

# The value of rib design in food packaging



Have you ever wondered why there are ribs on bottles or cans? Perhaps you can guess that ribs are applied to the packages because of some technical functions. In fact, ribs carry more value than you can image.

## *Demands & purposes*

Ribbing is a popular design that has been applied to food packaging for a long time. However, a comprehensive understanding of the value of ribs on food packaging has not been fully achieved yet. Nowadays, with more competition, packaging companies need to innovate continuously to enhance their competitiveness. Thus, ribs can be one of many design features that can be applied to innovate packaging for optimizing cost, satisfying consumers, and increasing profit.

This master thesis explores the value of ribs on food packaging and the Swedish consumers' perception toward rib designs.

## *Research method*

To fulfil the purpose, some existing rib designs applied to food packaging were evaluated to explore the value of ribs under the view of companies. Besides, 100 Swedish consumers were asked about their perception toward rib designs on food packaging. For instance, did they like rib designs on bottles? Which rib designs did they like? Did rib designs provide them any convenience during usage? The collected data were analyzed to provide a complete overview of the value of ribs on food packaging.

## *Findings*

Rib designs applied to food packaging have both pros and cons but the former surpasses the latter. Regarding technical functions, rib designs help to make packages stronger and prevent them from deformation during production processes. Rib designs also give companies an opportunity to save costs by reducing the amount of packaging materials. As a result, consumers can get a lighter but stronger package with a better price. In addition, rib designs bring cost benefit to companies and consumers from increasing production capacity and transportation efficiency, as well as from less damaged products.

For carton materials, rib designs prevent consumer hands from being burnt by decreasing the amount of heat transferred from hot beverage inside a package to hands, e.g. the hot coffee cup. Moreover, rib designs decrease negative impacts to our environment by reducing natural resource usage, energy consumption, and emissions caused by production and recycling processes of packaging.

Rib designs also create better appearance for packaging and make a product different from other products. Thanks to that, consumers can remember the brand well and it is hard for other companies to copy the packaging design. Moreover, the researched consumers said that rib designs make packaging more tightly fit their hands and more rigid when they grab packages, especially for large packages. In addition, consumers are willing to pay more for environmental friendly packaging or for packaging that provides them more convenience.

However, rib designs have cons. For instance, rib designs may make labels hard to glue on the surface of bottles or the designs require companies to invest high cost to make them.

The understanding of the value of ribs and Swedish consumers' perception toward rib designs helps companies to develop appealing ribbing packages in order to satisfy more and more consumers on the Swedish market.