



Press Release

EMBARGOED TO 4pm, 28TH JUNE 2012

SHOPPERS SPOT BRANDS IN MILLISECONDS

Consumers recognise their favourite brands in a matter of milliseconds, according to a major new study by the British Brands Group.

- Consumers recognise key products in under 250 milliseconds ($\frac{1}{4}$ second);
- Branding is crucial to consumer recognition. Reduced brand size means consumers take longer to recognise products;
- Where two products are packaged very similarly, consumers take longer to recognise products and make more errors.

A significant new study sheds fresh light on packaging and how shoppers use it when deciding what to buy. For many regular purchases, shoppers use mental shortcuts – heuristics – to notice and recognise products as they simply do not have the time to assess rationally all the options available to them. Advances in behavioural science allow these heuristics to be measured.

Branding acts as a powerful heuristic, allowing products to be recognised in milliseconds. The research found that recognition is significantly slower if brand elements are less prominent. It also found that, if a competing product is packaged to mimic a familiar brand, shoppers take longer to recognise the product they want and make more errors.

That products are noticed and recognised quickly is important to consumer decision making. Disrupting purchasing fluency frustrates consumers, reduces their liking of a product and reduces their propensity to buy.

John Noble, Director of the British Brands Group, said, “This research measures actual consumer behaviour, not how consumers say they behave, giving us important insights into how shoppers notice and recognise products.

We now have new hard evidence that designing packaging to mimic familiar brands damages consumers’ ability to find products and causes them to make errors. In contrast to other countries, it is very difficult in the UK to challenge similar packaging designs that mislead consumers. Now we have further evidence that Government must act.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The report published today, “Unwrapped. The hidden power of packaging”, is available at www.britishbrandsgroup.org.uk.
2. The British Brands Group published [a selection](#) of product packaging that mimics familiar brands in April 2012. Such similar packaging may well mislead consumers and be unlawful.
3. The British Brands Group was founded in 1994 as a non-profit-making membership organisation. It speaks on behalf of brand manufacturers and seeks to deepen understanding of how brands benefit consumers, society and the economy through the provision of choice, value for money and innovation.

It represents its members collectively when commercial and regulatory issues threaten the ability of brands to deliver value and to be a positive force in society. It also provides the prime forum for its members on brand-related issues.

The British Brands Group is part of a global network of similar brand associations, and is the UK representative of AIM, the European Brands Association, based in Brussels.

More information on the Group can be found at www.britishbrandsgroup.org.uk.

For further information on the report, please contact:

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