



## Appropriate Packaging & Labeling Matters in Locally Manufactured Products in Region 1

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**T**he functional features of product packaging are protection, longer shelf life and security. Packaging is also recognized as an effective marketing tool to a fast developing product trading, locally and internationally. Competitive, distinct and eye catching packaging and labeling designs can bring products to diverse market outlets thereby redound to higher sales and incomes of enterprises.

### Early On

**D**OST 1 has been promoting appropriate product packaging and labeling of locally manufactured products in Region 1 as early as 1995, years before the establishment of the Packaging Research and Development Center (PRDC) of ITDI-DOST. The first batch of beneficiaries on packaging and labelling interventions were five (5) enterprises, namely: *Anda Special Bagoong*, Anda, Pangasinan; *Lola Juana's Special Bocayo*, Mangaldan, Pangasinan; soy sauce of *Manuel Castellones*, Caba, La Union; chichacorn of *Ilocos Food Products*, Taleb, Bantay, Ilocos Sur and *Cornel Foods*, Laoag City.



*Bottled boneless bagoong first came out in 1997 through the efforts of DOST 1*



*The first appropriately labeled Iloko vinegar of Cornel Foods came out in 1995 packed in 1 liter capacity bottle (left photo) and 1 gallon and 2 liters capacity plastic containers (right photo).*

Way back in mid-90s up to late 90s, expertise of the Product Development & Design Center of the Philippines under the Department of Trade and Industry (PDDCP-DTI) and some local Fine Arts graduates were tapped in the preparation of the designs for products such as chichacorn, squash noodle, Iloco vinegar, and roasted peanuts. The execution of the designs were partly funded from the Grants-In-Aid of DOST 1.



*In 1999, Ilocos Food Products launched appropriately packed & labeled roasted peanut*



*Appropriately packed chichacorn and banana chips of Ilocos Food Products were launched in 1995 and 1996, respectively.*

More competitive packaging and labeling introduced the products to target markets through DOST's exhibits, DTI's trade fairs and other venues. As a result, there were significant increases in market outlets that pushed production capacities, income, and employment generation of the concerned enterprises four times (4x) or more higher than before the interventions.



## Others Followed Suit through DOST Sustained Efforts

Recognizing that packaging is the leading edge ingredient in economic development and sustainability, the DOST established the Packaging Research and Development Center of the Philippines (PRDC) in 1999. Efforts to introduce better packaging and correct product label were intensified. In 2002, the intervention became part of one of the flagship programs of DOST, the Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading (SETUP) Program.

Aside from the earlier interventions, packaging and labeling for over 50 products produced by about 50 enterprises were improved. The following shows some of the improved packaging and labeling of products from Region 1 that resulted in wider market reach.



## Evolution of Packaging and Labeling of Some Very Saleable Products

Changing markets dictated the composition and characteristics of packaging. For instance, the packaging of some of the saleable products that have reached the export markets have already evolved to suit the demand of the markets. The evolution of the packaging and labeling of some of the products produced by local entrepreneurs is shown below.

### Chichacorn of Ilocos Food Products

The crispy fried corn or chichacorn was originally packed in unlabeled plastic. Now, chichacorn comes in two packaging and labeling types. The photos right below and in the middle show the

product packed in polypropylene plastic bags. These are commonly marketed in various super-markets in Metro Manila and other parts of the country. The lower photo shows the metalized packaging for chichacorn for export.



### Sweet Potato Chips of Ilocos Food Products

The sweet potato or "camote" chips are available in two packaging and labeling types. The photo right below shows camote chips packed in polypropylene plastic bags.



These are commonly marketed in various super-markets in Metro Manila and other parts of the country.



The photo above shows the sweet potato chips for export packed in metalized material.



### Basi of Ilocos Food Products

The following shows the evolution of the packaging and quality of basi:



The first packaging and labeling design for basi, that has 12 %alcohol content, came out in 2001 (photo above). A year later, the design was improved and a box was introduced thru DOST 1 interventions (photo below).



The bottle/package container comes in two sizes, the 370 and 750 ml capacities. The above improved design garnered the second prize winner in the Market Basket Award during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Philippine Food Expo in 2003.



In 2005, Ilocos Food Products released Don Domingo Primera Basi with 21% alcohol content. The packaging is 750 ml capacity bottles sealed in metalized caps. The design of the label for the bottle and the box was also improved.

### Iloco vinegar of Cormel Foods

Cormel Products started using recycled bottles in packaging sugarcane “Iloco vinegar” when they were still very new in the business.



Re-cycled bottles without label used to be the packaging of Iloco vinegar of Cormel Foods.

However, due to the interventions of DOST 1, packaging of the ‘Sukang Iloko evolved into the much better present packaging and labeling as shown in the photos below:



Packaging in 1996



Packaging in 1999



2L capacity packaging as required by the Hawaii market

## Local Designers Now Within Reach

**M**ore entrepreneurs have already noticed that better product packaging and labeling really matter, so the requests for assistance on packaging and labeling design have markedly increased and still increasing. However, delivery time to grant request for packaging and label design is long since professional designers are limited and located in Metro Manila. Local entrepreneurs feel that they are not within reach. To address the concern, the project entitled *“Training for Promising Packaging and Label Designers in Region 1 in Support of SET-UP”* was implemented through a funding support from the Ilocos Consortium for Industry & Energy R&D (ICIIRD) and SETUP, amounting to **P64,000 and P56,576, respectively.**

The project had three components. Component 1 was the Search for Most Promising Artists in Region 1 in two categories- professionals and students. Ten (10) participants taking up or have finished Fine Arts, Computer Science, Architecture and Drafting joined the search. Only one (1) contestant per participating school per category was accepted by the Organizers. A set of three (3) competent judges from the Packaging R&D Center (PRDC) of ITDI-DOST was tapped to evaluate the entries. Three (3) winners were declared as Promising Packaging and Labeling Designers in Region 1.

Component II was the conduct of the 2-week training on packaging and labeling for the winners of the search through the PRDC. A fourth designer was trained at the PRDC through the initiative of DOST-1. The project provided for the traveling expenses (fare, food and lodging) and training fees.

Component III engages the services of the trained graphic designers who are now preparing the packaging and labeling designs of local products since 2007.

### *Impact of the initiative*

The presence of packaging and labeling graphic designers in the region 1 fast-tracked the preparation of the designs, from the usual one or more years to a few months only.

### *Lesson Learned*

- An innovative human resource development project can solve a concern on DOST's strategic interventions.
- Bringing the service at the doorstep of the entrepreneur fast-tracks adoption of interventions
- Decentralization of skills and knowledge for easier reach of DOST clients.
- Packaging and labeling is dynamic and it is here to stay to make our products more competitive.



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