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A PAPER ON QUALITY PACKAGING FOR MODERN CONSUMERS

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0 INTRODUCTION

Tanzania is already in many ways an integrated member of the global economy. The world is now transformed into a global village. The developing economies in Tanzania as elsewhere in Africa must be able to trade freely and competitively with each other and industrialized countries to ensure our economic survival in this modernized world. Therefore, packaging has a crucial role to play in ensuring that our local products not only reach but also meet the requirements of both the local and export markets of our choice.

The aim of this presentation therefore, is to discuss the role of quality packaging as a tool to win the markets of our consumer goods. The paper also highlights on the technical and social requirements to be met by packaging.

1 QUALITY PACKAGING

1.1 What is packaging?

Packaging has been defined in many ways ,and of the definitions available there are two which are better than the others.

- Packaging is the art ,science and technology of preparing goods for transport and sale.

This definition can be seen to cover a very broad field ,and a second definition makes a more specific contribution.

- Packaging can also be defined as a means of ensuring the safe deliver of a product to the ultimate consumer in a sound condition at the minimum overall cost.

Therefore from the above definitions, there are three set of facts to be considered or known before an effective package can be devised:

- Facts about the product
- Facts about the method of transportation
- Facts about promotion (marketing) consideration

1.2 Packaging requirements

Based on the above facts the **quality packaging** has to meet the following requirements:

1.2.1 Product requirements

A considerable amount of information is obvious as soon as the product to packaged is placed upon the table and examined.

For example, a powdered product will obviously require to be sold in a certain basic unit and consideration must be given to the size of these units in relation to the market for which they are destined, and also in relation of the cost of the product and cost of the packaging.

A liquid immediately raises questions as to the type of container which will be available-the quantity of the liquid to be packed as a unit will also influence the choice of this container.

Composite articles such as electric lighting bulbs and watches lend themselves to the same treatment. Their size, shape, complexity and surface finish can be seen; their weight and the materials from which they have been made, are either known or can be ascertained.

This information provide the detail which makes the answers to the following three sets of questions possible;

- a) How can this product be damaged mechanically?
- b) How can it be damaged or deteriorated climatically?
- c) Are there any compatibility questions which must be considered when the product is in contact with, or in close proximity to the specific packaging medium?

As a result of examinining the product in this way we should obtain a resonably clear idea of what it must not encounter during its distribution.

1.2.2 Transportation requirements

Here we need to consider the facts about the method of distribution. It will be convenient for our purpose to divide the hazards of any journey into three main groups:

a) Mechanical hazards

- **Compression:** when the package is stacked on each other or squeezed in handling.
- **Impact:** when the package is dropped during loading or unloading, thrown, rolled or tipped over.
- **Vibration:** Generated by the handling equipment or vehicle.
- **Bending, puncturing or tearing:** by the misuse of equipment or wrong method of handling.

b) Climatic hazards

- **Water vapour:** caused by the air humidity
- **Liquid water:** in form of rain, water on the floor or holds, condensation, salt spray
- **Temperature:** by exposure to heaters, sun, tropical climate, cold storage
- **Light:** exposure to ultra-violet radiation, artificial lighting
- **Dust:** generated by wind or long storage.

c) Other hazards

- **Biological:** caused by the micro-organisms (fungi, moulds and bacteria), insects (ants, flies) and rodents (rats, mice etc)

1.2.3 Promotion consideration

The promotional design of packages for consumer products through supermarket or shops plays a very important and active role in last link of distribution to its final consumer.

On the domestic market, promotional consideration poses problems as the products and their producers are well known and often operate in a monopoly or oligopoly market situation.

But when the export of the same products enters the world markets is facing severe competition from a large number of experienced rival producers.

Now, promotional package design becomes a vital element in the marketing strategy, particularly if the producer cannot afford to use other promotional media such as advertising or television to support his sales efforts. The package as the consumer sees it on the shelf in the shop, thus becomes the only means of communication between the producer and the customer – it represents his “face” in the final stage of the distribution system.

In this situation the role of the package is to.

- Attract the customer's attention and arouse his interest in the product.
- Create consumer confidence in the product and its producer.

- Give the customer detailed information about the product, its origin, how to use it, including all mandatory information prescribed by legal regulations.

It goes without saying that good packaging design cannot compensate for bad product quality – it might sell the product once but if the product does not live up to the expectations created by a good promotional design, the customer will never come back for a repeat purchase.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Almost all environmental legislations involving packaging are aimed at reducing the levels in the waste stream. Targets have been set for such reductions by relevant environmental protection authorities, and legislation embodying a variety of approaches for achieving these is already in place in many countries.

Germany in particular, is implementing laws, which effectively pass responsibility for packaging waste management from government to industry implicated in this case as “the polluter”. There is wide agreement at national, regional and local level that drastic measures must be taken to reduce the amount of waste, and that used packaging should impose as small a burden as possible on public waste disposal streams. The attainment of such aims should obviously not ignore the pivotal role which packaging plays in modern life.

Industry has therefore devised systems, which obviate the need to send used packages back through the distribution chain, by setting up separate collection schemes. The main objective is to avoid compulsory returns and deposits for used packaging and to keep open as many packaging options as possible.

With the Germany scheme, it is vital for the exporter to establish before concluding contracts that his packaging is compatible with the local waste management culture in his target markets.

The famous Germany "Packaging Waste Ordinance" came into force on 1 December 1990. The important features of this Ordinance are:

- ❖ **It bans** the sale of all packaging, which cannot be re-used, recycled or incinerated for energy recovery, and recycling is given a very high priority.
- ❖ **It obliges** the distributor/retailer to remove the transit or transport packaging such as paperboard outer boxes, plastic foam granules or film and other transit packaging before offering the product for sale, or else provide a receptacle so that purchasers can remove this material in the store rather than take it home.
- ❖ **It obliges** the retailer to take the goods out of their secondary packaging, such as blister packs or film wrappers, at the point of sale provides a receptacle so that purchasers can leave this material in the store.
- ❖ **It obliges** the distributor/retailer to set up adequate collection facilities for used packaging either at the store or within his sales catchments area.
- ❖ **It imposes** a mandatory deposit of a fee on all non- refillable beverage containers and plastic containers for laundry cleaners and household cleaning products.
- ❖ **It imposes** a mandatory deposit of a fee on containers for paints, solvents, pesticides, oils and other hazardous household products.

Packaging imported into Germany is subjected to exactly the same laws, which apply to locally produced packaging. There is no mood in the industrialized countries to extend concessions on these matters to exporters from the developing world. Such concessions would be seen as discriminating against their own industries.

For countries exporting to developed countries, it is thus essential to be fully aware of legislation in this field and their implications, and to develop an understanding of the basic factors, which are driving them.

Unless full cognizance is taken of this situation, the legislative developments now taking place could effectively create new impediments for exporting developing countries.

The environmental legislation scene in industrialized countries is evolving at a rapid rate on a fairly predictable path. The "3Rs" of "Reduction", "Re-use" and "Re-cycling" are now firmly in the focus of legislators and it is therefore also in the interests of exporters from developing countries not to lose sight of them.

3. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The way in which a product's safety can be enhanced or reduced by its packaging is another consideration that can affect the handling transportation and distribution cycles for all products. Health and safety considerations are particularly important for those products for which the package remains an integral part of the product throughout its life.

Commodities that are dispensed from a distribution package until it is empty are good examples. Particular attention should be given to how the product package will be used. In most cases, the product can be used a little at time or the entire contents can be removed at one time.

If it is necessary to re-close the package after it has been opened once, then the original design of the package should take care of this situation. Also, there should be clear and appropriate warning messages.

4 CONCLUSSION

- ❖ Quality packaging preserves and protects the contents and environment. This holds for physical and chemical as well as hygiene factors.
- ❖ Quality packaging facilitates handling at all stages from the manufacturer to the consumer and promotes a good working environment.
- ❖ Quality packaging carries valuable information to those who have to handle it or consume its content.
- ❖ Modern consumers today need more convenient and high value packaging.

In all these contexts, efforts must be done to ensure that good quality packaging is produced.

Hence, efforts must be done to ensure that the SME's make use of good quality packaging so that they can be able to meet the market requirements of their choice.

Thank you for listening to me