Yep, you can judge a book (or your oatmeal) by its cover

You can judge a book by its cover because it is what initially attracts you to even pick it up. In a bookstore with thousands if not millions of titles vying for your attention, a boring cover will make you pass it over. But the cover is also the title, and this is also why titles (and headlines) that grab your attention are so important.

However, I am not here to write about books today. What I want to talk about is packaging and how important it is. Packaging helps sell a product, and yet, I bet, nine out of ten times, packaging design is NOT handled by the marketing department.

Sometimes, product packaging needs a redesign. Much has been written about Tropicana's redesign (last year) where the familiar Tropicana interface was replaced with a minimalist approach, which some thought looked generic. Redesign is important, but companies need to be careful not to alienate their core buyers.

I am a huge McCann's Irish Oatmeal fan. I have been eating it for years, and thus buying the boxes for a long time. This is what I have always bought:



McCann's Irish Oatmeal
Before Redesign

The other day, I was getting my supply of oatmeal, and I was momentarily confused when I saw this:



McCann's Irish Oatmeal
Redesigned Packaging

Is this what I have always bought? It doesn't look the same, nor does it tell me that it is a new packaging design anywhere. In fact, I think McCann's not only redesigned the package but changed the contents slightly. And they did not bother to tell me. As I mentioned, I am a long time consumer of McCann's and there was no indication of whether this was the same Quick Cooking Irish Oatmeal.

In any case, the moral is definitely, redesigns can be good, but tread carefully. Don't confuse your customers or you may lose them.