

Breaking the mould:

The power of chaos packaging strategy in shaping brand positioning and product perception

Results of the work

The project delivered an investigation into how atypical packaging can influence consumer perception, brand positioning, and product differentiation within the frozen fries category. Through a structured three-stage process—secondary research, extensive fieldwork, and a large-scale quantitative experiment—the project provided Lamb Weston with a concrete assessment of the strategic potential of atypical or chaos packaging. The outcomes included a formalised definition of chaos packaging, an evaluation of its commercial feasibility, and a set of actionable recommendations tailored to the company's innovation ambitions.

Core value achieved

The central value of the project lies in its actionable, realistic and evidence-based business opportunity. By combining academic research, industry insights, consumer testing, and operational constraints, the project equipped Lamb Weston with a validated strategic direction grounded in empirical data. It clarified which packaging deviations offer added value, which involve risks, and how far the company can push atypicality without compromising consumer acceptance or product categorisation. This enables the client to make informed decisions on future packaging innovation with reduced uncertainty.

Scientific insights

The project reinforced several key principles of design and consumer psychology:

- Typicality remains a strong driver of appeal.
- Typicality does not significantly outperform moderately atypical packaging, making the second a potentially promising alternative.
- Strong atypicality reduces categorisation accuracy and overall appeal but significantly increases the packaging stopping power.
- Atypical packaging facilitates category-based association transfer, indicating its potential for signalling new benefits.

