Design trends in product packaging. A forecast based on evolving consumer behaviours.

It's no secret that we are seeing significant changes in consumer attitudes. As brands work to respond to new market demands, consideration to product packaging can be as important as consideration to the product itself. Increasingly, the way the product looks on a shelf and how the package feels in a consumer's hands can play a major role in communicating the right values to the right target groups.

Based on data from recent market studies, this report breaks down ongoing shifts among consumers and the different packaging design trends that are emerging as a response. It examines four areas of consumer behaviour that will play a particularly key role in reshaping the market in the coming years:

- **Responsible consumption**
- **Experience matured**
- **Heritage and provenance**
- **Convenience reborn**

Responsible consumption

For some time, health and wellness has been a key driver for foods and beverages. Today, this is merging with growing concerns over sustainability. Consumers want to make choices that will have a positive effect both for them individually – and for the planet as a whole.

The desire for responsible consumption is expressing itself in two emerging design trends: *Re-constructed legacy* and *Worldhood*.

Design trend: Re-Constructed legacy

In a period of great uncertainty, this trend turns to the past for answers on how we can become more responsible consumers. The style of a reconstructed legacy looks to our handcrafted traditions through a modern, eco-conscious lens.

Palette

- Warm, autumnal tones create a natural touch that calls to mind healthful choices and sustainability
- Gold is a key accent for a premium feeling that simultaneously reinforces the crafty style

- Greens, blues, beiges and pastel pinks lighten and balance

Key themes

- Then & now – a mix and match of eras
- Handcrafted quality
- Refreshed classicism
- Artful recycling
- Simplicity
- Sustainability
- Holistic design

Design idea

Packaging for a plant-based beverage

- The handcrafted typeface mixes with warm tones and simplistic elements drawn from nature.
- The result is artful and playful, evoking a sense of nostalgia that is simultaneously modern.
- Fully renewable packaging fits the product and reinforces the consumer's responsible choice.

Design trend: Worldhood

In some sense, calls for more responsible consumption are a reaction to tensions we see globally: an increasing clash of cultures and demands for inclusivity and human rights. The funky Worldhood design trend responds to this through symbolism and imagery that act as a cultural unifier. It's about connecting people around the world with a shared visual language.

Palette

- Inspired by the city and the streets – urban with a retro feel
- Warm and bright tones
- A simple palette using primary and secondary colours

Key themes

- Modern graphics
- Bright colours
- Patterns
- Urban retro
- Industrial nostalgia

Design idea

Packaging for slow-brewed coffee in three flavours

- A unique, light-weight packaging shape offers a bold choice for a youthful market segment.
- Eccentric geometric shapes contrast the modern linear typeface with retro-inspired patterns.
- The bright colours and exciting design motifs reflect the vibrancy of the urban setting.

Experience matured

As millennials become a dominant force

in the consumer marketplace, brands in all sectors are increasingly focused on meeting these customers' desires for authentic and memorable experiences. Coming of age in the era of digitalisation, this generation is also more accustomed to engaging with brands virtually.

In packaging, millennial behaviour drives trends for vivid, playful designs as well as features such as augmented reality and scanning codes that allow consumers to experience products in a multisensory way.

Design trend: Dark wonder

Digitalisation is reflected in an ultramodern aesthetic, where the fascination and fear of new technology expresses itself through darker tones. As AR, VR and AI change the future of physical identity, design seeks to excite all senses. We see this in artificial design elements that play on the idea of digital dream states and new realities.

Palette

- Reflects duality of digitalisation: contrasting fear and euphoria
- Dark tones dominate
- Bright, neon and fluorescent colours offer juxtaposition

Key themes

- Energetic look
- Bold, glowing typefaces
- Glossy surfaces
- Contemporary, edgy look
- Artificial textures
- Stimulation of the senses

Design idea

Packaging for energy drink with taurine and guarana

- A packaging choice with sharp lines offers a perfect fit for the product.
- The typeface and colour palette give a dark, strong look for bold consumers seeking edgy experiences.
- Ambiguous, digital shapes form liquid blobs that call to mind chemistry and molecules.

Heritage and provenance

In the face of globalisation, consumers have even more desire to celebrate the local. This means feeling proud of their own heritage and communities, while also showing growing interest in foreign cultures. Brands have responded with products that pick up on traditional flavours or combine foreign and local ingredients.

Packaging has a role to play in expressing heritage and provenance to the consumer, with designs inspired by the uniqueness and origins of the product itself.

Design trend:

Common ground

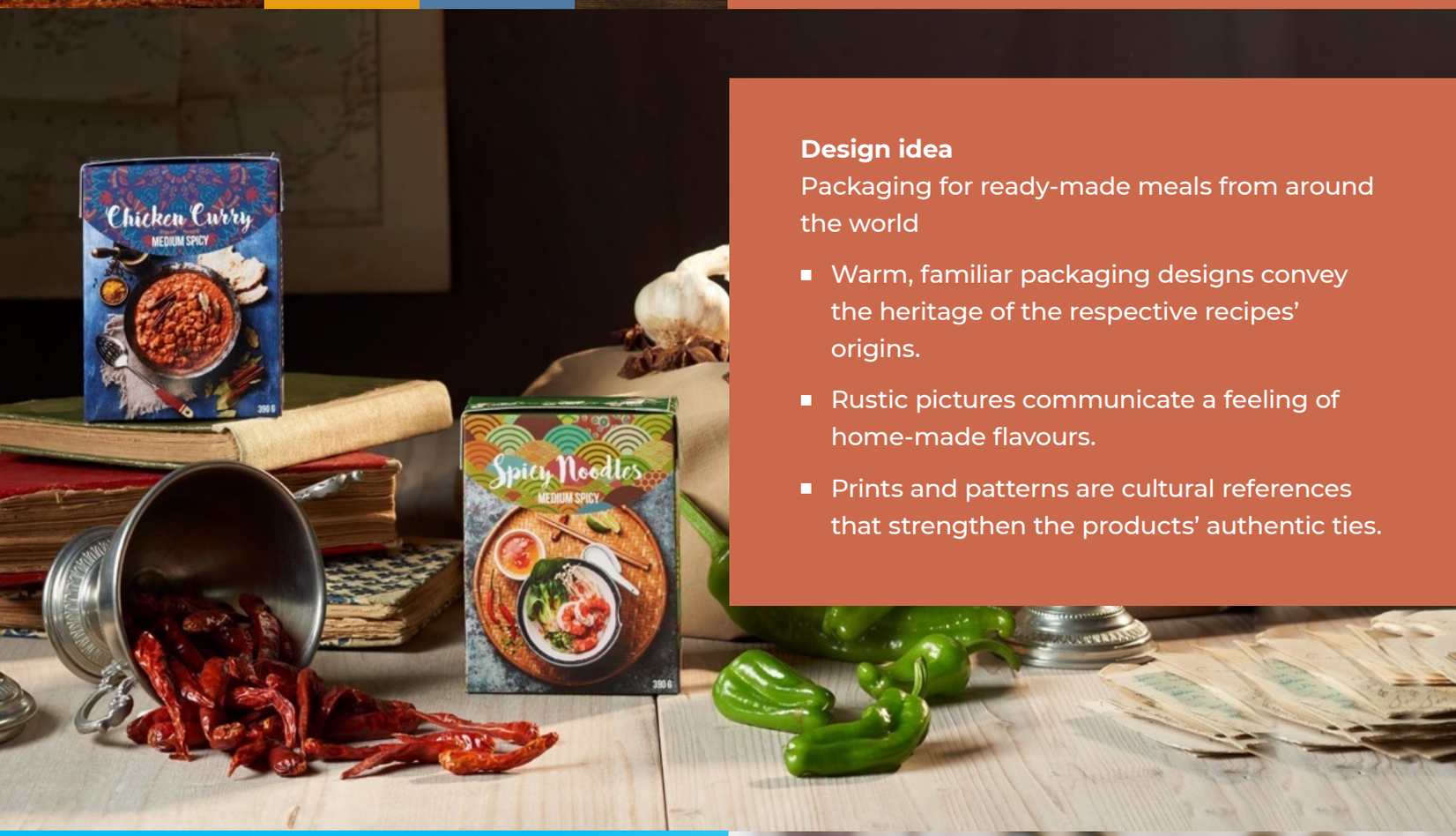
Consumers may be reacting against globalisation, but they are also seeking to connect more with one another – both locally in real life and around the world through social media. As the name suggests, this is a down-to-earth design trend that is about people coming together over familiar traditions and strong roots.

Palette

- Inspired by far-away, rural and traditional areas
- Rich, vibrant, well-saturated hues
- A warm aesthetic of earthy, natural tones

Key themes

- Local economy
- Authenticity
- Human relationships
- Rural lifestyles, rustic details
- Shared cultural roots and values
- The sharing economy
- Travel with taste



Design idea

Packaging for ready-made meals from around the world

- Warm, familiar packaging designs convey the heritage of the respective recipes' origins.
- Rustic pictures communicate a feeling of home-made flavours.
- Prints and patterns are cultural references that strengthen the products' authentic ties.

Convenience

reborn

Today's consumer desires convenience and availability in both everyday needs and life's more luxurious moments. With increased digitalisation, we simply expect more at the push of a button. At the same time, consumers want to harmonise these demands with desires for an eco-friendly and healthy lifestyle.

Brands are seeking to minimise the stress of too many options and give consumers a personalised product experience. This has resulted in two new design trends: *Straightforward* and *Tech-tility.*

Design trend: Straightforward

Demand for greater convenience is driven by increasingly hectic, digital lifestyles. Consumers want things at their fingertips, and design should reflect this mindset. The key concept is convenient nourishment: consumers want to nourish mind, body and lifestyle – all while saving time.

Palette

- The overall idea is simplicity
- Bright and fresh primary colours
- Modern hues with a vibrant touch

Key themes

- Basic design with clear information
- Importance of ingredients
- Simplicity with geometric shapes
- Time-saving convenience
- Fresh ingredients
- White spaces

Design idea

Packaging for ready-made foods

- Clear, bright design uses pictures to highlight ingredients and underscore simplicity and health.
- Important details like calories and ingredients listed on front of package to save consumer's time.
- Design element of the label used to convey the "clean-label" message important to consumer.

Design trend: Tech-tility

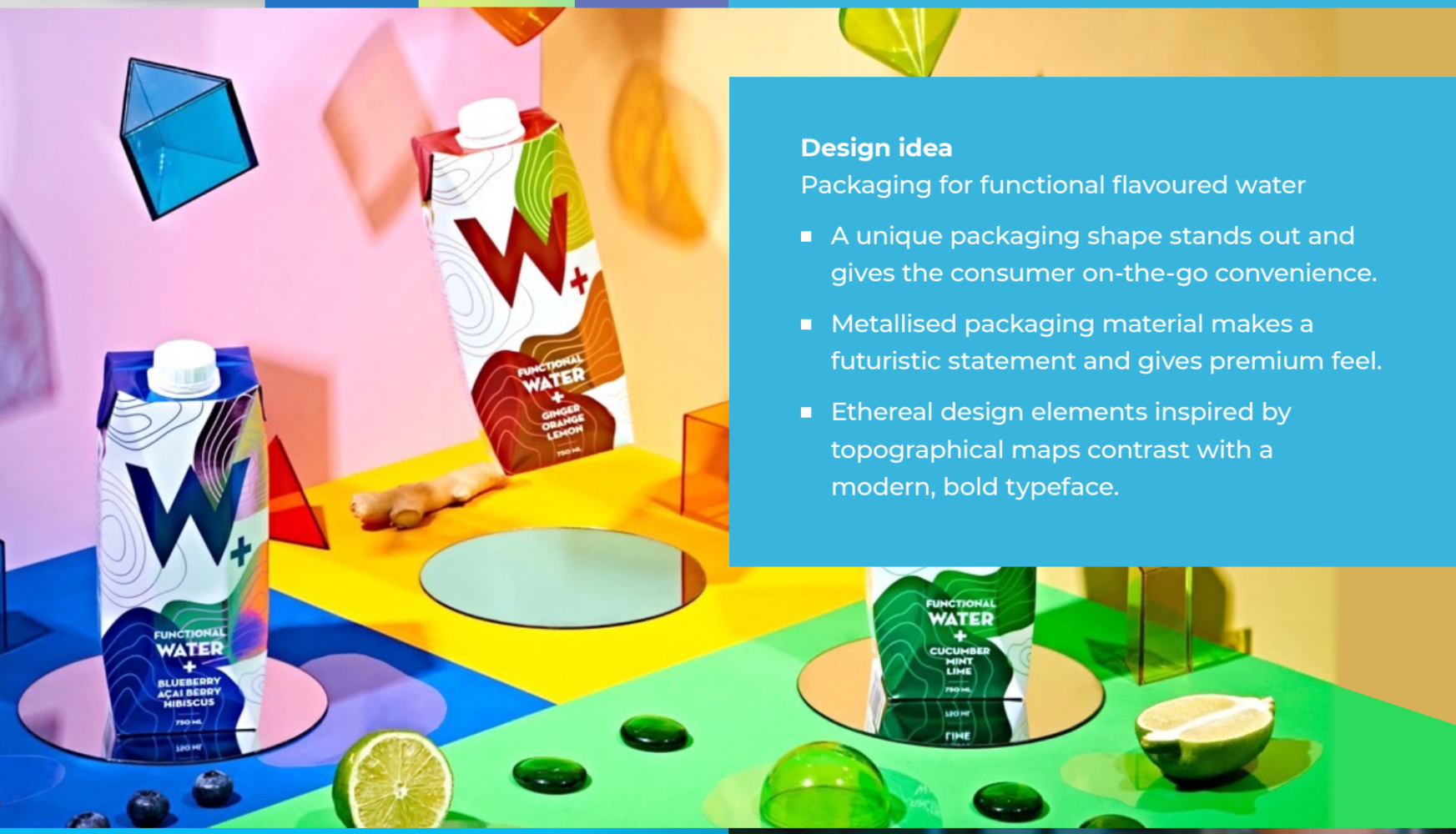
Daily interactions with multiple screens blur the boundaries between reality and fantasy, changing our understanding of forms and colours. The Tech-tility trend is a futuristic design vision that fully explores shape, colour and light to create ethereal and hypnotic effects.

Palette

- Inspiration from digital screens
- Oxidised effects and gradients for a futuristic look
- Vibrant hues of red, greens and blues
- Transparency patterns, depths and textures are common elements

Key themes

- Virtual nature: the digital vs. the real
- Ethereal style
- Futuristic vision
- Reflective surface patterns
- Glowing reflections
- Interior design influence
- Digital inspiration



Design idea

Packaging for functional flavoured water

- A unique packaging shape stands out and gives the consumer on-the-go convenience.
- Metallised packaging material makes a futuristic statement and gives premium feel.
- Ethereal design elements inspired by topographical maps contrast with a modern, bold typeface.

Which design trends are right for your products?

As this report shows, there are a variety of

vastly different trends influencing packaging design today. Choosing the right one very much depends on the product in question, your market and key target groups.

If you are interested in updating or re-designing the look of your packaging, you are always welcome to get in touch with Tetra Pak. Based on extensive marketing research and packaging expertise, we can advise on the best ways to convey a powerful story to your consumers. Our team is available to help you choose the right materials and packaging solutions for your specific needs, and they can offer useful guidance on all aspects of the packaging design.

Discover your new product packaging design. Contact us today.

A note on source material used for this report

Tetra Pak is committed to being part of solutions that move the food and beverage industries forward. To support our customers' innovation, Tetra Pak Marketing Services has compiled this report using extensive research into market trends and consumer behaviour. This has included material from the Tetra Pak Business Information & Analytics Team, which conducts yearly studies into both global macrotrends and changes happening within specific markets. It also includes data from WGSN, one of the world's leading experts in consumer trend forecasting.

Using a holistic approach, Marketing Services has analysed these studies to identify the key behaviours and trends relevant to today's food and beverage manufacturers. We have then worked together with Tetra Pak's in-house designers to create visual concepts and product mock-ups that illustrate how these design trends work in practice.

For further information on our research and analysis, please contact deborah.morelli@tetrapak.com

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