

This is obviously one of those questions that doesn't have a simple "yes" or "no" answer.

As with any research, the answer depends on a number of factors:

1. How much brand and packaging research has been done thus far, and when was it done?
2. What is the specific goal of the research?
3. For what stage of the package design process are you considering the web research?

Let's look at these factors one at a time:

### 1. How much brand and packaging research has been done thus far, and when was it done?

If your brand has done little consumer research, or if the research you have is old, you might want to review research methods that will give you a deep understanding of the brand and its consumer.

For packaging research specifically, context is an extremely important factor to consider... the consumer selects a package at retail, and later interacts with it physically:

- The competitive situation and shopping environment at retail need to be incorporated into your brand's framework.
- Understanding the functional and lifestyle roles your brand and package play when the consumer uses your brand can lead to greater insight.

### 2. What is the specific goal of the research?

Any online activity holds the promise of speed. However, web research demands the same rigorous upfront planning and critical thinking as brand planning. Your goals need to be clear. Your in-house research manager, your research suppliers and your design team can help you determine which methodology will best provide the direction you need for your specific goals.

### 3. For what stage of the package design process are you considering the web research?

We have seen clients use web research to define pack communications (language) and in optimization. But we also have clients that have used other methodologies for the same purposes. The client evaluates the success of each project, and learns for the next. The most important criteria may be whether you need an answer to move forward, or if you want to further your understanding of the consumer/shopper.

General notes:

As with any research results, knowing what to do with information about "key elements" and "drivers to purchase" is important. Research provides needed information (not dictates); also, research does not guarantee successful execution.

You might already know that consumers are most comfortable with the familiar; it stands to reason that if a concept reminds them of something they have seen before, they will prefer it (and usually do), rather than selecting more innovative options.

Regardless of the methodology, there are advantages in package design research to develop a team [of marketing, research and design] working toward a defined business goal.

*Note: Brandesign does not offer research services. We are an independent branding and design consultancy who has the expertise to review your situation and recommend various research paths and vendors to help you reach your goal.*



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