

Packaging as a Puissant Marketing Tool within the Breweries; the Case of Guinness Ghana Breweries Limited (GGBL)

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Abstract

This research surveyed the opinions of management and non-management staff of GGBL, retailers, and consumers of GGBL's products on the company's packaging. Packaging is heavily integrated into our daily lives as we see packages around every item we buy, such as chocolate bars, soaps and drinks. As a matter of fact, consumers' first exposure or encounter to a product may be its package and the physical attributes of the package can influence the consumer to accept or reject the product. Guinness Ghana Breweries Limited (GGBL), a major manufacturer of alcoholic and non-alcoholic products in Ghana, is noted for designing good quality packages for drinks. However, there are environmental concerns with the use of glass as a material for packaging the company's products. Consumers are also not comfortable with the fact that they are required to either deposit cash or submit an empty bottle of same kind before they are allowed to buy any of GGBL's bottled drinks from retail outlets to their homes. The study reveals interesting facts upon which recommendations are made to guide manufacturers within the brewing industry.

Key Words: Product Package, Packaging, Packaging Materials, Labeling, Branding

Introduction

The marketing world today is very dynamic, due to over-abundance of products in the market. Consumers find it very difficult choosing from competing products. To cope with this keen competition, packaging is adopted as a marketing tool in promoting and differentiating one's product(s) from competitors' products.

Guinness Ghana Breweries Limited (GGBL) was formally known as Guinness Ghana Limited (GGL). It was incorporated on 29th August, 1960 with its company's main headquarters based at Kaasi Industrial Area, Kumasi, Ghana. GGL became GGBL in 2004 after a merger with Ghana Breweries Limited. Some of the products of GGBL are Guinness Stout, Malta Guinness, Amstel Malt, Guinness Quench, Alvaro, Gordon's Spark, Smirnoff Ice, Star Larger, Gulder, Armstrong, and Heineken. To be able to differentiate their products in the market and sell, GGBL uses packaging as a tool.

Gilbert Churchill (1998) is of the view that about 20% of companies' products fail in the market due to poor packaging and 15% of a company's sales also comes as a result of its attractive packaging. J. Peter (1998) also states that most products fail in the market because such products' packages are not consistent with the products they hold. Consumers expect that whereas the package is attractive, so the product will be of a good quality. He stated further that packaging communicates a price range to consumers and helps differentiate the product from competitors' as well as help consumers to take a firm decision on whether to buy a product or not; and good packaging could convey a solid or upscale image, whereas poor packaging detracts from the product's image.

Therefore, it is important for firms to design good packages that could keep their products safe, attract customers' attention, describe the product and contents, make sales and maintain a good brand name for the product and company.

Meaning Of Packaging

According to Kotler and Armstrong (1999), packaging includes the activities of designing and producing the container or wrapper for a product. Berkowitz *et al* (2000) also define a product's package as any container in which it is offered for sale and on which information is communicated. To a great extent, the customer's first exposure to a product is the package, and it is an expensive and important part of the marketing strategy. Packaging has also been seen by Bearden, Ingram and LaForge (2001) as a container or wrapper for a product. It typically includes a label, a printed description of the product on the package.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (1999), developing an effective package requires several decisions. The first is to establish the packaging concept: defining what the package should basically be or do for the particular product. Decisions must also be made on additional elements: size, shape, materials, colour, text and brand mark.

After the package is designed, it must be tested as follows:

- a) Engineering Test: Conducted to ensure that the package stands up under normal conditions.
- b) Visual Test: To ensure that the script is legible and colours are harmonious.
- c) Dealer Test: To ensure that dealers find the packages attractive and easy to handle.
- d) Consumer Test: To ensure favorable consumer response.

To the researchers, packaging involves any material(s) which is/are used in wrapping the product to keep it from spoiling, make the product convenient to carry and easy to use, and on which information can be seen. A product's package, on its own, engulfs labeling and branding since the package has information, colors and sometimes drawings to make the product appealing to customers.

Labeling

A label is any piece of paper or material on a product's package which carries the product's brand name or symbol, name and address of the manufacturer or distributor, product's composition and size, place of manufacture, date of manufacture, date of expiry and the life span of the product (Kotler, P. 2003).

Labeling is an important aspect of packaging which can support the marketing effort by promoting the product and by adding value by providing information to help with product selection and use. Labels, as in the past, were once a separate element that was applied to a package; today, it is an integral part of a typical package. The right label can play an important role in attracting a consumer's attention and encouraging purchase.

Branding

Consumers view a brand as an important part of a product, and branding can add value to a product. This has made branding a central issue in product packaging decisions. Kotler and Armstrong (1999) defines a product's brand as a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of these, which is used to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors. Thus, a brand identifies the maker or supplier of a product. A brand also includes the use of family names, for example Guinness for all products under Guinness family; trademarks and practically all other means of product identification.

Branding helps consumers identify goods and services and also enhances purchase decisions. A good brand name can improve the company's image and help speed up acceptance of new products marketed under that same brand name. For example, because of the good brand name for Guinness and Malta Guinness, Malta Guinness Quench was easily introduced into the market without intense advertisements and so was Smirnoff Ice drink introduced into the product's portfolio. Branding, as an aspect of packaging, also protects the brand against competition and consumers who repeatedly purchase such brands may become loyal customers to the brand or product.

Packaging Materials

There are various kinds of packaging presentations. In other words, packaging materials are the different substances or materials that are used in making product containers or wrappers. The packaging materials include *paper, cellophane, plastics, polythene, glasses, metals, wood, and leather*.

Roles Of Packaging

Developing effective and good packages may cost the company but despite the cost, it plays numerous roles for both the company and customers. Below are the various roles packaging plays as were given by Boone and Kurtz (2005):

1. It is obvious that there is keen competition between companies producing drinks, alcoholic or non-alcoholic, and packaging comes in to play a major role in differentiating these drinks. Marketers combine colours, sizes, shapes, graphics and typeface to establish a trade dress that sets their products apart from the products of their competitors.
2. Protection against damage, spoilage, and pilferage. A package must protect its content from damage. Packages of perishable products must protect the contents against spoilage in transit and in storage until purchased by the consumer.
3. Fears of product tampering have forced many firms to improve designs. Over-the-counter medicines are sold in tamper-resistant packages covered with warnings informing consumers not to purchase merchandise without protective seals intact. Many grocery items and light-resistant products are packaged in tamper-resistant containers as well.
4. Many packages offer important safeguard for retailers against shoplifting and employee theft by featuring oversized cardboard backings too large to fit into a shoplifter's pocket or purse.

5. A good package sometimes gives a firm more promotion effect than it could possibly afford with advertising. Customers see the package in stores when they are actually buying. For example, a study found that 81% of consumers' purchase decisions on groceries are made at the store. The package may be seen by many more potential customers than the company's advertising. An attractive package may speed turnover enough to reduce total costs as a percentage of sales (McCarthy and Perreault, 1993).
6. The proliferation of new products, changes in consumer lifestyle and buying habits, and marketers' emphasis on targeting smaller market segments have increased the importance of packaging as a promotional tool. For instance, introduction of any new product into the market by the company would be easy since consumers are already aware of the company and its product line, thereby reducing advertising costs (Boone and Kurtz, 2005). For example, Malta Quench was easily introduced into the market due to the name 'Guinness'.
7. Packaging conveys information to consumers such as directions on how to use the product, composition of the product, which is needed to satisfy legal requirements of product disclosure, date of manufacture and expiry, safety conditions, name and trademark of the manufacturer. Other information consists of seals and symbols, either government required or commercial seals of approval. Packaging also facilitates choice making, thus consumers faced with thousands of products are helped to make a choice through well-designed packages (Berkowitz, Kerin, Hartley, and Rudelius, 2000).
8. Packages are designed for shelve impact, i.e. they must attract consumers' attention. Getting consumers' attention is very important because if that does not happen nothing else will draw them to a product. Once a package gains a measure of attention, it must communicate the desired set of meaning to the consumer (Peter, 1998).

Packaging Strategies

The following packaging strategy decisions identified by Etzel, Walker, and Stanton (1997) are used by marketers in managing the packaging of a product:

- a) **Packaging the Product Line:** A company must decide whether to develop a family resemblance when packaging related products. Family packages use either similar packages for all products or products padded to a line. When new products are added to a line, recognition and images associated with already existing products extend to the new ones. Family packaging makes sense when the products are of similar quality and have a similar use.
- b) **Multiple packaging:** Multiple packaging is the practice of placing several units of the same products in one container. Tests prove that multiple packaging increases total sales of a product by an increase in total usage of the product. Examples include handkerchiefs and towels packaged in multiple units.
- c) **Changing the package:** For competitive reasons, packaging strategies and tactics are reviewed annually along with the rest of the marketing mix. Sometimes, a company needs to correct a poor feature in an existing package by redesigning its package. To cope with innovations, firms need to monitor and consider continuing developments such as new packaging materials, uncommon shapes, innovative closure and new features. All these are intended to benefit middlemen and/or consumers and, as a result, are selling points for marketers.

Factors To Consider For Developing Effective Packages

Packages were originally meant to contain and keep the product safe but in recent times, it has become one of the important strategies in marketing since it helps to increase self-service in shops and supermarkets. To ensure effective packaging, marketers must consider ten (10) suggested factors proposed by J. Paul Peter and Gilbert A. Churchill (1998):

1. Place the ultimate authority and responsibility for packaging with the Marketing Department.
2. Use cross-functional teams, including personnel from other areas such as Production and Engineering.
3. Begin work on new product packages early in the product development process.
4. Consider needs of both customers and resellers
5. Consider the packages of other competitors and any legal or regulatory requirements.
6. Consider profitability to be the most important objective.
7. Do not change the package for the sake of change.
8. Get inputs from customers and resellers during the development process.
9. Test-market the package
10. Introduce package changes all at once, not gradually.

Criticisms Of Packaging

Packaging is in the public eye today, largely because of environmental issues. Etzel, Walker and Stanton (2001) criticized packaging on these specific concerns:

- a) Packaging that depletes natural resources: This problem is magnified by firms that prefer larger than necessary containers. This criticism has been partially addressed through the use of recycled materials in packaging. A point in favour of packaging is that it minimizes spoilage, thereby reducing a different type of resources waste.
- b) Forms of packaging that are health hazards: Government regulations banned several packaging materials, notably aerosol cans that used chlorofluorocarbons as propellants. Just as important, a growing number of companies are switching from aerosol to pump dispensers.
- c) Disposal of used packages: Consumers' desire for convenience in the form of throw away containers conflicts with their stated desire for a clean environment. Some discarded packages wind up as litter, others add to solid waste in landfills. This problem can be eased by using biodegradable materials in packaging.
- d) Deceptive packaging: A common problem is that the package size conveys the impression of containing more than the actual contents. Government regulations plus greater integrity on the part of business firms regarding packaging have alleviated this concern to some extent.
- e) Expensive packaging: Even in seemingly simple packaging, such as for soft drinks, as much as one half of the production cost is for the container. Still, effective packaging reduces transportation costs and spoilage losses.

Marketing executives are therefore challenged to address these criticisms. At the same time, they must retain or even enhance the positive features of packaging such as product protection, consumer convenience and marketing support.

Statement Of The Problem

Research has proven beyond doubt that consumers find it difficult to choose among competitive products at the point of purchase and a product's package can play a very important role at this stage. Buyers must appreciate the package in every way deemed important and be influenced to choose it among competing brands. However, there appear to be increasing environmental concerns with the use of glass as a material for packaging GGBL's products. Also consumers do not seem comfortable with the corporate marketing policy that they are required to either deposit cash or submit an empty bottle of same kind before they are allowed to buy any of GGBL's bottled drinks from retail outlets and taken to their homes.

Objectives Of The Research

The objectives set for this research were:

- a) To study the role of packaging on products of GGBL.
- b) To determine the forms of packaging consumers and retailers of GGBL prefer.
- c) To know the marketing strategies employed when taking packaging decision.
- d) To determine the best disposal system for packages of drinks.

Scope And Methodology Of The Research

This study was limited to analysing the efficacy of packaging as a marketing tool, using Guinness Ghana Breweries Limited (GGBL) in Koforidua and its surrounding towns as case study. It covered customers and retailers of GGBL's products within Koforidua, Somanya, Suhum, and Akim Tafo; and Management and Non-management staff of GGBL in Koforidua. In gathering data, the Guinness Stout, Malta Guinness, Amstel Malt, Guinness Quench, Alvaro, Gordon's Spark, Smirnoff Ice, Star Larger, Gulder, and Armstrong brands of GGBL were considered.

Sampling and Data Collection

The researchers accidentally and purposively administered questionnaires to two hundred and sixty-five (265) management and non-management staff, retailers (i.e. drinking bar operators), and customers of GGBL. Specifically, five (5) questionnaires were given to the management and non-management staff of the company, sixty (60) questionnaires were administered to retailers of the company, while two hundred (200) questionnaires were administered customers of GGBL; all within the aforementioned cities and towns. Convenience and Purposive Sampling techniques were used by the researchers to administer the questionnaires. The Purposive technique was used to select the management and non-management staff of GGBL while the Convenience technique was applied in the selection of the retailers and customers of the company.

The main research instrument used was questionnaire administration. Three (3) different sets of questionnaires were developed for the three (3) categories of respondents, containing open-ended, close-ended, and in some cases, 3-point Likert scale questions. Some of the respondents were also interviewed briefly to seek clarifications to unclear responses.

Data received were sorted and analysed and the information presented in tabulations, cross-tabulations, bar charts, and pie charts.

Data Presentation And Analysis

Section 1: Questionnaire Administration and Collection

Table 1 shows that out of the two hundred and sixty-five (265) questionnaires issued to respondents, two hundred and forty-nine of them (249) were retrieved, representing ninety-four percent (94%) respondent rate.

Section 2: Responses from Management And Non-Management Staff Of GGBL

Q: In your view what is packaging?

This question was asked with the intention of finding out whether management and non-management staff had a fair idea of what packaging is. In their responses, they described a package as a container and a wrapper in which products are placed for easy handling. They further indicated that a product's package carries all information in relation to the product. The various responses received indicated that every one of them knew what packaging is.

Q: Does packaging contribute to the instant recognition of the company or brand?

The aim for asking this question was to find out whether the respondents were aware that packaging helps give products an identity. All five respondents representing 100% answered 'yes' to the above question, implying that they are fully aware that packaging gives products an identity. It also shows the impact packaging is making in the firm. This information is summarised in Table 2.

Q: What do you think consumers like about your product packages?

In answering this question (Figure 1), 20% of the respondents believed consumers like the attractive colours and designs, 20% said it is the easy handling and 20% indicated that it was the quality of the packages. 40%, however, indicated that the company's packages were liked by consumers because of all the aforementioned qualities.

Q: Do the packages of products influence your sales?

All the respondents, i.e. hundred percent (100%) agreed that a package promotes the product and induces sales. They said the packages help customers to easily identify and locate their products in bars, restaurants and all sales points.

Q: In your opinion what kind of package is most appealing to consumers and retailers?

Responses from management and non-management staff have been presented in Table 3. Majority of Management/staff (60%) indicated that consumers preferred bottles for packaging drinks. 20% were of the view that consumers preferred the drinks to be in cans whereas 20% were of the view that all the packages appealed to consumers.

On the same question, all the retailer respondents (100%) indicated that retailers preferred selling the drinks when packaged in bottles.

The above shows that both consumers and retailers prefer bottles to other forms of packages.

Q: What factors should be taken into consideration when designing a package for drinks?

This question was aimed at finding out the critical factors that the company considers when taking packaging decisions. According to the management of GGBL, many factors are taken into consideration in designing a package but the most important is to take into account the health conditions of consumers, i.e. the degree of safety with regards to handling of the package and usage of the product. They further indicated that it is very important to think about the product's shelf life and the means by which the product will be transported, which would determine the kind of package it should have.

Q: Are the packages of your drinks environmentally friendly?

All the respondents (100%) indicated that the packages of GGBL's drinks are environmentally friendly because the packages do not litter the environment and the empty bottles are retrieved and used for refilling.

Q: By what means is it appropriate to dispose of your company's packaging containers after use?

This question aimed at finding out the most appropriate way to dispose of defective packages that could not be reused. In answering the question, all the respondents indicated that such packages should be sent for recycling instead of burning, throwing away, or burying, which all have negative effects on the environment. They added that most consumers and retailers throw the defective packages (mainly bottles and cans) away, which is a habit that must be stopped.

Q: Would you say product packaging is of any importance?

Responses to the above question, which was meant to ascertain the importance of packaging, showed that a product's package is really of great importance to the management and non-management staff of GGBL. They

stated that packages enhance product differentiation, easy identification of the product, helps with product preservation and marketing of the products of GGBL.

Section 3: Responses from Retailers/Drinking Bar Operators

Q: In your view, what is packaging?

This question intended to examine retailers' understanding of the subject matter. In their responses, 61% knew a package to be a container, 19% thought it is a bag, and 20% said a package could be a container, bag, or box. This information is presented pictorially on the pie chart in Figure 2.

It is clear from the above that all the respondents have a fair idea of what packaging is about.

Q: What type of packages appeals to you most?

This question was meant to find out the packages retailers preferred. Responses (provided in Figure 3) revealed that majority of the respondents (about 70%) preferred bottles as packages for drinks whereas 20% and 10% preferred Cans and Plastics respectively.

The research showed that many retailers preferred bottles for selling drinks than other forms of packaging because according to them, the cost of selling drinks in bottles is cheaper and this facilitates quick sales as compared to cans or other types of packages.

Q: How do customers react toward these packages?

This question intended to measure the patronage levels of consumers toward the different kinds of packages. Retailers were expected to indicate the patronage levels for each package on a rated scale of "Very Good", "Good", and "Poor."

Responses indicated that sixty-three percent (63%) of the respondents rated bottles as very good, and thirty-seven percent (37%) rated bottles as good; twenty percent (20%) said customers react favourably toward cans whilst eighty percent (80%) indicated that consumers react poorly toward cans; 20% and 9% rated customers' reactions toward plastic packages as very good and good respectively, while the remaining seventy-one percent (71%) indicated that consumers react poorly toward plastics. Also, fourteen percent (14%) of the respondents indicated customers' reaction toward cellophane/paper packages as either very good (7% of respondents) or good (7% of respondents) and the remaining eighty-six percent (86%) said that consumers reacted poorly toward cellophane/paper packages.

Plastic and cellophane/Paper packages were evaluated based on other competitors' products since GGBL does not use such packages. These responses are summarised in Table 4.

It is clear from the above that according to retailers, consumers prefer bottles as packages for drinks than any other type of packaging material.

Q: Do the packages of drinks (e.g. the Guinness bottle) have any impact on your sales?

This question was asked to help the researchers assess the relationship between sales and packaging. The respondents said packages of GGBL's drinks have a good impact on their sales, thus it helps in selling the products faster than other competitive products. All the fifty-four (54) respondents representing one hundred percent (100%) answered 'Yes' to the question, which indicates a positive relationship between packages and sales.

Q: How do you dispose of packaging wastes?

This question was intended to help the study identify the disposal practices of retailers of packaging waste. It came to light that about seventy percent (70%) of respondents dispose of packaging waste by merely throwing it away, twenty percent (20%) bury it, and the remaining ten percent (10%) burn it. None of the respondents said they dispose of their packaging waste by recycling.

This information is presented pictorially on the bar chart in Figure 4.

Q: Do you think the packages of GGBL's drinks are environmentally friendly?

This question was asked to help the study determine whether retailers see the packages of GGBL's products as environmentally friendly. The answers received, presented in Figure 5, showed that about eighty percent (80%) of the respondents believed that the packages are environmentally friendly whereas twenty percent (20%) believed otherwise.

The respondents who said “yes” explained that the packages do not litter around, can be used again for refilling (with much emphasis on bottles) and also said the cost of bottles or drinks in bottles is cheaper than the cost of canned drinks.

The twenty percent (20%) also argued that the packages are not environmentally friendly in the sense that broken bottles litter around and are not biodegradable, thereby exerting a negative effect on the fertility of the soil.

Section 4: Responses from Consumers

Q: In your view, what is a product’s package?

This question aimed at ascertaining respondents’ knowledge about packaging. Responses showed that majority of consumers (50%) knew a product’s package to be its container, thirty-five percent (35%) thought of it as a container, bag or box, and the remaining fifteen percent (15%) said a product’s package is either the bag or box containing it. This information is presented in Table 5.

From the above, it can be realized that all the respondents have fair knowledge about packaging.

Q: What kind of packaging appeals to you most?

This question was to enable the study find out the types of packages that consumers of drinks preferred. In their responses, forty-five per cent (45%) of the respondents indicated that bottles appeal to them most, those that preferred cans constitute twenty-five percent (25%), and plastics and cellophane/paper formed twenty percent (20%) and ten percent (10%) respectively as illustrated in Figure 6.

Consumers that liked the bottles said that drinks in bottles are enjoyed most when hanging out with friends. The respondents that preferred cans, plastics, and cellophane/paper considered the cost involved in depositing money for bottled drinks, especially in cases where one does not have an empty bottle but needs to take the drink away. Also they argued some retailers do not accept cracked bottles which also causes so many problems to consumers. As a result, they would accept any other kind of package, which could easily be taken away without all the above-mentioned problems.

Q: Do you think there should be another way to package drinks?

The study wanted to know whether consumers could suggest other ways by which products could be packaged. According to the survey, eighty percent (80%) of the respondents did not think GGBL’s drinks could be packaged in a different way. Twenty percent (20%), on the other hand, said GGBL could adopt the use of plastics and paper. Their choice was backed by the reason that such packages can be used and thrown away, hence avoiding the problems of sending bottles back for refilling. Also, they said plastic and paper packages are lighter in weight and less expensive.

Q: What factors influence your choice when making a purchase decision?

The study asked this close-ended question, to find out the aspects of a product’s package that consumers take into consideration before making a purchase choice. In their responses, about twenty-two percent (22%) indicated that they depend on packaging materials to make their choices, arguing that they usually prefer products in packages that are recyclable and/or biodegradable. About twenty-five percent (25%) considered the quality of the product’s package to make a choice because according to them, a good quality product cannot be taken to the market without proper packaging and that it is even the package that will attract people to buy a product. 8% of respondents also consider the package colour and design when making a choice between alternative products that they might not have used before. Forty-five percent (45%) of the consumers, however, indicated that they have been usually influenced by their social groups in their search for information about a particular product. They were optimistic that those people who might have used similar products are able to tell which is best. See Table 6.

Q: How should packaging waste be disposed of?

This question intended to measure the beliefs of consumers about how packaging waste should be treated. From the responses in Table 7, most of the respondents (58%) suggested packaging wastes should be thrown away and not necessarily recycled. Thirty-five percent (35%) of the respondents were of the view that packaging waste should be recycled but other respondents believed that packaging waste should either be burnt or buried.

Q: Do you think the packages of GGBL’s drinks are environmentally friendly?

Environmental issues concerning drinks are very crucial when packaging drinks. According to the responses, seventy percent (70%) of the respondents said GGBL packages are environmentally friendly. Various

reasons given included the fact that the bottles can be refilled or recycled after use, bottles do not litter around and the cans are convenient and easy to handle.

Out of the hundred percent (100%) responses, thirty percent (30%) said the packages are not environmentally friendly because broken bottles and empty cans do litter and are not biodegradable. Refer to Table 8.

Q: Which would you prefer are used for packaging GGBL's drinks?

This question was asked to find out whether respondents liked the current system whereby they have to buy drinks in bottles, which would have to be returned to the manufacturer through resellers or would want another suggested alternative. The responses, shown in Table 9, indicate that forty-five percent (45%) of respondents did not have a problem with the current system but fifty-five percent (55%) of consumers would want packages that could be easily taken away and thrown away after usage without having to send it back to the manufacturer for refilling.

Conclusions And Recommendations

Developing a product's package involves designing a container for a product. The package, however, does not only contain the product but also promotes, protects and connotes meaning to the product. Despite the fact that developing a good quality package for a product is quite expensive, it is very important for organisations to invest huge sums of money into developing a puissant package, in order to enjoy all the benefits that potent packages could bring.

It was realized from the research that most retailers prefer bottle packages to other kinds of packages. The main reason for this preference was that bottles do not litter the environment and can also be refilled or recycled after use. Retailers also said the cost of selling bottled drinks is cheaper and more affordable to consumers than canned drinks.

The research also revealed that consumers react differently to the various kinds of packages (bottles, cans, plastics and cellophane/Paper) based on each individual's beliefs regarding environmental issues, pricing, and package quality.

The study confirmed the findings of earlier studies that designing a good quality package entails finding and using the right packaging materials for the package and providing all information necessary to sell the product. To design a good quality package, therefore, organisations must consider the product for which the container is being made, ascertain the best materials to be used in containing and sustaining the product, cost, level of consumers' incomes, and their tastes and preferences.

Disposing of packaging wastes is another vital factor companies need to address. From our research, we realized that empty bottles are sent for refilling while cans are thrown away. There is no specific or proper system to dispose of broken bottles hence left in gutters or any place convenient for disposal. These broken bottles tend to pose various problems to people in the society since they are not biodegradable.

Survival of a company depends mostly on its sales as well as profitability. This research has revealed that packaging has a positive effect on sales of drinks. In other words, there exists a direct correlation between packaging and sales. This indicates that good packaging can facilitate sales and profitability. It also attracts customers' attention and arouses a desire to make a purchase.

An important emerging issue the research revealed was whether there should be another way to package drinks. A significant number of the respondents said plastic and paper packages should be introduced aside the bottles and the cans. A consideration was given to the problem of sending packages for refilling, throwing them away after use and the convenience of a package. It came to light that consumers prefer packages that can easily be used and thrown away after use.

Based on the results of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are spelt out:

Sustainability and growth of every company depends on its customers. Companies, for this reason, should pay particular attention to their consumers' tastes and preferences. From the research, it was realized that majority of GGBL customers prefer bottled packages and a sizable number preferred either paper or plastic packages. Introduction of paper and plastic packages in smaller proportions to test-market consumers' tastes is recommended.

Disposal system of packaging wastes should also be of much interest to both consumers and the organisation. Packages are not to pollute the environment and must be biodegradable or recyclable to enhance the safety of the environment. We recommend that GGBL should provide a proper disposal system for broken

bottles and wasted cans. Education to the public at large is to be fostered to inform them of the health hazards improper disposal can cause and the effects of polluting the land (environment) with broken bottles and rusty cans. Retailers should also be encouraged to accept any cracked bottles from consumers which would further be collected from them for recycling.

Although good packaging can be expensive, the cost involved would be offset with the benefits to be received from it, such as protection of the product against damage, spoilage, and enhancing selling. It is recommended that packages should be developed in such a way that they can keep and preserve the products for a very long time. Also, the packages should be able to protect the product in transit and should offer convenience to the user at home. In this light, it is finally recommended that Guinness Ghana Breweries Limited, especially the Packaging Department and Research and Development Department, should further research into consumers' tastes and most preferred packages for its drinks.

Justification And Significance Of The Study

Many products offered to the market have to be packaged. In today's highly competitive market place, the package may be the seller's last chance to convince buyers. McCarthy and Perrault (2002) opined that packaging involves promoting, protecting, and enhancing the product; and can be important to both sellers and customers. It makes a product more convenient to use and store, prevents spillage or damage, and makes it easier to identify a product.

It is expected that this study would serve as a source of encouragement and enhance creative thinking in marketing professionals in their consideration of packaging as a marketing tool in promoting sales.

It is also expected that the study of the subject matter would promulgate the benefits of good and effective packaging of products to managers within the brewing industry, helping them to cope with the intense competition within the industry.

Most importantly, the study is expected to remind marketers in the brewery industry of customers' preferences as a key consideration in making packaging decisions.

Similarly, the need to always adopt environmentally friendly packaging has also been highlighted in the study.

It is also expected to serve as a manual for students in their fields of study and to broaden their knowledge on packaging.

Limitations Of The Study

There were time and financial constraints, which restricted the researchers to a small sample size and limited the scope of the research to Koforidua and its surrounding towns. Also, some elements of the population were denied the chance of being selected for the study because of the use of Convenience and Purposive sampling techniques.

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Table 1: Summary of Questionnaires administered and collected.

GROUP	NUMBER ISSUED	NUMBER COLLECTED	(%)
Management and non-management staff	5	5	100
Retailers	60	54	90
Consumers	200	190	95
Total	265	249	94

Table 2: Distribution showing management/staff's view on whether packaging gives products an identity

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	(%)
Yes	5	100
No	-	-
Don't know	-	-
Total	5	100

Table 3: Distribution showing the packages that appeal to consumers and retailers most.

RESPONSE	CONSUMERS		RETAILERS	
	FREQ	%	FREQ	%
Bottles	3	60	5	100
Cans	1	20	-	-
Plastic	-	-	-	-
Cellophane or Paper	-	-	-	-
All the above	1	20	-	-
Total	5	100	5	100

Table 4: Retailers' rating of consumers' reactions toward different packages.

RESPONSES		VERY GOOD	GOOD	POOR	TOTAL
BOTTLES	FREQ	34	20	-	54
	%	63	37	-	100
CANS	FREQ	-	11	43	54
	%	-	20	80	100
PLASTICS	FREQ	11	5	38	54
	%	20	9	71	100
CELLOPHANE OR PAPER	FREQ	4	4	46	54
	%	7	7	86	100

Table 5: Distribution showing consumers' knowledge about packaging

RESPONSE	FREQ	(%)
Container	95	50
Bag	9	5
Box	19	10
All the above	67	35
Total	190	100

Table 6: Distribution showing factors that consumers consider when making a purchase decision.

RESPONSE	FREQ	(%)
Package colour and Design	15	8
Packaging Quality	48	25
Packaging Material	41	22
Information from others	86	45
Total	190	100

Table 7: Distribution showing how consumers think packaging waste should be treated.

RESPONSE	FREQ	(%)
Recycling	66	35
Burning	9	5
Throw away	110	58
Burying	5	2
Total	190	100

Table 8: Are packages of GGBL environmentally friendly?

RESPONSE	FREQ	(%)
Yes	133	70
No	57	30
Don't Know	-	-
Total	190	100

Table 9: Distribution showing the packages consumers prefer

RESPONSE	FREQ	(%)
Glass bottles that must be returned to the manufacturer for refilling	85	45
Packages that could be easily taken away and thrown away without having to send it back to the manufacturer for refilling	105	55
Total	190	100

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Figure 1: Bar Chart showing what consumers of GGBL like about the company's packages.

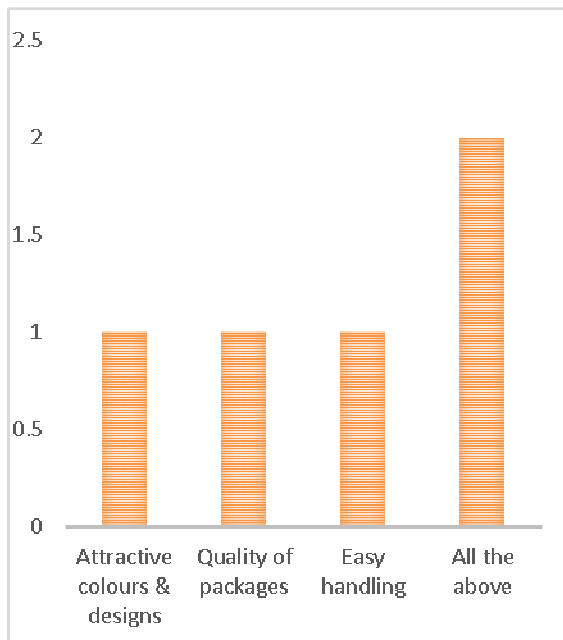


Figure 2: Pie Chart showing retailers' views about packaging

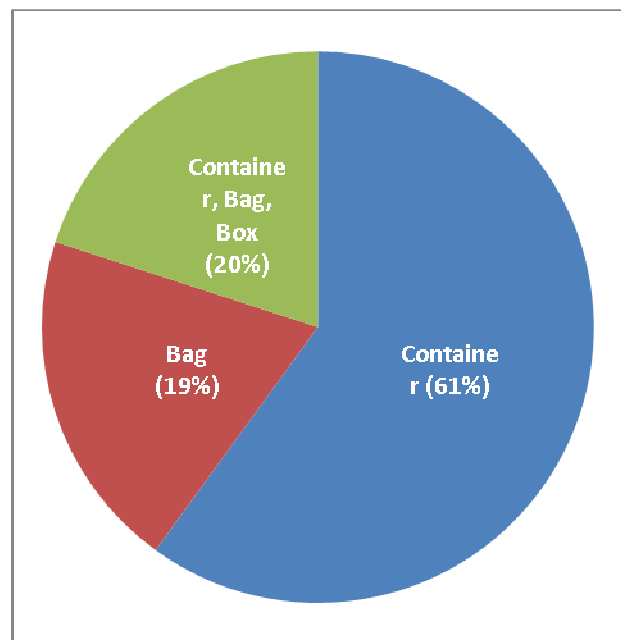


Figure 3: Bar Chart showing the packages that appeal to retailers

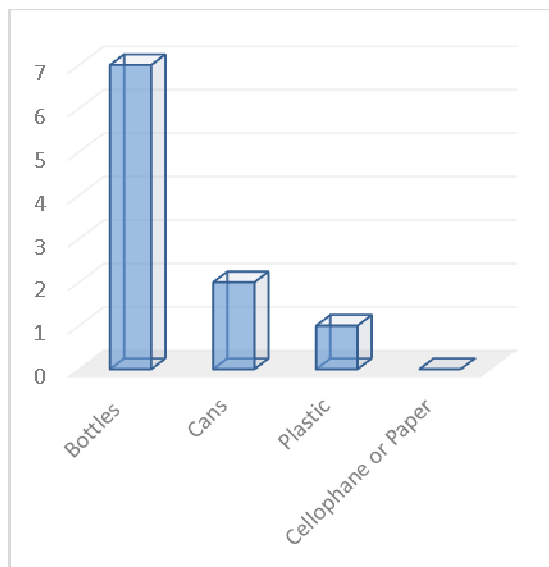


Figure 4: Bar Chart showing the packaging waste disposal practices of retailers of GGBL's products

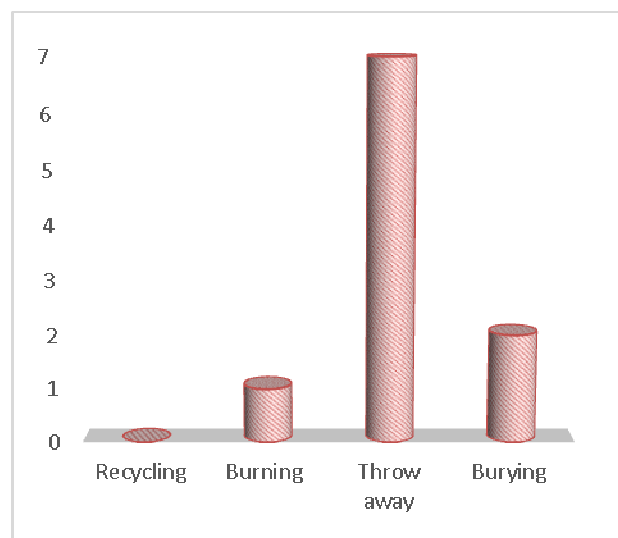


Figure 5: Pie Chart showing whether GGBL's packages are environmentally friendly.

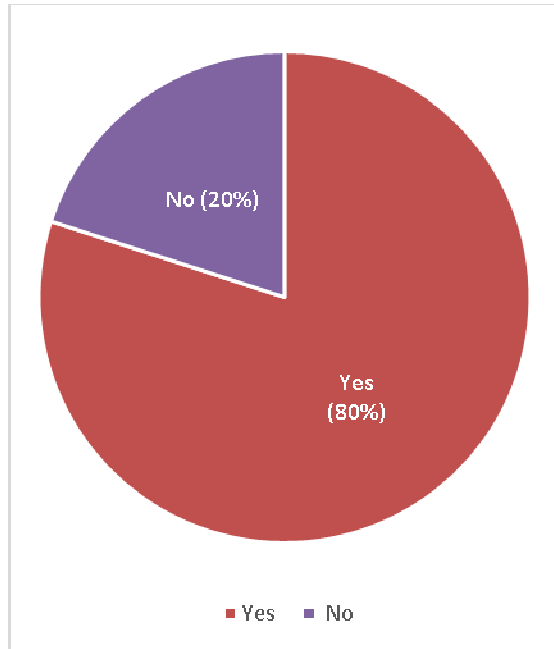
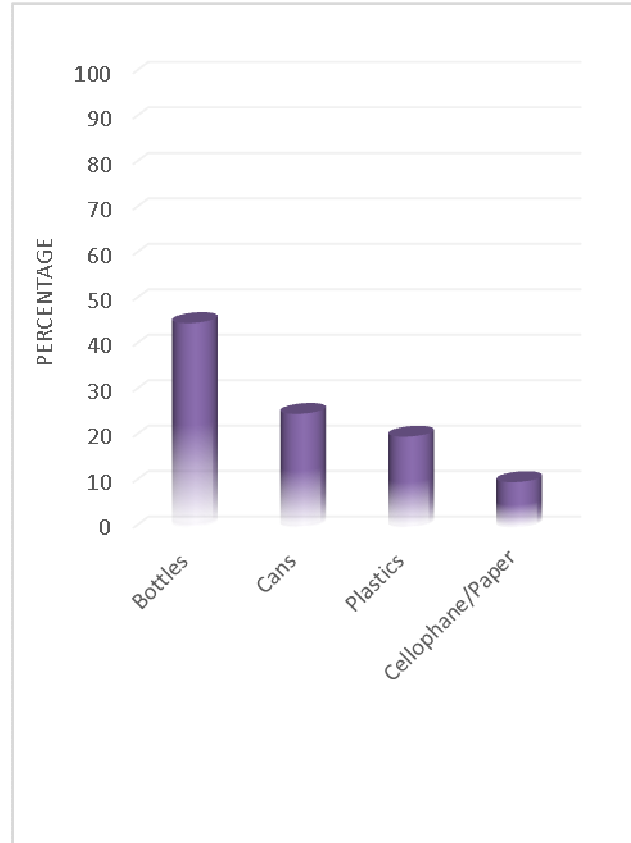


Figure 6: Bar Chart showing the packages that appeal to GGBL customers.



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