The second stage was to develop the applied brief for a specific market, managed by the SBU, Market and PTC. The brief, based on a standard company format, outlined the possible:

- Products and product lines
- Technologies
- Recipes and ingredients
- Points of differentiation
- Shapes of the product
- Launch date

Together, this defined what the product would be. The process ensured the document enjoyed the commitment of key decision makers.

Although the focus of the brief was on the core product, it was necessary to state a proposed packaging format. The project leader himself inputted the format, stating that, “for these types of products flowwrap is really the only option, development is focused on creating graphics for the wrap” [BA15]. No research or evaluation was undertaken. The logic behind this decision also resulted from the firm using “this type of packaging on similar products, the product could therefore run on a similar production and packaging line… retail can also display it alongside our existing products… cutting investments and risk” [BA15]. The decision to input this format without consultation illustrated that whilst the company’s process meant that the project leader was “duty bound to consider packaging from the first stage…. it is down to the individuals involved as to how they are handled as one” [BA14]. This decision resulted in problems for the project.

The third stage was to define the concept. Specifically, on the technological side, this involved investigating and establishing (based on internal documentation):

- What to produce?
- What equipment would be used or required?
- Where it should be manufactured?
- How it should be produced?
- How much the costs would be in total?

Based on the nature of the project, the PTC technology and engineering team made a significant contribution, examining machinery and manufacturing, investments, and
technical development. From this, the team understood what the product would be and how it would be manufactured.

The fourth stage focused on concept development. At this stage, the product was implemented and realized: equipment was to be purchased, the factory built up, feasibility established, and test runs made on the production line. Engineering and quality teams ensured safety and quality control. Concurrently, a design firm was recruited to work on a design for the surface of the packaging, and the final design would be provided to a packaging supplier for the surface of the flow wrap.

During the early parts of this fourth stage, a problem was highlighted with the packaging, and its ability to ensure that the product reached the customer in an acceptable condition. This was identified when the packaging team was approached, to verify and develop exact specifications for the flow wrap prior to buyers approaching potential suppliers. The team immediately highlighted that a flow wrap would not work effectively, due to issues with both the flow wrapping process and the flow wrap itself. Three problems were noted:

1. Due to the product’s delicate nature, the packaging would not provide adequate protection on the production line, meaning it would be prone to breaking apart.
2. Inadequate protection would also result in it getting broken easily when packing into boxes for distribution.
3. Breakage was also likely, both during distribution and in consumers’ homes.

The team immediately found that the first problem could be reduced, but not resolved, by running the line at a slower speed (reducing breakages). However, this negated much of the advantage of the new faster production technology. Another potential solution was to add an inner protective layer of board, but the key decision makers decided that this would be too costly. A project was therefore initiated to further understand the issue and identify other solutions. The team was also to examine the impact on costs and margins, how fast the line could run, and how delicate the product would be.

Had the project continued as planned, the next stage would have been the product launch. However, the above issues prevented this progression. An interview with one
packaging specialist revealed his beliefs on the origin of this problem: “The lack of a holistic approach to product and packaging development caused the problems….. [the] packaging was initially given minimal consideration at the stage of the project brief” [BA14]. The problem originated from “not having packaging staff, as a key stakeholder… or packaging expertise… involved in the project from the beginning resulted in the format being selected based on the manager’s basic understanding and experience, with no evaluation made” [BA16]. Therefore, the team, “should have done pre-production testing earlier and involved a packaging specialist” [BA14].

The implications were so severe that there were concerns that “the project would be stopped and the costs [were] too high” [BA14]. However, it was not possible to examine this fully, as soon after the packaging team were recruited, the project was suspended, due to “a change in strategic direction for the business unit” [BA17], resulting in other projects being prioritised. At the time of writing up this case study, the project had not made it to launch, and the focus had moved elsewhere. However, it has recently been reinitiated; and thus may be launched in the future.

8.4.4 Project I: The development of a new premium chocolate product, to be marketed alongside the ‘Expressease’ line of coffees

Project I examines a project managed by the PTC for Expressease, in Switzerland, with approval given by the SBU and central HQ. The case focuses on the development of a line of boxed chocolates, to be marketed alongside an existing line of premium coffees. The project can be broken down into two separate parts: an initial project to develop a small box for boutique shops, which enabled the company to test the product and confirm their belief that it would be successful; followed by a project to redevelop the box alongside a larger one for online distribution. This study largely focuses on the latter parts of the project: when the PTC for confectionery became involved, subsequent to problems being identified with the product and packaging which needed to be resolved.