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## ppreciating the shopper: retailing and packaging

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Rummaging through a shopping Eldorado at ease – who wouldn't enjoy this? Shopping for food in a pleasant atmosphere whilst being inspired at the same time – be it at the famous Berlin department store "Kaufhaus des Westens" (KaDeWe), at Dallmayr, deli store Käfer in Munich or at Julius Meinl in Vienna – here shoppers not only get their money's worth in terms of ambience. In most cases, a tasty food service additionally invites shoppers to while away their time over a snack or a cup of coffee.

However, the quality of the products, most of which are brimming with strikingly tasteful packaging designs, speaks its own language. Almost all products – private labels or other pre-packaged brands – attach importance to packaging concepts that exude high quality. Products are often purchased in small quantities but daily. Those who selectively visit such fine food oases offering delicatessen from all over the world relish choosing from delicatessen food and quality beverages.

While the Dallmayr and Meinl brands have a more national character, Feinkost Käfer with its party service, has a preference for the Far East. The French deli brand Fauchon, established in 1886 at its present headquarters in Paris, is represented with its own mono-label stores and shop-in-shops worldwide. In April 2007 a 2,200 m<sup>2</sup> store under the "Fauchon Paris" banner was opened in Beijing as well as a restaurant in Tokyo. This means the Fauchon brand is represented at 450 points of sale in 37 countries.

What a difference for shoppers, entering the shopping realms of supermarkets and discounters where racks groan under the weight of goods and several "bays" have to be passed before the required

product is spotted. A time-consuming exercise that gets on your nerves and is truly a challenge for packaging design: catch shoppers' eyes and yet slot in with the existing product range to avoid clashing with the specified colour code. Hurrying through the aisles of a supermarket is definitely not a shopping experience here.

But – isn't there anything retailers could use as a reference when it comes to well-designed supermarkets that consumers enjoy entering? Lessons could be learnt from Mark & Spencer's convenience stores in England, for example. Here convenience food is presented in such a fashion that entering the store is not only useful but also fun, because a combination of packaging and product comes into play. A display window provides shoppers with a glimpse of appetisingly prepared foodstuffs that can be turned into a meal for guests at the flick of a wrist.

These convenience stores are in line with the zeitgeist both in terms of shop fittings and product display – most of which are presented on refrigerated shelves. All products are packaged in such a manner that the contents are either visible for shoppers or become visible by slightly shifting a cover. So what is the difference between these and the convenience shop-in-shops at such "deli-temples" as Dallmayr, Käfer and Julius Meinl? Here, great emphasis is placed on the freshness aspect, or in other words, the pasta just freshly prepared comes in a handy take-away packaging with the salsa packed in a plastic cup. This is not especially attractive when unwrapped in the kitchen back home, but it is, after all, really fresh. The question is whether such a matching packaging concept for fresh produce should not also be part and parcel of shopping at the food and delicatessen department of the Berlin "Kaufhaus des Westens" (KaDeWe), for example. After all, cheap, run-of-the-mill bread-roll bags, probably

even featuring advertising on the back, are used by any old corner-shop bakery. This also says a lot about the appreciation that high-end retail houses have for their shoppers. Although the quality and *joie de vivre* acquired along with the purchase of a high-quality foodstuff are key, the value of a purchase is enhanced if the customer can “celebrate” un-wrapping the purchased fresh produce at home.

The Tyrol-based retail chain store MPreis addresses its customers in a completely different way: despite pre-specified budgets, it builds outlets that perfectly blend in with the landscape, where consumers love to shop. Tiny details such as rounded rack-edges or shelf-ends that seamlessly blend in with the next row of bays lend their supermarkets a different look. Wide aisles and stores which are predominantly daylight-flooded, are characteristic of these outlets. Many markets even have a cafeteria thereby doubling as meeting points for customers from the districts or villages. With such concepts designed to make customers feel at home, shoppers can feel that retailers appreciate them. Since 2002, the chain store has

cooperated with artist Michaela Schweeger in designing the wrapping paper for cold cuts and cheese at the chilled counter – it features printed poems by Eugen Roth, Ringelnatz and the like. “This means the finest foods are wrapped for customers in François Villons’ “Ballade für den Hausgebrauch im Winter””. No wonder shoppers look forward to coming home, unwrapping their cold cuts and then suddenly coming across a poem they have not read in a long time or never seen before.

Accordingly, it does not necessarily take elaborate concepts to attractively package high-quality fresh produce. After all, there are products said to have been primarily sold because of their packaging...



Photo/Foto: Julius Meinl

*Wellness atmosphere in an exquisite setting:  
Café area at Julius Meinl in Vienna.*

*Wohlfühlatmosphäre auf hohem Niveau:  
Cafébereich bei Julius Meinl in Wien.*