

**ANALYSIS OF WORK PROCESSES IN THE PACKAGING
INDUSTRY: GETTING PRODUCTS READY FOR MARKETING
(THE PACKAGING INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE)**

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Abstract

There is no uniformity of work process in the packaging industry. Work processes differ based on goods to be packaged. There is a forward-backward linkage between manufacturing firms and packaging firms. Work processes in any packaging firm are aimed at making manufactured goods ready for unit purchase in the market place. Packaging firms are conveyor machines based firms. Marketing activities make packaged goods become easily branded for customers' loyalty and patronage. Packaging firms need to keep healthy physical working environment. Manufactured / packaged goods needs to be arranged in such a way that factory and line space are maximally used. Manufacturing firms may not be able to package its goods by itself, hence the need for packaging firms.

(keywords: work processes, packaging industry, products and marketing).

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Introduction

The packaging industry is a service industry. Service industry do not produce goods rather, it provides services at a profit. Service is a by-word from product; indicating that product is a generic name for goods and services. Goods are regarded as tangible products while services are regarded as intangible product. It is said that services are rendered or provided but goods are produced. The packaging industry consists of firms operating in perfect competition since they provide identical function or services.

The packaging industry is the industry that provides the function of putting manufactured goods in containers or packages for eventual sales to final consumers.

Packaging industry gets goods ready for marketing. Packaging industry is not a manufacturing industry. Firms in the packaging industry do not produce the goods, but rather provides packaging services to manufacturing firms.

Most manufacturing firms produce goods that they do not necessarily packaged by themselves. For example, firms that produce tangible goods such as soap, deodorant, perfume, chocolates, contract out the packaging of their goods to packaging firms. Thus, packaging firms do not have ownership of the goods.

Therefore, packaging industry can be described as the industry that helps manufacturing industry to itemize and singularize their goods in provided appropriate designed containers or packages. Packaging can be described as when goods are put in containers or packages Kurtz and Boone (2006), thereby making them fit for itemized purchase in the market.

Work processes in the packaging industry can be described as all kinds of job performed and carried out in the packaging industry in order to get goods ready for marketing activities in the market place. There are different industries with different work processes. The primary industry is made up of firms that carry out work process of primary production of extracting primary or raw materials from land and other gifts of nature. The secondary industry consists of firms in the

secondary production that carries out the work processes of converting primary materials into semi-finished or finished goods.

The tertiary industry is made up of firms that provide ancillaries to trade and other services in the economy.

Distributive and commercial activities are work-related functions in the tertiary industry.

Packaging industry bridges the gap between secondary industry and tertiary industry since it helps to complete production on most of the semi-finished goods and making them ready for final consumption because it is argued and said that production is not complete until what is produced gets to the final consumers.

Problem analysis

Many of the manufacturing firms produce goods that cannot be distributed in the market place in their state of production without having first being put in containers or packages.

Many of these goods are put in boxes in bulk in the factory. Thus manufacturing firms need the services of packaging firms. The packaging industry is a conveyor machine based industry.

Manufacturing firms transport their goods out of the factory to the packaging firm while still retaining ownership of the goods, for packaging purposes. Manufacturing firms provide the appropriate packages and containers for their goods. Packages, boxes, containers, labels, leaflets and many such things needed in packaging of goods are provided by the manufacturing firms to the packaging firms for packaging purposes.

Packaging is cost related, that is, it takes place at a cost. Packaging materials and the packaging fees paid to the packaging firms are added to the total cost (TC) of the manufacturing concerns. Therefore there is need for cost efficiency and cost effectiveness in packaging.

Packaging firms are in business for profit motive. They have expenses such as salaries and wages, electricity and water bills, repairs and maintenance of machines and others to contend

with, and so need to charge manufacturing firms competitive packaging fees taking into consideration the pricing strategies of competing firms.

Manufacturing firms know how they want their products to be packaged. Therefore they provide the packaging manuals to the packaging firms for control and compliance. Any deviation will constitute rejects, hence the need for quality control. Effective quality control tends to reduce deviation, rejects and other associated costs.

Conceptual Framework

The below diagram is developed as a conceptual framework for this study.

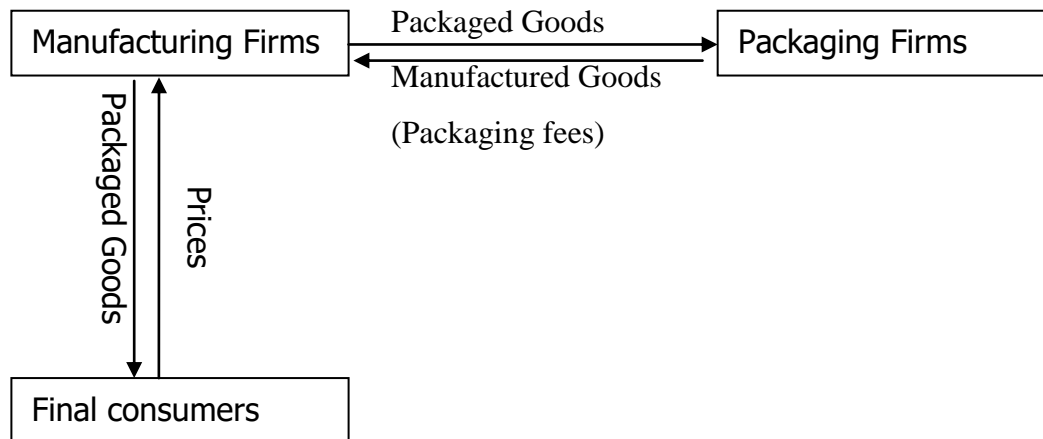


Fig. 1a Manufactured goods turned packaged goods

Source: Author

In the diagram above, manufacturing firms send manufactured goods to the packaging firm paying an amount of money referred to as packaging fees. Packaging firms work on the manufactured goods and turn the goods into packaged goods. Therefore, packaging firms returned manufactured goods back to manufacturing firms in the form of packaged goods.

Manufacturing firms after receiving these packaged goods bring them to their points of final distribution. Therefore, work processes in packaging firms get goods ready for marketing.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the theory of production, most especially, on the definition of production. Production is defined as the creation of goods and services that possess utility. It is further said that production is not complete until what is produced gets to the final consumers.

There are two types of production; direct and indirect. Direct production is the production for personal/household consumption. In direct production, packaging may not necessarily be important. Indirect production is the production for commercial purpose. There are three forms of indirect production. Firstly is the primary production which involves extraction of raw materials from land and other gifts of nature. Secondly is the secondary production which involves the conversion of primary products into semi-finished and finished goods. The packaging industry operates in the secondary production. Most goods no matter their state after packaging become fit for final consumption.

Thirdly is the tertiary production which involves all service related and commercial/ distributive economic activities. Tertiary production is the form of production where major marketing activities are played out. This is the stage where packaged goods get to their final consumers.

Description of Work Process in Packaging Firms

In any packaging firms, factory layout is done in such a way that space is maximally utilized. The kinds of goods packaged determine the work processes that go on in a packaging firm. The factory layout of packaging firms can be segmented into normal temperature and cold temperature work spaces. Goods such as chocolates, ice cream etc are packaged in cold temperature work space while some other goods such as deodorants, body creams etc are packaged in normal temperature work space. Factory space is further partitioned into lines. Lines in any packaging firm are numbered for purpose of identification to all employees. Therefore, lines are numbered from 1 (one) to any number depending on the partitioned factory space.

Each line is assigned to a supervisor who coordinates the work activities of employees on the line. The supervisor has the manual of the goods to package. In addition, there is a total quantity of goods that will be packaged within the duration of the working hours. Working hours are usually between a minimum of eight hours (8hrs) to a maximum of twelve hours (12hrs), with break time (s) at interval (s).

In order to package any particular good, work processes involve segmentation into tasks. In other words, packaging is a work process whereby jobs are segmented into tasks that are performed by

a particular employee on the line. Each employee has a task to carry out on the line in the work processes of packaging. Number of employees on the lines may vary depending on the tasks to carry out. Work processes of packaging may be simple, easy, lengthy or tedious, it all depend on the manual provided by the manufacturer. Human resources managers in packaging firms having studied the product manual can restructure employees, recalling or withdrawing one or more employees from lines with simple and easy packaging work process to lines with lengthy and tedious work process.

Work process of packaging on a line begins from the start points of a conveyor belt and finishes at the end point of the conveyor belt.

The employee at the start point commences work by placing the containers at the start point where the containers pass through a scanning machine to the next employee who un-wraps the containers to the other employees who fill the containers with the products, to others who put the leaflets into and paste the labels on the containers, to the employee who makes the box into which the packaged goods shall be enclosed. Then finally the boxes are arranged in particular quantities on pallet and then wrapped in plastics for protection and easy carriage by lift and forklift as the case may be.

However in packaging, work processes are not uniform. Work process in packaging of a particular good may not necessarily follow work process for another good. For example, work processes involved in the packaging of deodorants, body creams or ice cream are different.

Goods meant for packaging are placed and arranged neatly on the lines in ways that space are well-utilised. These goods are already in boxes in particular quantities. These boxes are opened by the employees and placed in some tubs for purpose of packaging. All boxes used by the manufacturers to convey the goods to the packaging industries, are no longer useful at this point. These boxes and other waste packaged are generally thrown into the central overhead conveyor machine that conveys all waste boxes and packages to a threshing machine for further recycling. All waste plastics, cut boxes etc are conveyed to different waste threshers for purpose of recycling also. In packaging firms, nothing is allowed to waste.

Sanitation

In the course of work processes in packaging firms, lines and other spaces tend to get dirty and littered with wastes and other trashes. Therefore in order to maintain health and safety standards for the packaged goods and employees, there are employees responsible for cleaning and mopping the floor spaces.

There are specially made brooms for factory floors for sweeping. There are specially made mopping buckets for factory spaces. All of these are designed and made in such a way as to maintain a clean and healthy work environment.

Moreover any employee who visits the restroom in the course of the work processes is expected to wash his/her hand before returning to the duty post. All employees are to maintain a consciousness of safety environment. All necessary safety gadgets such as helmet for the head, glasses for the eyes, safety boots for the legs etc are to be put on and used within the work processes.

In addition cleaning of the restrooms is very important in any factory or packaging firms.

Some Machines in the Packaging Industry

In the packaging industry, machines and equipment such as conveyor machine, hand lifts, forklifts etc are used. Forklifts are used to transport manufactured goods from the warehouse to the lines and packaged goods from the lines back to the warehouse. Hand lifts are used to convey manufactured goods from the factory spaces to the line and packaged goods back to the factory spaces. There are various conveyor machines in a packaging firm serving various functions. Some conveyor machines convey goods while some convey wastes. There are other machines such as taping/ceiling machines, scanning machines etc all serving different purpose but with the aim of getting goods ready for marketing.

Other simple implements like cutter, pallets are also employed. Pallets are wooden plastic or metal platforms of the size of 1.23m by 1m (48inches by 40 inches) upon which goods are placed for storage.

Palletisation and mechanized handling have helped to reduce manual accident thereby resulting in almost total elimination of damage to merchandise (Nwokoye, 2004)

Machines also develop fault and need to be repaired, serviced and maintained. Packaging firms do have its technical crew in the maintenance department. The main duty of these employees is to ensure that conveyor machines and other equipments are in good working conditions.

Marketing

Marketing is described as one of the organic functions that is usually undertaken by “make and sell” or “buy and sell” organisations.

Marketing is a revenue generating source (Adeyanju and Adegbite, 2018). Marketing is related to the effort of business firms selling these goods and services (Etzel, Walker and Stanton 2001). Therefore marketing describes all activities of any business enterprise carried out in order to facilitate the exchange of its product at a profit. Marketing is a want-satisfying activity. Manufacturing firms produce want-satisfying goods in bulk, but packaging firms make these goods readily available in units in order to meet its want-satisfying purpose.

Products have been classified into consumer and business products. Any of these category of products may be packaged, but since there can be distinctive type of market for both products; thus each requires different marketing methods. Packaging a product requires managerial attention. Since packaging is made up of all the activities of designing and producing the containers or wrappers for a particular product.

Lamb, Hair and McDaniel (2006) opined that packages of firms are differentiated to achieve certain purpose such as:

- Protection of the good on its way to the final consumers.
- Provide protection after the product is purchased
- Help gain acceptance of the product from middlemen
- Help persuade consumers to buy the product

However, authors such as Etzel, Walker and Stanton (2001) stated some eyebrows on packaging such as:

- Packaging that can deplete natural resources

- Packaging that are hazardous to health
- Packaging that are non-disposable
- Packaging that are deceptive
- Packaging that are expensive
- Packaging that are inflammable

Summary and Conclusion

Work processes in the packaging industry help to add value to many manufactured goods. Manufacturing takes place in large quantities. These quantities need to be made available in units for final purchases. Packaging firms, therefore help to put these large quantities of goods into their various individual containers and packages.

Packaged goods are easy to carry and put on shelves in stores. Packaged goods can easily become branded for customer's patronage and loyalty. Promotional mixes elements can easily be employed to market packaged goods. Manufacturing firms need packaging firms to complete the stage of production. There is a forward-backwards linkage between manufacturing firms and packaging firms.

Recommendations

Packaging firms contribute significantly to manufactured goods thereby making these goods ready for marketing. Thus packaging firms must endeavor to maintain good physical working environment. The health and safety standards should not be compromised. Quality control on goods must be observed in order to reduce and eliminate wastes and rejects. Marketing may be difficult to meet if efficiency is not attained in packaging. Thus, mal function and breakdown of machines need to be drastically checked.

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