

Case Report – Tulip Pålækker

Purpose

The aim of the project was to re-launch the product known as Pålækker and that Pålækker should gain a leading role in the sliced cold meat category resulting in a market share increase from 11.6 % to 20 % and an increase in the product volume from 8 % to 15 % by the end of 2013. Tulip, furthermore, wanted to achieve an increase in loyal consumers of 3 % (from 12 % to 15 %).

Gathering insight and research

The preliminary work consisted in analysing which of the competing products Tulip would gain the most from testing in comparison with the existing type of packaging: Pålækker.

Tested packaging types

Three types of packaging were selected for testing:

1. Bordpak Pålækker, manufactured by Tulip: hard plastic bottom and hard plastic top, click seal lid with knob
2. Bordpak Budget: hard plastic bottom and soft plastic top
3. Bordpak: hard plastic bottom and hard plastic top, click seal lid without knob



Mechanical testing

On a previous occasion the Danish Technological Institute had measured the mechanical force necessary for opening Pålækker in order to assess whether the force used for opening the packaging was a critical parameter for the target group of Tulip. The mechanical test showed that the force necessary for opening the packaging was low (measured as 9 N based on 10 items) - 95 % of all users without any particular disabilities aged between 10 and 80 could easily open it.

Observations of end users

The three packaging types were tested in a user-based study. It is important for Tulip that everyone, including the aged, who generally have less powerful hands and fingers, is able to open the packaging of their products. For this reason the end users participating in the user survey consisted of young as well as old people, with and without physical ailments.

The end user survey was intended to give Tulip a basic understanding of problem areas in existing packaging as well as an insight into other opportunities for development. Furthermore, the user survey also provided Tulip with an insight into the attitudes of various users toward different packaging types.

Plan for the testing: test subjects were asked to open and re-seal packaging. They were asked to think aloud while doing so and to look for instructions and other guidance on the packaging *before* opening the packaging. After opening and resealing the test subjects were interviewed briefly; during the interview they answered the following questions:

- 1) What type of packaging was the easiest to open and why?
- 2) What type of packaging was the most difficult to open and why?
- 3) Did anything located on the packaging help you open it – instructions, graphics or markings on the material?
- 4) What product would you prefer to buy and why?

Workshop and ideas generation

Tulip had gathered employees from the entire organisation in order for them to participate in a day of workshops. In the course of the workshop, videos recorded during the end user study were analysed. In the following we have gathered the insights identified on this day.

Insights from the user survey

- Genluk (re-seal) is important - users expect to be able to store cold sliced meat in the packaging after opening it.
- Genluk ensures that the product will appear "exciting" after the first day it has been opened.
- The size of flaps on the packaging should be increased (in particular in the upper layer).
- The choice of material is very important (a hard material is better!)
- Make sure that the joints on the top part of the packaging are not too hard, as this makes the packaging unnecessarily difficult to open.
- It is important that the opening is clearly visible.
- A rough/granulated surface makes getting a grip easier
- It may be a good idea to attach a ring to the opening
- A mechanism which ensures the separation of flaps should be attached

Ideas/focus from the workshop

During the workshop, in which employees from different Tulip departments participated along with packaging suppliers and an advertising agency, it was, among other things, noted that:

- Consumers rarely read instructions; the opening mechanism, consequently, has to be clearly visible.
- Consumers are prejudiced with regard to packaging types according to their own experience.

During the workshop different ideas for new packaging types were generated. You can see photos from the workshop below. It has been very important for Tulip to preserve the tray-based solution, as is evident from the proposals below. The different ideas incorporate different flap and ring-based solutions which utilise different materials and in which the flap/ring can be bent and pulled. Furthermore, different design solutions for the tray itself were suggested in order to make the location of the opening mechanism more obvious and to allow the consumer to get a better grip on the flap.



Concept development and prototypes

In June 2008, in connection with the development of the packaging, Tulip, aided by Research Int., carried out an analysis of the key drivers of purchase. This study showed that "product display" is the most important factor, indexed at 100, while "useful for storage" indexed at 70, and "easy to close" and "easy to open" indexed at respectively 64 and 54.

For this reason, packaging development has been focusing on the aforementioned parameters. After ideas generation during the workshop, Tulip has continued their work on the new type of packaging; the central point being the development of a type of packaging with larger flaps which will make it easier to get a good grip on the packaging. Although the mechanical test showed that the packaging requires slightly more force to open (13 N based on 10 items) the consumer can transfer greater force due to improved grip. The knob in the packaging ensures that the consumer is able to separate flaps without using his or her nails. Furthermore, consumers can open the packaging from two corners instead of one. The new type of packaging is shown below.

The development process has included deliberations on which solutions are feasible in relation to technical possibilities with regard to implementing changes to the packaging, purchasing new parts for existing packaging equipment, estimating the costs for materials, etc.



The result

Based on this process, Tulip has, in week 47 of 2011, launched the product Pålækker in a new type of packaging for cold sliced meats with larger flaps (see images below). This packaging provides the best possible protection during transport, storing and when it is stored by the consumer. At the same time, the packaging should differentiate the product and offer convenience to the consumer, including ease of opening and presentation when the product is served in the packaging type meant to be placed on the table.

In addition to the direct result: a new type of packaging, Tulip has, furthermore, gained a better understanding of the various considerations which are necessary for developing new types of packaging. Video-taped observations, in particular, proved to be effective tools for increasing the understanding of the end user's behaviour and needs. The process has also created a higher degree of cohesion between the different departments of the company. This has been important as Tulip is a large company characterised by a high degree of efficiency. The process has, consequently, increased the internal cohesion of the company and created a better understanding of the objectives and motivations of different departments.

