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Patterns™

about design in consumer packaging



## Tea

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# Patterns: Tea

about design in consumer packaging

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# Tea

## Introduction

If you're a brand manager, marketing professional, package designer or student about to begin early stages of a brand or package design initiative, it's essential to be aware of context. R.BIRD "Patterns" are published reports based on our observations and professional experience that provide basic insight into common practices within a given product category. For each observation there are proposed opportunistic responses.

## Method

Armed with digital cameras and note pads, our designers visit retail environments to photograph and observe product presentation in its natural habitat. We then purchase a selection of examples and bring them back to R.BIRD for closer study in search of common design threads and patterns of opportunity throughout the category.

# Storytelling



## Storytelling

Tea and its origins, varieties and cultures is rich in heritage. Nonetheless, there seems to be a dearth of storytelling that plays a prominent role in packaging of tea.

We attribute this to a fundamental difference between Eastern and Western cultures. Let's face it. Western cultures have far to go and much to learn, while Eastern cultures span thousands of years. In that context, history is treasured and trumpeted.

## Response

Western culture, too often, favors quick commercialization above honored heritage in its product marketing and packaging. There's a huge opportunity for brand-building in the tea category, particularly, as the west becomes more knowledgeable about the beverage.

Storytelling is a way to build understanding and demand for authenticity and quality of experience.

# Asian Influences



## Asian Influences

Many of us associate the Eastern hemisphere with the origin of tea, including: China, India, Ceylon and Japan. The use of background patterns, graphic shapes, typographic styles and iconic figures of these regions creates an association with time and place that enhances perceived authenticity.

## Response

The use of authentic images and symbology in packaging for tea also creates a promise that the product will live up to the expectations created through visual cues.

# The Leaf



## The Leaf

Images of whole tea leaves are common in all varieties of teas and tea-flavored beverage packaging, regardless of price or form. Packaging claims may include statements similar to, “made from the finest whole tea leaves.”

## Response

Such claims for many tea products found in retail mass-market are stretching the truth. Grades of tea follow this hierarchy from best to lowest quality: “O.P.” or whole leaf; “B.O.P” or broken whole leaf; “Fannings” or crumbled bits of leaf; and, finally, “Dust” the waste that’s left over from the rest.

As consumers become more educated to the origins, processing and serving of tea, an honest representation of product content will be well-received where expected and judged harshly where inappropriate.

## Keywords & Brands

### A

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Asia 9  
authenticity 8, 9

### B

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