

## Case report – Tulip can

### Purpose

The project was launched in order to gather Tulip's employees in a joint process of developing user-friendly packaging. The project's aim was to study an entirely new type of packaging; the plastic can and compare it to Tulip's traditional can. Furthermore three other products were included in the test each representing different opening mechanisms with and without "tools".

### Gathering of insight and research

As preparatory work an evaluation was made as to which of the competing products Tulip would benefit most from testing in the end user test and compare with the two chosen existing types of packaging.

### Test packaging

A total of five types of packaging were chosen for the test:

1. Tall round can with a pull ring from Tulip.
2. Plastic can with foil cover and flap from Tulip.
3. Low round can with pull ring and plastic lid.
4. Round can without pull ring.
5. Round can with a turning key.



### User observations

It is important for Tulip that everybody including elderly people with impaired strength in their hands and fingers are able to open their packaging. Therefore the end users participating in the study were young as well as elderly people with and without physical ailments.

Test plan: The test persons opened and resealed the chosen types of packaging while being video filmed. They were asked to think out loud while doing so and to look for instructions or other types of guidance on the packaging *before* trying to open.

Then a short interview (10 min) was conducted where the test persons answered the following questions:

- 1) Which type of packaging was the easiest to open and why?
- 2) Which type of packaging was the most difficult to open and why?

- 3) Was there anything on the packaging that helped you to open it – instructions, graphics, markings in the material?
- 4) Which product would you prefer to buy and why?

The video material was cut and edited in order to be used in the workshop to communicate the insight gathered concerning the target group and their attitude and handling of the different types of packaging.

## Workshop and idea generation

Tulip had gathered employees from the entire organisation for a workshop day. During the workshop the video clips from the end user studies were analysed. Below you will find the insights that were identified during the day.

## Insights from the end user study

Insights gathered during the workshop and noted on "video cards" for each of the three test persons:

Kim (mild arthritis)

- Usually tries without using assistive technology.
- "I am not handicapped".
- Irritated by having to use assistive technology.
- Economises his strength.
- Packaging needs to be easy to hold.
- Okay if the packaging is small but not round.
- The size of the packaging matters.
- Difficult using the "key" for the cod roe can.
- Avoids metal cans, the plastic ones are better.

Jette (severe arthritis)

- Has developed her own technique for opening can with pull ring using a spoon.
- Chooses easy-open lid (ring).
- Would prefer a larger key and flap for the cod roe can.
- Needs her husband's help for opening packaging.
- The plastic can is easy to hold, comfortable material.
- The tall can is easiest to open because of the size (and Jette's own opening technique).

Jørn (no arthritis)

- Opening should be quick.
- Prefers easy-open solutions.
- The "key" for the cod roe can is inconvenient.
- Rather use a knife.
- Chooses products based on a lot of parameters.
- Doesn't store food in cans.

- Perceives plastic as more eco-friendly than metal.

#### List of insight

- The size of the can is important in order to get a good grip (especially if assistive technology is used).
- Grip/opening mechanism should not be placed too tightly on the lid of the can.
- The form (round vs. square) is important for how good your grip on the packaging can be.
- The material (smooth vs. rugged) and elasticity (stiff vs. soft) is likewise important for your grip.
- Should be quick to open → user-friendly
- The plastic can was a good alternative to cans with ring opening.

#### Ideas/focus points from the workshop

During the workshop where employees from the various parts of Tulip as well as the packaging supplier and an advertisement bureau participated it was noted that

- The end users seldom read the instructions so the opening mechanism has to be very obvious.
- The end users are prejudiced concerning types of packaging based on previous experience.

Tulip has a separate innovation department with a cross-occupational approach to product development and packaging design. Market analyses and packaging tests are conducted annually focusing on the end user's aesthetic, ethical and functional preferences. The results are used as indicators for new developments.

#### Further work

The workshop showed that there still are some challenges in developing packaging for canned goods primarily because the durability requires a very strong sealing. The implementation of other packaging types than the traditional cans has proven to be quite a challenge. The project therefore has been indefinitely postponed.