

Foil stamping and embellishments on packaging are not new concepts. The underlying technology has experienced incredible advances over the past decade. The invention of new digital foil technologies, a previously cost-restrictive process, is now easily within reach, allowing even smaller companies to prototype package design.

The Foil & Special Effects Association (FSEA) has been the voice of the foil stamping industry for decades, playing an instrumental role in pairing

old-world techniques with cutting-edge technology. FSEA's studies into the efficacy of foil on packaging have helped product developers, designers, print vendors, and retailers make better choices about how to present their products to consumers.

FSEA was kind enough to allow us to use their studies in this document. We hope it will help you to make an educated decision about the value that foil can add to your product packaging.

A HISTORY OF FOIL IN THE MARKETPLACE

Zantac[®]

Zantac[®] Antacid³

In 1983 Zantac[®] Antacid was introduced with embossed metallic foil stamping, raising the bar for OTC product packaging. It immediately set the premium price point for OTC antacid products, becoming the largest selling pharmaceutical drug in America in just three years.



Colgate[®] Total[®] Toothpaste¹

In 1997 Colgate[®] launched their Total[®] toothpaste brand with a holographic foil stamped package and a \$100 million marketing campaign. In four months, it became the #1 selling toothpaste brand in the United States with a staggering 30 percent market share.

Gillette[®] MACH3[®]

Gillette[®] MACH3[®] Razor²

In 1998, Gillette[®] launched the MACH3[®] Razor with overprinted foil stamped graphics and a price tag most critics said was far too high for a disposable razor. The MACH3[®] Razor became the #1 selling razor in the USA and Europe within six months and went on to change the disposable razor industry.



Best Choice[®] Products⁴

In 2004, Best Choice[®] Products added gold foil stamping to its olive oil labeling. Stores that stocked the new bottles had an initial 30% jump in sales and an overall retention of 10-15%. Over the next few years, the brand overhauled their entire product line to include foil embellishments, helping increase company wide sales nearly 50% over a four-year period.

In 2013, The Foil & Special Effects Association commissioned a study done by The Sonoco Institute of Packaging Design and Graphics at Clemson University, in partnership with R. Andrew Hurley's research program. The eye-tracking study was done in the CUshop Consumer Behavior Lab over a three-day period with 265 participants.

The participants were asked to look for a specific type of food items in a mock store setting, mimicking a normal shopping experience. The results were measured in the amount of time it took to see the item and the total time the item was viewed. The system also tracked the total time the participants viewed items that they were not directed to find, but noticed the packaging.

TIME TO FIRST FIXATION

The study found that packaging which had foil caught the eye of the participants at a mean average of 2 seconds, while non-embellished packaging took over 3.5 seconds to touch that same participant.



TOTAL FIXATION DURATION

The total time the participants maintained eye contact with various packages was measured and the mean average was created, to show that packages which had foil kept the attention of the consumer for nearly half a second longer than those without.



INDIRECT FIXATION DURATION

The study also gathered valuable information from the alternate items which were not part of the specific shopping list given to participants. While only glancing over them, the foil items held the casual attention of the consumer for nearly 50% longer.



THE 2016 FSEA FOIL STUDY

In 2016, The Foil & Special Effects Association commissioned a new study to compare an unknown brand to existing, established brands, with both foil and non-foil packaging. Again utilizing the Sonoco Institute of Packaging Design and Graphic's CUshop Consumer Behavior Lab, the study had participants select K-Cup coffee to purchase.

Among well-known brands such as Maxwell House®, Gevalia®, Donut Shop®, Green Mountain Coffee® and Eight O'Clock®, was the fake test product "Zapotec Coffee." Zapotec was given three different labels with a non-foil control and a foil stimuli. Of the 180 participants, 30 were given each stimuli and control.

DESIGN MATTERS

The three packages had various results, proving that the simple inclusion of foil is not a guaranteed indicator of success in a real world transaction. However, even including the less successful label designs, 77% of participants said they preferred the foil to the non-foil versions of each of the labels, while a staggering 46% perceived the contents of the foil packaged pieces as being of higher quality or inherent value.

ATTRACTING ATTENTION

Grabbing the consumer's attention is the gateway to your touchpoint. Within this study there were a total of four

variations of one specific label: red, red foil, gold, and gold foil. The red foil grabbed consumers attention 1.5 times faster than the red printed version of the label. However, the gold foil attracted consumers' attention an amazing 2.5 times faster than the printed version.

The red non-foil control did poorly compared with the competition, only performing better than Donut Shop®. However, the foil version outperformed every brand except Gevalia®.

TIME TO FIRST FIXATION RED BIRD CONTROL (A)

1.8 Seconds	2 Seconds	2.2 Seconds	3.5 Seconds	3.9 Seconds	4.9 Seconds
Eight O'clock	Gevalia	Maxwell House	KGM	Red Bird Control	Donut Shop

TIME TO FIRST FIXATION RED BIRD STIMULI (B)

3 Seconds	3.5 Seconds	3.6 Seconds	4 Seconds	5.1 Seconds	6.2 Seconds
Gevalia	Red Bird Stimuli	KGM	Maxwell House	Eight O'clock	Donut Shop

MAKING THE SALE

This was a fake brand being offered as a viable alternative to well-known coffees that have been around for years and some even generations. When it came to a sale, the red versions of the test packaging outperformed the gold, with the red non-foil control selling as much as the gold foil stimuli. The gold foil sold as much as the 124 year old brand Maxwell House®, while the red foil version from an unknown brand performed even better.

PURCHASE DATA FOR GOLD BIRD

Control	28%	43%	–	–	22%	7%
Stimuli	40%	30%	10%	10%	10%	–
	Gevalia	Donut Shop	Maxwell House	Gold Bird Stimuli	KGM	Eight O'Clock

PURCHASE DATA FOR RED BIRD

Control	13%	10%	23%	17%	17%	23%
Stimuli	10%	14%	30%	4%%	27%	17%
	Maxwell House	Red Bird	Donut Shop	Eight O'Clock	KGM	Gevalia

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5. "Holographic Foil and Other Enhancements Lend Sales Boost to AWG Private-Label Packages", InsideFinishing, November/December 2011
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7. Trends and Opportunities in Packaging R&D in the US, Niels Hauffe, NVW Market Discovery, Inc., Technology Review, 2007
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9. Definitions also provided by Dr. R. Andrew Hurley, Sonoco Institute of Packaging Design and Graphics at Clemson University
10. Eye Tracking as a Tool in Package and Shelf Testing, Tobii Technology AB, November 2008

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