

Navigating the Regulatory Maze

Supporting Food Startups in Designing Compliant and Consumer-Centered Packaging

PROBLEM

Food labeling regulation exists to protect consumers and support informed decisions. Yet unhealthy products still dominate supermarket shelves, and misleading packaging persists, while regulatory complexity creates a barrier for the businesses trying to do better, especially early-stage food startups.

80%

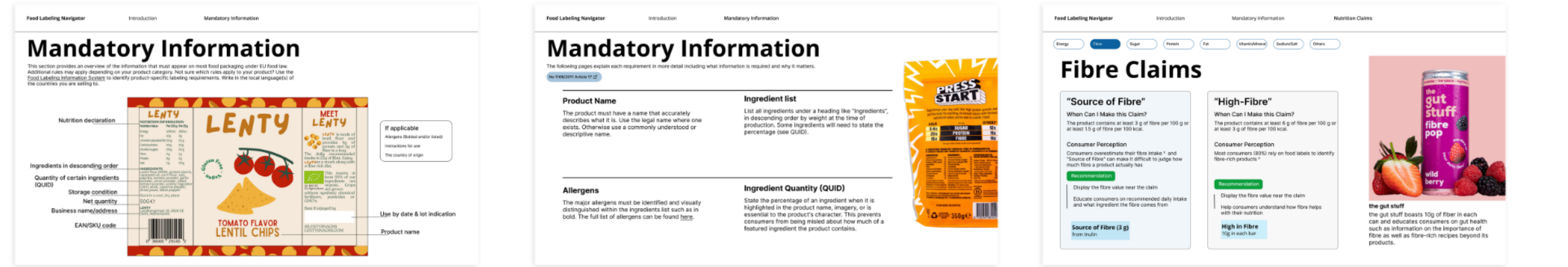
of products sold in Dutch supermarkets fall outside the Wheel of Five healthy-eating guideline



Food startups face regulatory complexity without much legal support or budgets. Because they're often the ones pioneering healthier, more transparent products, this gap is where support can have a large impact on the food system.

INTERVENTION

Emerging from the frame "Library: A Place for Learning and Connecting," the Food Labeling Navigator translates dense regulation into plain-language guidance, annotated packaging examples, and consumer-perception insight. Accompanying it is the Food Labeling book, which is a set of visual-forward explanations of nutrition claims.



METHODOLOGY

Applying Kees Dorst's Frame Innovation to develop a deeper understanding of the problem situation, synthesize these findings into themes and frames, reframing the problem in new ways for future opportunities, and exploring future opportunities and potential directions for transformation that emerge from these new frames.

EMERGING THEMES

The shared "universals" across startups, regulators, and consumers:

-  Trust through transparency
-  Having a Seat in the System
-  Navigating Complexity through Accessible Knowledge
-  Innovating for a Healthier System

Claim Definition

According to the law, when can I make this claim?

"Energy-Reduced"

When Can I Make this Claim?

At least 30% fewer calories than the original/standard version. The reason for the reduction must be stated.

Consumer Perception

Consumers may not know what the reduction is compared to. Addition-focused claims can lead to stronger behavioral intentions than removal-focused claims *

Recommendation

- Highlight an added value
- Provide a comparison to a standard product

30% Reduced Calories
Compared to our Original Recipe

3 g of Fiber
in a bar

Recommendation

How should this claim appear on packaging?

Consumer Perception

According to literature, how would consumers perceive this claim?

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