

REDESIGN OF SK-II

OVERVIEW

Packaging is often the first interaction a consumer has with a brand, making it one of the most important external brand touch points that influence a purchase decision. When selling to women, it is essential to carefully consider packaging since women are incredibly tactile creatures – research shows that if a woman picks up and interacts with a package, she is more likely to buy the product. The brand that I assessed as needing an updated look was SK-II, a women's skin care beauty line, launched in Japan in 1980.

ORIGINAL IDENTITY

SK-II, although often considered one of the most expensive beauty brands in the world, doesn't have the immediate appeal required to make new customers reach for it. The overall branding (logo, colors, shape and style of packaging) seems disconnected from the product. As a product designed for women, SK-II should be branded to appeal to females, yet with its masculine color palette (deep burgundy) and harsh serif font choice it seems anything but feminine. A cursory glance might lead many to believe that it is designed for men, especially the packaging of the facial treatment essence, which looks suspiciously similar to the packaging of many men's colognes and aftershaves. The cylindrical shape coupled with the frosted glass and metallic cap exude a decidedly masculine feel like the two products below.



Since the SK-II product line originated in Japan, it is understandable that a red-dish color dominates the packaging. Red has many cultural implications for the Japanese; it is the color related to heroic figures and it is also believed to keep spirits away. One SK-II product comes in a cherry-red jar, but all of the others use a dark maroon color. Considering the rich selection of beauty brands available, SK-II employed unique branding to help differentiate its products in the marketplace, but they shouldn't have simply done the complete opposite of what everyone else was doing.

REDESIGNED IDENTITY

An examination of a selection of similar age-defying products shows that most radiate softness. Some companies assume that marketing to women is as easy as changing the colors to pink and including flowers on the packaging, but the courting of women, for this product in particular, needs to go beyond color to exude an overall air of quality and sophistication. From the slender slightly curved containers to the pump applicators and delicate font, we know who these products are for — no confusion, no guesswork.





It was these findings and the product's origins that drove my logo and brand redesign for SK-II.

With roots in Japan, I wanted to retain the richness of SK-II's original maroon color palette, but give it an updated look that would be more appealing to female consumers. The deep fuschia color I selected worked well with the pantone metallic silver 877 font color I chose, as well as the semi-transparent cherry blossom. Selecting the right font was the most challenging as I wanted something reminiscent of Japan, but many of the Asian-themed fonts were not sophisticated enough. Tempus Sans ITC felt like the right choice with its calligraphy-like look. I had to layer the text a few times to give it strength and make it pop. The darker layer beneath the silver added a sense of depth.

