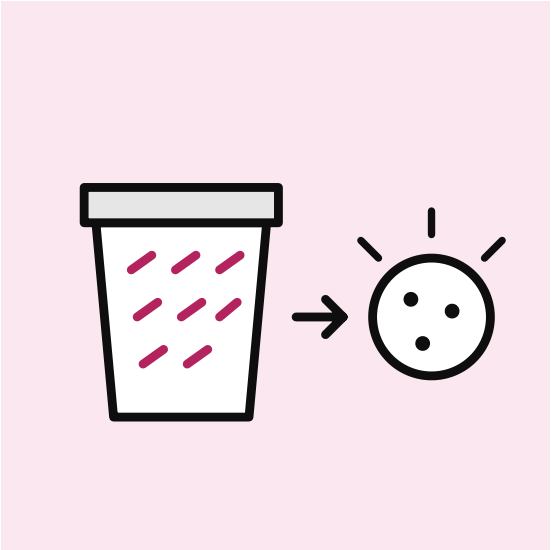
Concept

Sensation transference

The impressions left by the package or container, such as its color, shape or feel, pass on to the product and change how it is perceived, even its taste or texture.



In Spanish
Transferencia de sensaciones

Origin
Louis Cheskin (1950s); later studied by Krishna and Morrin (2008), among others

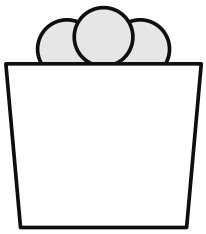
What problem it addresses

It explains why the same product can seem different depending on what it comes in. Packaging design takes from it that the package is not only seen: it is also part of how the product is experienced.

An example

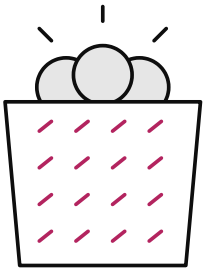
An illustrative example: the same cookies, in two jars that differ only on the outside.

Smooth jar



You hold a jar with a smooth surface. **The cookies seem ordinary.**

Rough jar



You hold a jar that feels rough. **The cookies seem crunchier.**

The cookies are the same: what changes is what the hand tells the mouth.

Why it happens

1

Judging a product is hard. Taste or quality can't be seen at a glance.

2

The package comes first. It is seen and touched before anything is tasted.

3

We blend the two impressions, without noticing they come from different things.

Applications in design

Use it like this

Test the product inside its package, not only in a blind tasting: what people perceive includes the package.

Avoid

Using the package to promise a quality or taste the product doesn't have.

Don't fall for it

If you compare two products, take them out of their packages: part of the difference you notice may come from them.

6.10 vs. 5.18



What the research says

Sweetness, from 0 to 10, of the same coffee served in a smooth cup and in a rough one, according to 117 coffee enthusiasts (Carvalho, Moksunova and Spence, 2020).

●●○ **Debated evidence.** The two cups also differed somewhat in shape and weight. With packages, the effect appears only for some attributes: cookies from a rough jar seemed crunchier, but yogurt did not change (Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence, 2012).

Connections

Used in

- Color, material and finish (CMF) design
- Multisensory design
- Food design

Related to

- Gastrophysics

Authors and works

	Louis Cheskin (1950s)	Working in market research, he proposed that people carry over to the product what they perceive from its package, and called it sensation transference.
2008	**Aradhna Krishna and Maureen Morrin**	In four studies, the firmness of a cup changed how the water in it was judged, especially among people with little need to touch things.
2016	**Skaczkowski, Durkin, Kashima and Wakefield**	Reviewed studies on how packaging, branding and labeling change the experience of eating and drinking, and explained them with this idea.

Sources

Original sources

- Cheskin, L. (1957). How to predict what people will buy. Liveright.
- Krishna, A., & Morrin, M. (2008). Does touch affect taste? The perceptual transfer of product container haptic cues. Journal of Consumer Research, 34(6), 807–818. View source (https://doi.org/10.1086/523286)
- Carvalho, F. M., Moksunova, V., & Spence, C. (2020). Cup texture influences taste and tactile judgments in the evaluation of specialty coffee. Food Quality and Preference. View source (https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid%3A517c3980-7e53-462b-a6f0-a92d6131142f/files/m82a82373a69c00fbb51e8be69563fcec)
- Piqueras-Fiszman, B., & Spence, C. (2012). The influence of the feel of product packaging on the perception of the oral-somatosensory texture of food. Food Quality and Preference, 26(1), 67–73. View source (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2012.04.002)

Academic reviews

- Skaczkowski, G., Durkin, S., Kashima, Y., & Wakefield, M. (2016). The effect of packaging, branding and labeling on the experience of unhealthy food and drink: A review. Appetite, 99, 219–234. View source (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2016.01.022)

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