Church
Creative Director: Stan Church
Designers: John Bruno, Lawrence Haggerty (logo), Paula Bunny
A well-designed PDP may be a simple, clean design that clearly communicates the product’s personality.

**Required elements generally include:**

* Brand Mark
* Brand Name
* Product Name
* Ingredient Copy
* Net Weight
* Nutritional Information
* Expirations, Hazards, Directions, Dosage, Instructions
* Variety
* Bar Code

**Elements dictated by design include:**

* Colors
* Imagery
* Characters
* Illustrations
* Graphic Devices
* Photographs (noninformational)
* Symbols (noninformational)
* Icons
* Visual Hierarchy

Understanding the order of importance of primary and secondary design elements helps to determine their distribution on the packaging design. Generally speaking, the primary elements can consist of the ones that are required by the marketer, by a regulatory authority, or by an assessment of the most important communication elements. Secondary elements comprise all supplementary design elements, such as product descriptors or romance copy. The size, position, and relationship of the elements are determined by basic layout and design principles, and a hierarchical system is used in overall strategy of the packaging design. The hierarchy of information is successful when the design is easy to read, meaning the eyes move around the design reading what is most important first and following around in a logical sequence.

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**Hierarchy and clear communication:**

* Elements are organized by importance.

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* Information can be clearly understood.
* Variety, assortment, and product differences are easy to distinguish.

**The Well-Designed PDP**

* Communicates the marketing/brand strategy effectively

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* Illustrates product information clearly
* Emphasizes information by hierarchy and is uncluttered and easy to read
* Suggests the function, usage, and purpose visually
* Describes the usage and directions effectively
* Differentiates the product from the competition
* Distinguishes the product on the shelf and in relation to other varieties

**NOTES:**

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