

## Gestalt versus Semiotics in packaging design

### CARTILS

CARTILS, established in 1960, is one of the world's first branding and packaging design consultancies. For over fifty years the company has been providing independent, expert advice focusing on the development of brand packaging design. CARTILS provides strategic advice to companies producing fast moving consumer goods including leading names in the beverage, tobacco, and fragrance sectors. The company has its own branding specialists, strategists, designers, 3D designers, in-house artwork studio, printing facilities and model makers. Offices in Amsterdam and London, and multidisciplinary professionals coming from a variety of backgrounds, create a working environment based on know-how merged with international experience.

### Problem definition

When a pack does not stand out on shelf (i.e. is not *seen*), it hardly gets the chance to communicate the brand's message (i.e. to be *understood*).

There are two theories on the process of perception. The traditional theory claims that one firstly perceives the parts, and after that the whole. So, in case of a chair, you will first see the leg, the seat, the armrest, and then you'll see the chair and thus something to sit on. The modern theory claims the opposite. So, firstly you'll perceive the whole, the so-called 'Gestalt', and after that you'll zoom in on the details like leg, seat, and armrest.

CARTILS feels that the modern theory is closer to reality. Firstly, you'll see the Gestalt and after that the details. That would imply that Gestalt is relevant when it comes to being seen, and details for being understood.

Despite of this, many designers are assigning more value to these details. The elements would have specific meanings (semiotics) and as a result packaging is often completely unravelled in market research. By doing that, CARTILS feels that the details are not evaluated in their functional context, but over-valued as stand-alone elements.

### Assignment

Define where Gestalt and Semiotics meet. Is indeed Gestalt dominant for being seen and are the elements important for message transfer, i.e. being understood? Or are the details more important than we feel and is this separation not so easily made?

It appears that there is already some literature available on this topic. This knowledge combined with experiments in the field of packaging should be able to answer the question about the importance of both theories for brand presentations.

### Intern/ graduate

We are looking for a student who is interested in brands and packaging design and who understands graphical design. Someone who is enthusiastic, has an analytical way of thinking, is visually orientated, has strong eye for detail, and likes working in a team. The internship is an excellent way to get to know our agency and the world of brand design.

### Information

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