

More purchase incentive through brand signals and context packaging

CONSUMER CONTEXT | "A beer always goes", says the popular saying - but always the same beer? Does "always" always look the same? Not at all! Occasions of use or the individual consumer context often decide on the choice of drink and the appropriate beer. Good experiences and learned brand symbols are just as important for the occasion-related repurchase as packaging appeal and spontaneously triggered consumption and tasting occasions.

CURRENTLY, the beverage brand - The challenges we face are many at the same time: The plastic debate, the battle for glass and bottles, rising energy and procurement costs, corona effects, declining sales figures, more conscious alcohol consumption by Generation Z, the war for talents (especially in the catering industry), the threat of an advertising ban on alcoholic beverages and sweet drinks. With all the problems and crises, fears grow and the necessary marketing tasks are postponed until "later". Especially in crises, it is necessary to resort to consistent brand management with four to five distinguishable ~~long~~ brand codes and a purchase-stimulating design.

The revival of the euro bottle was a short-term exclamation mark in the

The packaging appearance of the beer bottles, which made consumers nostalgically marvel at the traditions of light beer in Bavaria. Unfortunately, the Euro bottle with its standard white-blue labelling has largely sunk into the monotony of light beers: no brand has been able to differentiate itself with the Euro bottle plus blue-white. In the current crisis context, the packaging approach is becoming even more important!

I see what I want

Packs and labels are central means of communication for brands in terms of recognition and reaching new customers. The confounding thing is that a

packaging is only decoded and has a behavioural effect if a system 1 approach according to Daniel Kahneman is successful. If, consequently, the consumer's autopilot is activated via the label ~~tmk~~ (design, assets, codes) and an automatic linking of brand codes with brand experience and consumption contexts takes place in the brain.

Otherwise, there is a risk of a "matryoshka effect": only those who enjoy playing with and dismantling the matryoshka dolls, or who have any positive memories, will be able to play.

Those who have a connection with this object or with their region of origin will want to engage with it in terms of content or purchase relevance. For everyone else, the matryoshka remains the "shell of a shell" - like a package with zero decode and zero relevance. Which in this context once again underlines the behaviourally relevant significance of situational contexts: Context matters.

Seasonal beer consumption

But even beverage brands with weak branding and only subliminally effective brand assets can use contextualisation to make consumers curious and stimulate them to buy.



Authors: Dr. Uwe H. Lebok (photo left), Marco Gromer, K&A BrandResearch AG, Röhrenbach a.d. Pegnitz

Matryoshka effect of packaging
Source: K&A Brand Research



Seasonal effects can be observed annually with beer, for example. As soon as the first rays of sunshine usher in the warmer season, beer sales increase. The more summery it gets, the more people look for refreshing, tastier beer moments. We consumers almost always react contextually. And not only in summer, when the sun is shining and it's tropically hot.

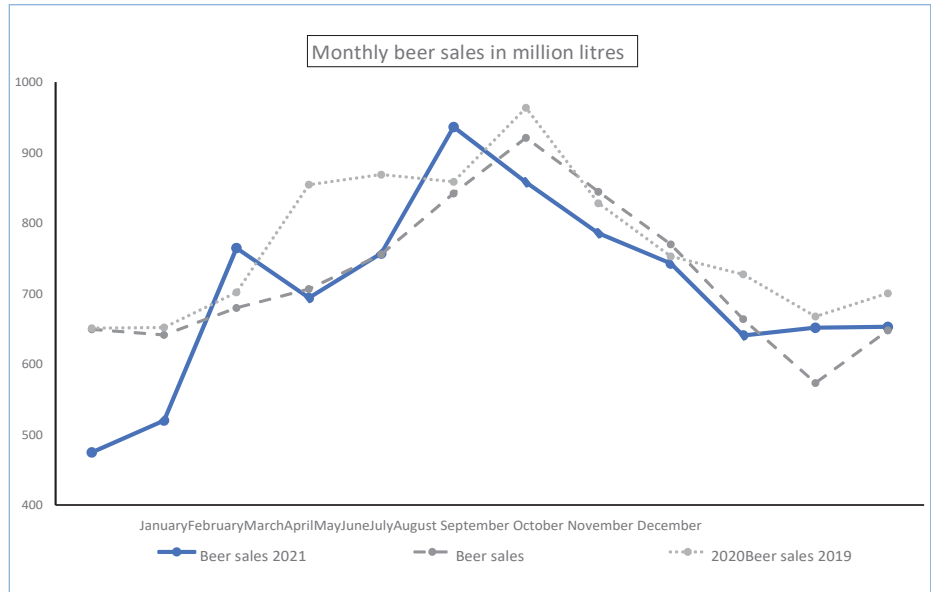
For example, habitual beer drinkers might find it routine to replace empty beer cans with full ones. The routine beer purchase means even in the "Generation X" (Baby Boomers and Generation X) do not necessarily always buy the same brand, but may well switch to a comparably good brand if it is on offer. If, on the other hand, a habitual beer drinker has a barbecue event in mind with friends who like to put on a beer show together, then they will change their shopping behaviour and look for more unusual regional or craft beers and pay particular attention to authentic label signals.

- Other contextual examples are:
- Father's Day hike with buddies? A "Wegseidla" fits perfectly!
 - Lake outing on a hot day? It's nice that there's a summer beer!
 - Do you want to brighten up the cold season? A Bock beer is needed!
 - Is January a time for bad habits? A low carb beer for the "dry weeks".

So it's true: a beer always goes - just contextually. And not every beer is always good. Many different contexts can be found for a beer brand. For example, the Franconian-regional beer brand Grüner of the Radeberger Group was able to profitably exploit the Bundesliga promotion of SpVgg Greuther Fürth, Carlsberg the Champions League victory of FC Liverpool, Paulaner the cooperation with FC Bayern, Brinkhoff with BVB, Fiege with VfL Bochum and Astra with FC St. Pauli. All examples of success without losing brand recognition.

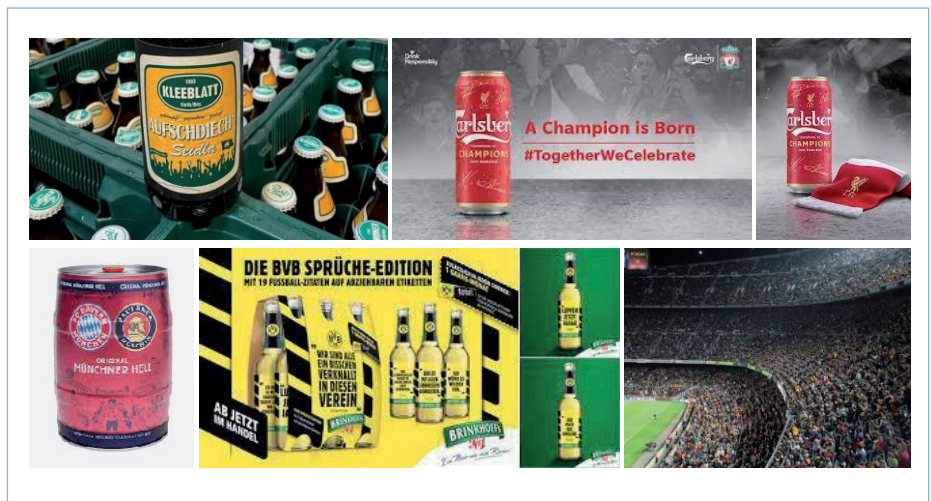
Recognition via a handful of brand codes

In such cases, the label can be equated with unmistakable, recognisable brand codes. And according to marketing



Seasonal consumption effects for beer

Source: destatis.de



Football and beer - success examples for contextual connections Source: K&A BrandResearch

Expert Mark Ritson invites such an initial basis to a continuous co-dying: Through the communication of packaging brand assets, consumers are constantly reminded of their product experiences, the branding is cemented via the packaging reminder and, if necessary, updated via newly conveyed consumption occasions.

When shopping, we can observe ourselves in terms of behavioural economics: We usually shop on an occasion when we need to fill up our fridge. In the supermarket, we therefore switch from the role of consumer to that of shopper. As a rule, we don't just buy things to somehow fill up the fridge, but we contextualise our reasons for buying. For certain contexts that we already have in mind, we quickly look for something suitable. Habits control our autopilot and we react to them.

strongly salience-driven: What we know, what we have had good experience with, is more likely to be bought again.

In shopping situations, we usually buy more than we actually wanted to. We react spontaneously to special placements, high-signal codes, offer signs and also to unusual packaging. We are literally distracted by packaging codes at the point of purchase. This is all the more successful the more efficiently a label "emotionally packs" its consumer relevance in everyday life via signal codes. And it is a question of how well a package succeeds in stimulating new contexts that seem relevant to consumers in the course of shopping.

Advertising and packaging communication via stimulating labelling are necessary for long-term successful brand management. In addition to physical availability

In order for a brand to be accessible via distribution, it must be mentally available or likely to be called up, which goes beyond familiarity. Few assets that are distinct from other brands and options, that can be distinguished from alternatives by the consumer and that can ideally be assigned to usage situations are the keys to the consumer. While fixed packaging codes primarily fulfil long-term brand-strategic functions, contextual approaches can be used,

z. The product's packaging and label design can also be used to encourage more consumption, e.g. through special editions and specific packaging and label designs.

Label and pack in contextual reference

Today, brands have to master three challenges in particular in order to remain relevant to the consumer's everyday life via contextual references and not to be forgotten. The manufacturer is faced with the following questions:

- In which contexts does the target group think of my brand?
- Which brand signals or key stimuli succeed in creating a mental link with certain contexts?
- How can additional contexts be "conquered" for my brand and credibly communicated so that they become behaviourally relevant?

Packs, labels and thus also brands are market-effective and strong when they attract attention via signal codes,

remain memorable and stimulate concrete contextual references in everyday life. A routine purchase needs recognition in order to ~~put~~ a familiar and already experienced occasion of use, in order to (repeatedly) simplify or even "beautify" everyday life in the imagined contextual environment. Our eyes are always looking to see what we want to see (and buy).

When it comes to new consumption occasions for brands, the packaging (or the combination of packaging and communication) must convey, expand or emotionalise a contextual association. The eMOT® test approach, which has been used by K&A BrandResearch for decades, allows the contextual reference to be measured implicitly and precisely without great effort using an experimental approach. The focus is less on whether a package reinforces an intended brand image, which leads to rational (System 2) answers from consumers anyway via lengthy item queries and is only conditionally effective in terms of behaviour. Instead, the emotional effect and the wow-effects of a package are determined, which ideally receive a specific everyday association on the part of the consumer.

Changed context perception after package confrontation

Compared to values of previous examinations (or a previous measurement)

it is relatively easy and uncomplicated to determine how the context perception has changed or whether a pack stimulus has an occasion focus compared to conventional bids, or whether it has a context-efficient effect or not. Besides a measurable context shift, the label (or pack) must be as concrete as possible (branding) and as exciting as necessary (wow effect). Without an attention-grabbing effect that is worth remembering and can be recapitulated by the consumer, it is much more difficult to change behaviour in actual consumption contexts.

Less interchangeability through contexts

Any beer is good for a nightcap after work or for a barbecue with friends or for football. These are everyday contexts for which it doesn't matter in principle whether Paulaner, Krombacher, Oettinger or a regional beer is drunk.

However, if individual beers and beverage brands succeed in differentiating themselves from the hundreds of other alternatives through a distinctive appearance and an efficient contextual approach in such a way that they immediately come to mind in certain contexts, the first steps towards something more unusual and less interchangeable in everyday life have been taken. Then, on a particular occasion, only brand X is my beer - and no other! ■