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Popular Article

How packaging becomes a marketing strategy for poultry products

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With an output of 3.8 million tons of chicken meat and 66.45 billion egg per annum in 2013, India has emerged as the 4th largest world poultry meat producer and 3rd largest egg producers. The broiler production has been growing at an incredible rate of 12-15 % per annum and egg production at the rate of 6-8% over the last decade. Despite spectacular increase in egg and broiler meat and production, both processed poultry product and value-added product sectors in India are in a nascent stage. Even today the bulk (80%) of chicken are sold alive or as skinned carcasses in wet market and the rest are sold as dressed whole carcass, cut-ups or further processed value-added products. Establishment of about a dozen modern, mechanized poultry processing plants and vertically integrated poultry companies with their own retail outlets/ restaurants, proliferating fast food outlets and entry of a few multinational fast-food chains have given some momentum to the growth of this sector over the last decade. Hence efforts are needed to evolve cost-effective and efficient technology for the production of shelf-stable, consumer-oriented convenient products to penetrate the vast until now untapped market.

In order to gain a competitive advantage in the dynamic market, multinational companies in the food processing sector give more focus on the quality of the product, functional aspect of the product, specifications of the product, aesthetic design of products etc. But in competitive market almost all the products of the same category have more or less same quality, functionality and features. So the companies target on providing uniqueness amongst themselves on these grounds.



And this makes them to give more emphasis on the aesthetic designing of packaging of their product to grab the attention of the customers.

Many multinational food processing firms are spending approximately 10% of their retail pricing on the packaging, even in some scenario it becomes the most expensive part for the company. Often packaging is considered as a key element for the promotion of the product. Reaction to the packaging determines the success and failures to the product. As in a dynamic marketing environment, adopting new designs are unavoidable for the lively presence of the firms in the market.

The basic purpose of packaging is to protect meat and egg products from undesirable impacts on quality including microbiological and physio-chemical alterations. Packaging protects foodstuffs during processing, storage and distribution from:

- **contamination by dirt** (by *contact with surfaces and hands*)
- **contamination by micro-organisms** (*bacteria, moulds, yeasts*)
- **contamination by parasites** (*mainly insects*)
- **contamination by toxic substances** (*chemicals*)
- **influences affecting colour, smell and taste** (*off-odours, light, oxygen*)
- **loss or uptake of moisture** (*evaporation or water absorption*)

Above all packaging should ensure the protection of the product from various breakages, spills through shipment, storage etc. Practically all films used for meat packaging derive from **synthetic “plastic” materials**. The most common synthetic materials used for meat packaging are:

Polyethylene (PE)	(oxygen + , water vapour -)
Polypropylene (PP)	(oxygen + , water vapour -)
Polyvinylchloride (PVC) (soft)	(oxygen + , water vapour -)
Polyester (PET)	(oxygen ± , water vapour -)
Polyamide (PA)	(oxygen - , water vapour +)
+ = relatively permeable & - = relatively impermeable	

Moreover, packaging is one of the crucial elements which decide the purchasing decision of people. Since food products were available in wide range and varieties, unique packing design is one of the strategies that can adopt to get the customer attention. Customers have certain expectation regarding the packaging of a product, viz; the packaging material, complete and simple labeling listing the ingredients, instructions to use, nutritive quality, storage conditions etc.



Packaging should be able to meet the customers' need, so as to meet the customers from various market segments. Since Indian traditional joint families are converting into nuclear ones and globalization makes people to travel and stay away, food packaging development should cater the changing consumption patterns and smaller households. Single and smaller serve products will reduce waste by meeting the needs of single and two person households. Increased use of retail ready packaging also reduces double handling and damage and improve stock turnover. Recently the manufacturers as well as the retailers adopted a new strategy in the packaging that is 'eco-friendly' packaging technique which attracts consumers mainly because of easiness in disposal.

People are very sensitive to the quality aspect, especially when it comes to food items. That is the reason why 70% of customers prefer transparent packaging than a closed packaging for food items. Also, transparent packaging films normally used for meat products allow attractive product presentation as the packaged product is visible. However, such films provide no protection against possible light impact on meat products which may cause unattractive colour changes, oxidation and rancidity.

Packaging has a vital role to play in containing and protecting food as it moves through the supply chain to the consumer. Innovations in packaging materials, design and labeling provide new opportunities to improve efficiencies. Recognition of the benefits of packaging technologies, development of economically viable packaging systems and increased consumer acceptance for packaged products opens new frontiers for entrepreneurs in marketing the poultry products.

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