



The distinctive robin's egg blue of Tiffany & Co. is one of the most iconic packaging colors ever created.

Image Source: Flickr user Constantin Wiedemann

One of the most widespread concepts in business is the idea of the seven-second rule: people make vital decisions within the first seven seconds of being introduced to a product and what happens in those seven seconds can either nurture long-term consumer loyalty or turn would-be customers off for good.

However, most consumers' first contact isn't with the product itself, but with the product packaging. As such, packaging design is often just as important as the design of the product, shaping consumer perception from the very beginning of a potential customer's encounter. "Packaging is powerful because it tells consumers why your product and brand are different," writes Joseph Conran for *Inc.* "Thinks of Tiffany & Co. For most people, the iconic robin's egg blue box is more recognizable than the jewelry."¹

Indeed, the importance of color in packaging cannot be overstated; research reveals that "85% of consumers attribute color as a primary reason for purchasing behavior."² At a time when more products are competing for space in the marketplace than ever before, smart packaging design choices can be a vital deciding factor in the success of a product and spectrophotometric analysis of that packaging is essential to ensuring that your vision becomes reality.



Apple's distinctive boxes serve as a prime example of the importance of color in packaging.
Image Source: Flickr user Brett Jordan

Harnessing the Power of Color in Packaging

Packaging color choice isn't arbitrary, nor is it necessarily about selecting an aesthetically pleasing color. Instead, the designers must draw on both [deeply ingrained color psychology](#) and a pre-existing visual lexicon of product associations to create packaging that speaks to the consumer in a language they understand. "Certain colors send specific messages to consumers," says Pamela G. Hollie of The New York Times. "In the soft drink industry, red means cola. Green means lemon-lime. Blue means low-calorie. In Household products, green is pine scent. And, it would be hard to sell any dishwashing liquid in a yellow container if it did not have something to do with citrus."³ Research indicates that even [prescription drug packaging can shape consumer expectations of product performance](#), thus influencing purchasing decisions and consumer experience with the product itself.

But, Hollie points out, certain associations are open to change. For example, the white packaging now associated with sleek, simple, and sophisticated items, such as Apple products, was once considered downmarket due to its association with store brand grocery items. Thus, brands can simultaneously redefine and come to be defined by particular hues, allowing color to stand in for a host of marketing parameters.



Coca-Cola's consistent use of color has solidified its brand identity and propelled its distinctive red to iconic status.

Image Source: Flickr user Mike Mozart

The Value of Consistent Coloration

Using color as part of a product's iconography and truly solidifying brand identity depends not just on selecting the right color, but consistently producing that color over time. "A color palette, distinctive graphics and brand identity work synergistically and can eventually become iconic if consistently maintained," says Ted Minnini, president of Design Force. "Imagine seeing a soft drink can in signature red with a white swirl, missing its brand mark: 'Coca-Cola'. Would people still recognize the product and immediately call the brand to mind? Surely just about everyone, the world over, would."⁴

Coca-Cola red and Tiffany blue didn't become icons due to a single consumer encounter with these hues, but by repeated exposure to the exact same hue again and again, each time fortifying consumer associations between the brand and the color until the two became interchangeable. Creating that consistency depends on spectrophotometric color analysis.

Ensuring Consistency Via Spectrophotometric Analysis

Spectrophotometers are uniquely engineered to capture color information and distill that information to objective data, alerting you to even the slightest color variation and ensuring that each packaging component stays within your chosen color parameters regardless of manufacturing location. In doing so, these sophisticated instruments allow you to implement [global color quality control protocols](#) to guarantee consistent, accurate coloration.

The versatile nature of modern spectrophotometers allows for measurement of all sample types, including inks, papers, plastics, and plastic films. Where applicable, these instruments have the ability to [measure either color alone or total appearance](#) to [account for geometric attributes](#) such

as gloss, opalescence, and haze, giving you the highest level of insight into and control of your packaging. The sophistication of today's spectrophotometers allows you to analyze even cutting-edge packaging materials such as [metallic substrates and transparent inks](#).

HunterLab Quality

HunterLab has been at the forefront of spectrophotometric technology for over 60 years. Today, our comprehensive lineup of [portable, benchtop, and inline instruments](#) play a critical role in the development and manufacturing of packaging materials, giving you the ultimate in color quality control. With the help of HunterLab's cutting-edge spectrophotometers, you can truly harness the potential of color to optimize your chances of success, whether you're updating the look of existing items or introducing new products to the marketplace. [Contact us](#) to learn more about our innovative technologies and world-class customer support services and let us help you select the ideal instruments for your needs.

1. "Why Your Product's Packaging Is As Important As the Product Itself," September 22, 2014, <http://www.inc.com/joshua-conran/why-your-product-s-packaging-is-as-important-as-the-product-itself.html>
2. "The Importance of Color in Beauty Packaging," May 30, 2014, <http://www.gcimagazine.com/business/manufacturing/packaging/The-Importance-of-Color-in-Beauty-Packaging-261239041.html>
3. "Advertising; Importance Of Color Packaging," August 20, 1985, <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/08/20/business/advertising-importance-of-color-packaging.html>
4. "Package Color: The Ultimate Consumer Persuader," July 2011, <http://www.designforceinc.com/package-color>