

# Using Specialty Coatings to Help Packaging Stand Out in the Grocery Aisle

Sun Chemical's SunInspire™ Coatings Engage the Senses to Grab Attention of Shoppers



**Figure 1** Packaging on the store aisle has three to seven seconds to make an impression. If the package doesn't stand out in a sea of glossy packages, impulse purchases won't happen.

## Introduction

Traditionally, packaging was developed and used for purely functional purposes, including the transport, storage and protection of everyday goods. Now we live in a different world where packaging drives sales, communication, advertising, branding, and product security.

Shoppers have changed as well. Today's youngest adults, the Millennials, are digitally savvy shoppers who can use all types of technology and are constantly engaged with what retailers offer them. They especially want an "experiential buying" experience with packaging that appeals to the senses and really stands out.

Shelf appeal has long been at the heart of marketing campaigns and specialty coatings applied to a package can enhance a product's appeal.

However, simple glossy coatings alone no longer add the differentiation needed to stand out on a shelf. Just walk down any store aisle (Figure 1) and try to find the item you are looking to buy. They all seem to blend into one large kaleidoscope of attractive glossy packages.

To avoid this and differentiate the product, some items are being enhanced by adding a variety of special effects coatings to the packaging. Glitter, pearl or metallic coatings can be combined with contrasting matte and gloss effects to provide visual contrast, stimulation and differentiation.

According to a study by the Point of Purchase Advertising Industry (POPAI), a package has three to seven seconds to make an impression. Only 58 percent of shoppers purchase something they did not plan to. Only 24 percent of purchases are preplanned. When consumers see approximately 1,700 packages and brands on the shelf, packaging must stand out or impulse purchases won't happen.

working for you.

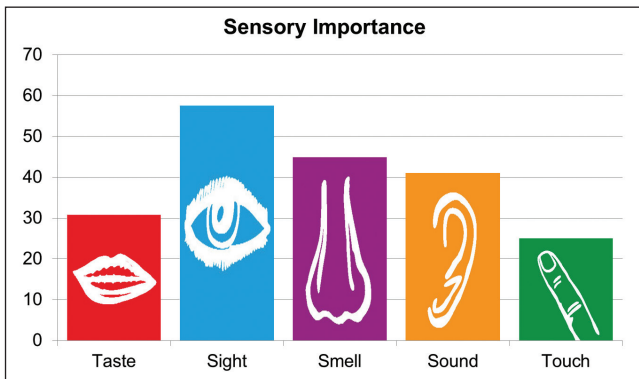
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Sun Chemical's SunInspire™ specialty coatings can add value to the finished package, booklet, report or sales item by providing a differentiating property. There is no doubt that for consumer items, these specialty coatings will entice interest and lead to increased sales if printers are willing to experiment with their equipment configurations.

### The Importance of Sensory Branding

According to Martin Lindstrom's groundbreaking research in his book "Brand Sense," he states that "83 percent of all commercial communication appeals only to one sense—our eyes, leaving a paltry 17 percent to cater for the other four senses." The book goes on to explain how the most successful brand owners use strategies to integrate packaging that appeals to all five of the senses—touch, taste, smell, sight and sound.

According to the book, sight is still the most important, but smell and sound are not far behind (Figure 2). It is also a fact, according to POPAI, that 70 percent of packages that are picked up are purchased, so it is impossible to minimize the importance of the sense of touch.



**Figure 2** According to "Brand Sense" by Martin Lindstrom, successful brands use strategies to integrate packaging that appeals to all five of the senses.

The more senses a product appeals to, the more emotionally connected the consumer feels. The connection of consumers to brands through the senses adds five important dimensions:

1. Emotional engagement
2. Visceral reaction
3. Connection between perception and reality
4. Creation of a brand platform for product extensions
5. Trademark scents

Sun Chemical's SunInspire specialty coatings utilize sensory special effects to engage the senses of sight, touch, and aroma to help packaging stand out on store shelves.

### Visual Effects Coatings

Sun Chemical's wide range of SunInspire specialty coatings offers a variety of visual special effects that help packages stand out on the shelves, including high-luster metallic, fluorescent, glitter, pearlescent, iridescent, frosted, and gloss.

Historically, the use of metallic coatings on packaging has been limited, and therefore is not commonly seen on store shelves. Sun Chemical can change that for a printer with SunInspire Metallics, a wide range of coatings that can take on unique metallic tones. Using bright mirror-like silver and gold coatings and effects, for example, can separate a package from the competition on the shelves.

SunInspire Cold Foil Adhesive (Figure 3) is another special-effect coating that can help products pop off the shelf. Designed for flexographic or litho applications, the coating system allows for simpler foil stamping; can be used on paper, paperboard and various plastic substrates; and yields economical replacements for metalized and holographic substrates.



**Figure 3** SunInspire Cold Foil Adhesive Coatings

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Newer pigmented coatings can yield an effect that changes color depending on the angle of view. This is very enticing to customers, since the package seems to morph as they pass by the display. The SunInspire Color Shift (Figure 4) coatings line comes in a variety of colors from blue to green or yellow to orange shifting.

Another visual effect Sun Chemical offers is SunInspire Glitter coatings (Figure 5), which incorporate small holographic bits of glitter. Best applied with a roll coater, the effect from this coating is most pronounced over dark colors.



**Figure 4**  
SunInspire Color Shift Coatings

**Figure 5** SunInspire Glitter Coatings

Sun Chemical also offers a unique matte/gloss effect through its SunInspire Glossback (Figure 6) coatings. The coating creates a pronounced contrast between the glossy UV coating and the smooth matte appearance where the spot overprint varnish (OPV) is under the coating.

Designed to produce a pearlescent effect when applied over or under an ink or on a substrate, SunInspire UV Pearl (Figure 7) coatings can mute an image when applied over ink.

Similar to the pearlescent effects coatings are the iridescent coatings, which are rather flat and weakly colored when viewed at one angle, but take on the metallic sheen of another color when the viewing angle is changed. While not the best choice for small detailed work, this effect can be used to simulate metallic effects, depending on the thickness of the coating used.



**Figure 6**  
SunInspire Glossback Coatings

**Figure 7** SunInspire UV Pearl Coatings

### Making Visual Coatings Interactive

In addition to grabbing the attention of consumers, some coatings can take a package to a whole different level with interaction.

Thermochromic coatings, for example, change color with temperature. A beer can could turn blue when cold and remain silver when warm. The colors can match common heat and cold sources, from the fridge, skin, or microwave, and can make multiple transitions. Thermochromics can also be used to promote frozen candy bars where a unique graphic appears when the temperature drops below 40 degrees.

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Thermochromic applications can be used for hidden messages, interactive games for children on packages and other sweepstakes and promotional gimmicks. In addition, photochromic coatings can cause colors to appear on a package when exposed to UV light or sunlight.

Consumers can also interact with packaging that glows in the dark. A candy bar logo could glow, for example, or a package could use the effect for special promotions or seasonal items.

### Shelf Appeal through the Sense of Touch

When a consumer touches a package on a shelf, there is a 70 percent chance it will end up in the shopping cart. By enhancing the package with simple coatings that provide a textured effect, the odds of that package going in the cart only increase.

For example, using the SunInspire UV Reticulating coating varies the finished dried films from a smooth dull appearance into a reticulated texture effect (such as a wrinkled “alligator” hide) (Figure 8). These effects are spot printed and flood coated with a SunCure UV coating.



Figure 9 SunInspire Emboss Coatings

The use of embossing and debossing to enhance a package is well known, but specific dies must be set up, which adds cost and lead time for a job. The use of a thick, flexo-applied UV coating can duplicate the effect of embossing and provide a low-cost alternative that allows for quicker turnaround. Designed as a high-viscosity coating, Sun Chemical’s SunInspire Emboss (Figure 9) coatings give a tactile feel of an embossed product when spot applied.

Sun Chemical’s SunInspire Sandy Feel tactile coatings come in a range of particle sizes for different effects and offer gloss, matte or satin finishes, allowing for very rough to soft and silky feel options (Figure 10). Suitable for gravure, flexo and screen applications, these coatings can be surface printed on paper or film.

Designed for a wide variety of substrates, SunInspire Soft Touch (Figure 11) coatings create a matte surface that has a soft feel.



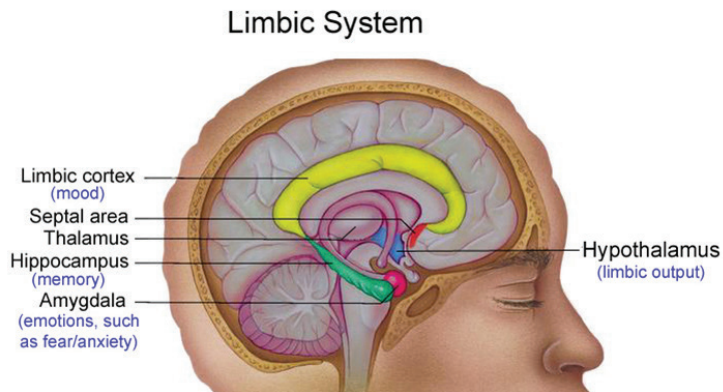
Figure 10 SunInspire Sandy Feel Coatings

Figure 11 SunInspire Soft Touch Coatings

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### The Power of Aroma

Humans react powerfully to aromas because they are linked to memories. Aromas are processed in the same part of the brain, the limbic mode, where memory and impulses are processed. (See Figure 12.)



**Figure 12** Aromas are processed in the limbic mode, the same part of the brain where memories and impulses are processed. This means that humans react powerfully to aromas because they are linked to memories.

For example, one whiff of wood can immerse a person in memories of an afternoon barbeque from 30 years ago far more intensely than seeing a photograph of that scene. These odor-memory links, known as the Proust Phenomenon, can be a very powerful tool to aid brand loyalty and drive purchase behavior.

Brand owners can capitalize on this link and leverage the sense of smell to ensure that the positive experience people have with a brand will be remembered. Scented packaging enables those positive feelings to be triggered at the point of purchase.

A product's aroma can create anticipation and desire in the minds of consumers. If it smells good, they are confident it will taste good, or perform well, and they are more likely to purchase the product.

### SunScent Water-Based Coatings

A recent partnership with ScentSational Technologies has resulted in SunScent water-based coatings, a new technology which enables packaging printers and converters to use microencapsulated scents that do not break prematurely.

This solution involves printing a scented coating directly onto the package itself. The scent can be released by simply handling the product. This technology does not require scratching—just holding the product releases the desired scent.

The scented coating can be applied directly onto the primary packaging, including flexible packaging pouches. Since these pouches are tamper resistant, consumers cannot open them ahead of time to smell the product. But with microencapsulated scented coatings, flexible packaging pouches can compete with rigid packaging options such as plastic shampoo bottles.

The unusual structure of shampoo pouches would stand out on the shelf, but the invitation to sample the product's aroma will demand attention, leading to the package being handled. When the consumer picks up and touches the package, the aroma is released immediately and the odds of purchase rise dramatically.

This type of scented flexible packaging can be used for shampoos, snacks, beverages, sports drinks, nuts, detergent, personal care products, alcoholic beverages, super-fruits and more.

Stock and custom fragrances designed for specific products can help the consumer make a unique connection to the brand, enhance the taste experience, improve the shopping experience, and most importantly, drive purchase.

It is also important to note that the coating can be formulated to release scent at the shelf, or during opening and use. Olfaction packaging can therefore create a unique brand experience for consumers, build loyalty and set brands apart from competitors while still maintaining consumer safety.

### An Investment in Equipment Leads to Product Differentiation

Each flexographic or screen coating in the SunInspire line can be used with web offset, sheetfed offset, flexographic, gravure and screen applications.

Most presses today are not equipped to handle special-effect coatings in one pass due to limited print and coating units, but multiple passes drive up costs. Press manufacturers have recognized this and have created newer designs that cater to the need for a specialty coating application.

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Although flexo printing readily allows multiple coating applications (provided enough print units are available for all the colors and coatings), sheetfed offset printing of cartons has slowly evolved to incorporate coating.

It is not that long ago that most print shops could not even apply a UV coating inline. Today, press designs are available that can provide coating units at the end of the press, in the press and at the beginning of the press. Some printers have multiple units throughout the press to enhance printing as well as the finished product. This is unlike a few years ago, when a printer might have only one anilox unit for water and UV coatings.

This limited option would often compromise the coating volume. The difficulty of changing aniloxes also hindered switching them to optimize the print job. New flexo coating units are designed to change aniloxes with the push of a button using revolver-type units that store variously configured aniloxes within the press. In this way the printer can effectively utilize the best anilox for the coating they are applying without lengthy downtime to change out aniloxes.

The ability to quickly and easily change aniloxes (and the applied coating film weight) has led to the expanded use of Sun Chemical's SunInspire specialty coatings.

Currently not every printer can utilize all these specialty coatings and inks due to the equipment which is available to them, but this will change as new equipment is purchased and the value-added capabilities are included. The key is to get into the market before your competitors all have the capability.

### Summary

Brand owners are faced with changing consumer habits, and packaging only has three to seven seconds to make an impression on shoppers. A package needs to be more than simply glossy to make an impression; now it needs to create an interactive or sensory experience. Sun Chemical's SunInspire™ specialty coatings can add value to a finished package by providing a differentiating property to the printed product if printers are willing to experiment with their equipment configurations.



To learn more about Sun Chemical SunInspire specialty coatings, call 708-236-3798 or visit [www.sunchemical.com/nai-coatings](http://www.sunchemical.com/nai-coatings).

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