

My first involvement with food packaging was on a cottage industry level. You see, I used to package and sell gift baskets to make a little bit of extra cash at the craft market. We would make some pretty extravagant food packages. After all, gift baskets are as much about the packaging as the product. You don't want simplistic, straightforward food packaging. Elegance is not one of your goals. What you want is something that is sparky, shiny, and cheerful. A gift basket, after all, should tell someone that you love them. It should demonstrate your affection through tinsel and flashy colors.

Working for a company that sells commercial packaging supplies is a much different experience, needless to say. It is amazing how many different possible designs that are in food packaging. I have seen every single conceivable form of food package. Nowadays, as consumers get more jaded, the packaging of food seem to get more and more elaborate. There are candies, for example, that consist of almost nothing beside the packaging. They will come with molded plastic cell phone cases with a few candies inside, or perhaps a little race cars. Packaging foods - especially junk foods - is often more about the package than the food.

On the other hand, some food packages has gotten much more simplistic and straightforward. With environmental consciousness becoming popular, food packaging is definitely trying to keep up with the movement. A lot of the time, people buying more expensive health foods actually go for a simpler, cheaper to manufacture food wrapping. This is good for the environment, but it is also good for the company selling the foods. After all, they get to make more money on food that costs them less to package and send out. It seems like everyone wins.

What really intrigues me is the products where the food packaging never changes very much. Milk and orange juice, for example, have been the same forever and continued to be the same. Milk comes in either the cardboard cartons or the plastic half gallon jugs. Orange juice comes in similar food packaging. For some reason, people just trust the packages of certain staples. Take eggs for example. Do you think cartons will ever go away? I seriously doubt it! I think it is because people don't really want innovation with their dietary staples. They want basic foods that have a basic look that never changes. That is what inspires consumer confidence.