Packaging: design and labels

Packaging design and development must be closely linked to the product to be packaged and are strictly connected to the identification of all the requirements: structural design, marketing, shelf life, quality assurance, logistics, legal regulatory, graphic design, end-use, environmental and, in some way, ease of recycling. Prerequisites in packaging design are: the product quality must be maintained; for example, in some products the design process involves detailed regulatory needs; any package components that may come into contact with foodstuffs have to be made of suitable material. Moreover, consumers must be able to easily access and use the product without harming themselves or contaminating the product, even if packaging needs to be tamper-evident or child-resistant by making the package intentionally difficult to readily open.

Packaging processes, labelling, distribution and sale need to be validated to fulfil the regulations and have the well-being of the consumer in mind. An effective quality management system and verification and validation protocols are compulsory for some types of packaging and recommended for all. All aspects of packaging development that may give rise to quality problems must be identified and minimized by good design: all these goals put together are a challenge.

Packaging can be described in relation to the type of product being packaged: short-lived or long-lasting goods, i.e. easily spoilt and liable to rot or durable stuff. Three different types may be used and it is sometimes convenient to categorize packages by layer or function: a primary pack is in a direct contact with the product, it holds it and has to maintain the product quality; the secondary level contains the product and the primary pack and helps to preserve and to give information about how to transport or dispose of the package. Finally, the third type is needed for bulk handling, warehouse storage and transport shipping.

Package labelling has several objectives, but the recurring one is to inform us how to use, transport, store, recycle or organize the package or product. With pharmaceuticals, food, medical, and chemical products, more detailed information is required by governments. Some labels are used more and more for track and trace purposes for particular foodstuffs.

bulk handling: *trattamento di grossi quantitativi*
closely: *strettamente*
compulsory: *obbligatorio*
challenge: *sfida*
to fulfil: *rispettare, ottemperare a*
labelling: *etichettatura*
liable to rot: *facilmente deperibili*
logistics: *logistica*
regulatory: *normativa*
shelf: *scaffale*
short-lived: *di breve durata*
spoilt: *rovinato, guasto*
stuff: *merce*
strictly: *rigorosamente*
suitable: *idoneo*
tamper-evident: *anti-manomissione*
to trace: *tracciare*
to track: *seguire*
well-being: *benessere*

1 **Complete the following sentences with words from the text above.**

a. One of the requirements of a wrapping is .....

b. One of the most basic pre-requisites in packaging is .....

c. For some types of stuff, certification and validation protocols are .....

d. Goods easily perishable are .....

e. The most common aim of labelling is to .....

2 **Read the text again and underline the technical keywords (for example: shelf-life, tamper-evident, etc.).**

3 **Use some of the words you underlined in the text and give a short report on "How to develop and design a modern package".**

4 **Answer the following questions.**

a. Who requires more detailed information about food, medical, chemical and pharmaceutical products?

b. How can packaging be described?

c. How many different types can be packages be classified into?

d. What steps have to be validated to satisfy the rules and keep the safety of consumers in mind?

e. Can you name a prerequisite for food package?