

**PACKAGING AND LABELING DESIGN FOR
TOURISTIC PROMOTION OF GREEK PRODUCTS****Nikolaos Efkolidis**

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries, generating app. 11% of global Gross Domestic Product, employing 200 million people and transporting nearly 700 million international travelers per year. Product and packaging development is a prerequisite for satisfying the consumers' demands and can become an alternative tool in order to satisfy the visitors' needs. The present paper introduces a number of packaging and labeling design case studies. Some are based on matching different Greek well known pure products, with a combination of traditional concepts and packaging/labeling design. High quality products can be sold in the touristic market using innovative packages. Those can either be consumed directly or can be considered as sold for souvenirs.

Key Words: packaging and labeling design, tourism, touristic promotion.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries, generating app. 11% of global gross domestic product (GDP), employing 200 million people and transporting nearly 700 million international travelers per year. This is expected to double by 2020, which means that tourism also belongs to the fastest growing industries worldwide. Greece has for a long time been among the top tourist destinations worldwide and welcomes more than 11 million tourists annually.

Greece has a long tradition in tourism and hospitality mainly due to its culture, history and ancient civilisation. Visitors were considered something sacred in ancient Greece. Xenius Zeus, the father of gods and the god of hospitality, was considered as the protector of the visitors, inspiring locals to take care of them. The geographical location of Greece, which is both the Europe's south-eastern end and a strategic crossroad to Africa and Asia, was the basic reason that led to a large travelling activity. Nowadays, Greece is one of the world's most popular tourist destinations, ranking in the world's top 20 countries. This means that tourism is one of the growing service sectors in Greece. In 2011 the direct and indirect contribution of the Greek tourism industry to the total GDP and employment reached 15.8% and 18.4% respectively (Kasimati, 2011). There is a direct relationship between tourism and economic growth, because tourism increases foreign exchange income, creates employment opportunities, stimulates the growth of the tourism industry and therefore triggers overall economic growth. As such, tourism development has become an important awareness in political authorities worldwide.

Product and packaging development is a prerequisite for satisfying the consumers' demands. In addition, they can become an alternative tool in order to satisfy the visitors' needs and their changing demands (Weiermair and Pikkemaat, 2004). The packaging and labeling design of traditional goods can improve the profitability of tourism businesses by increasing or enhancing products and services available for tourists. Taking Greece as an example, there are many dairy products with unique quality and unsurpassable nutritional value. If they can be promoted, based on novel packaging and labeling design, then both the touristic industry and the producers (i.e. farmers) can increase drastically their income.

DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF TOURISM

The majority of visitors prefer the country's seaside, the reliable sunny summer weather, its nightlife, historical places and natural beauty. Nonetheless, there is a significant amount of visitors who care about gastronomy tourism. It is real that the demand for this kind of tourism is on the rise at the moment. The importance which has been given by the media about topics related to diet, cookery, and local cuisine over the last few years had as a result, the continuous increase in the number of travellers whose criteria for choosing a destination also includes a gastronomy perspective. The role of the local communities is very important and increases as the time passes. They are responsible for the whole process of attracting new visitors since they produce the agricultural and farm products of their region. They are able to provide high quality food services and participate in all of the stages of establishing such services, which are directly linked to the gastronomy. The ability of the local production of superior quality products are considered as a fact on both the structural and economical level. The local touristic companies are able to offer more regional made products and services, and as a result to increase their income. Gastronomy should be considered as a chance for sustaining and developing tourism. For all visitors, gastronomy provides the opportunity for new and valuable experiences. Such connections between tourism and food production have been regarded as a mechanism to support sustainable agricultural practices (Yurtseven, 2010). The production and promotion of local and authentic food in tourism increases the economic and financial benefits of the local communities, while it can be considered as a positive social impact.

In addition, souvenirs shops can provide a number of services to visitors. Souvenir industry development plays an important role in destination management, while it is directly linked both to the psychology and the economic aspects of tourism. Travelling is considered synonymous to the acquisition of several souvenirs depending on the place that the visitor travels. United States visitors, for example, spend about 33% to 56% of their travel budget on shopping and a significant part of it on souvenirs (Wicks, 2004). The size of souvenir sales proves its economic importance. So, it is necessary to develop interesting souvenir products that are suitable to both the visitors and the local community. It is then that the local economy will be able not only to sell souvenirs but produce, prepare, sale and create a new myth around them. While, it is not so easy the gather of quantitative empirical data, well-designed souvenir products can be a strong support to the destination's image. Souvenirs can work as messengers of every local place to visitors. A new sales and cultural demand can be promoted and increase the identification of the touristic destination.

The present paper introduces a number of packaging and labeling design case studies. Some are based on matching different Greek well known pure products, with a combination of traditional concepts and packaging/labeling design. High quality products can be sold in the touristic market using innovative packages. Those can either be consumed directly or can be considered as sold for souvenirs. Some others intersect Greek products with a modern packaging design philosophy. Traditional products can use impressive packaging (i.e. milk) and promote Greece not only for its tradition but for the design capabilities of Greek designers and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

PACKAGE AND LABEL DESIGN

Packaging is important because it protects the physical product until it is sold. However, the product package is also important because it communicates information to the consumer. This information can include the name of the product, information on ingredients, where the product was produced, the product price etc. In addition, the physical design of the package is used to communicate the benefits that the consumer will receive when buying the product. An attractive package that uses words and images to convey the product's benefits, helps the consumer to make the purchase decision (Klimchuk and Krasovec, 2006). During the design process, the goal is the creation of a high quality, interesting and clearly labeled product. The main carry of the label should be the customer, as well as spreading the product name with a logo that is easily identified. The colour schemes for the labels can also play a major psychological role when selling the product, as different colours invoke different emotions in people. The chosen labels can reflect so much important information, so it is essential to be clear and direct.

While the main use for packaging can be considered the protection of the product inside, packaging also fulfils a key role to the success with a recognisable logo or packaging, so that the product can be directly understandable and widely known for the high quality goods which are inside. From the consumer perspective, packaging plays a major role when products are purchased. Packaging is crucial, considering that this is the first thing that the consumer has before making the final decision to buy (Bramston, 2009). In tourism marketing the packaging and label should give more importance to consumer as visitors. Design must include additional elements desired by them. The goal for the packaging is to give to the visitors a sense of the local experiences that they will feel when acquiring the product. The package will be a promotion tool in order to persuade visitors to purchase the product and experience what the locals feel with them.

A well-developed handicraft industry usually generates income for local producers. Unique local crafts might even become one of the main reasons for tourists to visit the destination. Because of this, several destinations can promote their difference from others. They can be distinguished from a number of other regions and become unique. There are many challenges associated with the development of handicraft industry. When constrains are overcome then production becomes very economically, culturally and socially beneficial. The social and cultural benefits are mainly associated with the destination's heritage, which is the memory of the old traditions. Maybe it is the best way to promote the different identity of a place in this age of globalization. Crafts need to be recognized as one of the major economic and cultural sectors in each destination and the many different views about crafts must change. At the political level, a policy must be created for the development of the local handicraft industry (Wicks, 2004). This action requires trained craftsmen to produce useful and authentic objects. The goal should be to create distinct handicraft products that will be directly recognizable. Handicraft is a business which suits extremely well the Greek local tradition.

CASE STUDIES

Wine has been an important part of Greek culture for over 4000 years, as it is proved from a numerous archaeological discoveries throughout Greece. The ancient Greeks used the wine as an inseparable part of their daily regimen because they enjoyed its taste, odour and nutritional value. They loved to organize intellectual gatherings called "symposia" where they would eat and talk about philosophical subjects while drinking wine. In recent years, the Greek wine industry has undergone tremendous improvements with serious investments in modern wine making technology. The new generation of winemakers has been trained well using both the experience acquired over the years and the high level studies and cooperations with research institutions. Their effort was successfully recognised in a number of cases when they received awards in international competitions. Greek wine becomes unique from the more than 300 indigenous grape varieties which are grown in Greece, some of which have been cultivated since the ancient times. Many of the world's best wine critics agree that the distinct flavours that come from these native grape varieties are a strong marketing advantage for the Greek wine industry (Vlachvei et al, 2000). Moreover many well-known international grape varieties are

also used in Greek wine making. The combination between the variety of grapes and the appropriate climate situations provide an excellent environment for the production of high quality wines.

The combination of handcraft souvenir and Greek high quality products is the main idea used for the creation of a wood sculpture souvenir, used as secondary packaging for a Greek wine (Figure 1). The shape and the colour of the fretwork are inspired by techniques which has been used to the interior design of old Greek churches. The primary packaging which consists of a bottle made of glass and a series of different labels is inspired from traditional Greek pattern designs that can be found on several historical artefacts. In addition the different colour used remind of different cultural issues:

- the red makes the customer pay attention to the product and expect to experience its strong taste,
- the golden colour refers to the temple of a traditional Greek church and reminds of the blessing that was given to the wine, and
- the different tones of green recall memories of the high quality grapevines that are used in order to produce this high quality product.

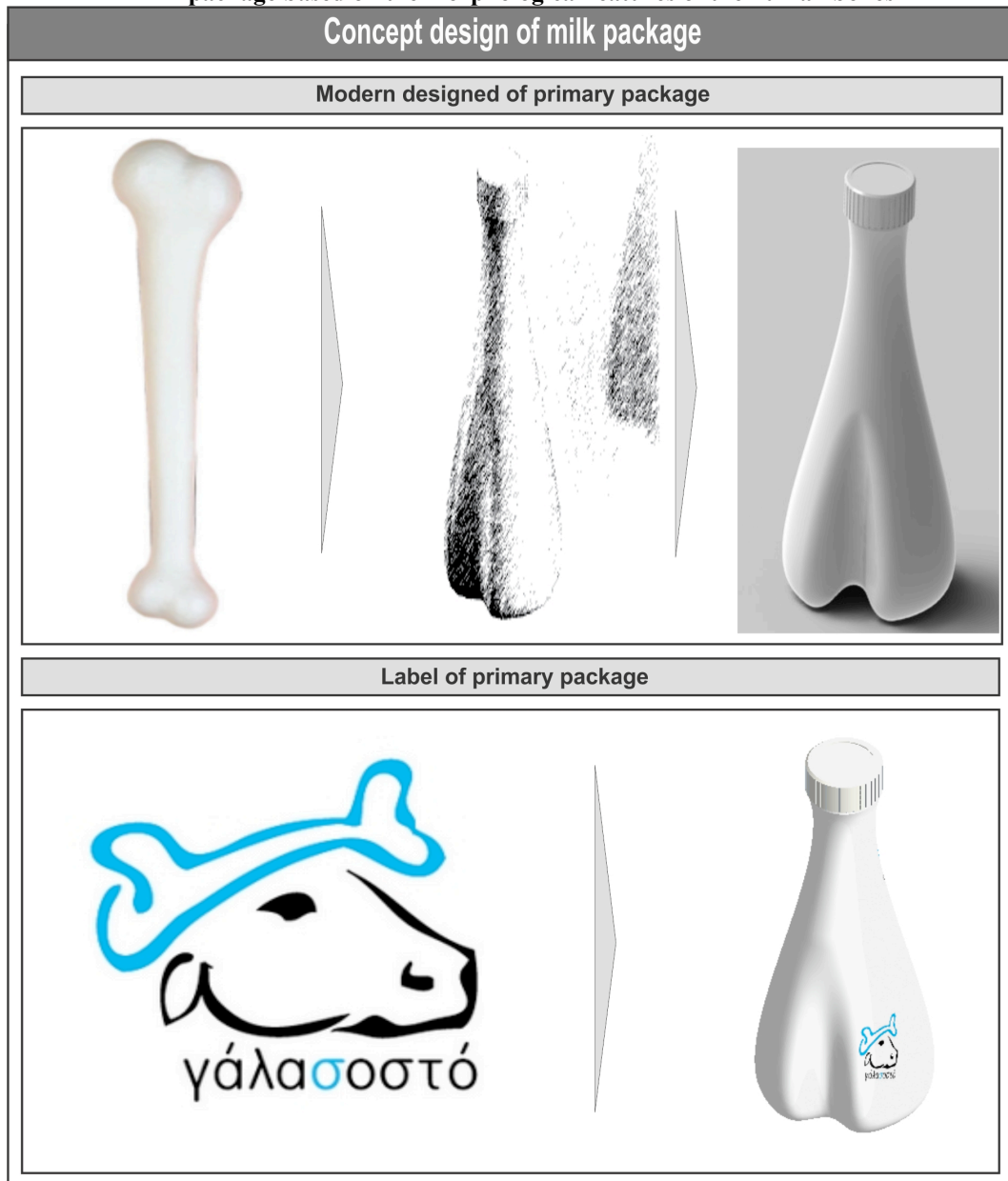
Figure 1
Wine primary and secondary package
Concept design of wine package



Milk is an especially popular good in Greece as well as worldwide. Due to the great variety in milk types, many types of labelling have been conceived up to date. However, the need for packages that promote the purity and the traditional production of milk led to the design of the proposed packaging idea. It is widely accepted that the consumption of milk promotes bone and general health. With this in mind, a package for milk was designed based on the morphological features of human bones. So, the suggested design reminds of a human bone and it is made of PET for food safety assurance.

The general shape of the package has the curves and details of the human bone (Figure 2). White colour was selected for an even more realistic representation (Gernsheimer, 2008). The logo is the combination of two elements: the head of the cow and the human bone, which replaces the ears of the cow. The image aims not only to show the head of the cow but also to highlight the important position of the human bone in the representation. A wordplay was invented for the name of the package which in Greek is pronounced “galassostó” and combines the words “gala”, that means milk, “ostó” that means bone and “sostó” that means right, proper, good. In brief, this wordplay makes an allegory that the milk is good, right for bones and attempts to explain the image of the package. It is a 1L package and meets all technical and health requirements for food safety.

Figure 2
Milk package based on the morphological features of the human bones



CONCLUSIONS

Design is without doubt able to challenge souvenir and gastronomy stereotypes. In order to promote commercial traditional products successfully, designers need to collaborate with all responsible actors involved. They need good background knowledge and comprehension of the local tradition. The design and the presentation of the wine packaging concept were based on that idea. While the concept design for the milk is an attempt for the promotion of traditional products with a more modern design philosophy. Packaging and labelling is directly linked to success of the product and they meet all requirements for food safety and attempt to provide an innovative image of traditional and popular goods. The proposed approach of combining tourism with modern packaging and labeling design is expected to increase both the consumption and the awareness of Greek popular products, and relate the Mediterranean lifestyle directly to the purity of these products.

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