The same design firm was given the brief. The size of the larger box was again based on the existing packaging used for the distribution of the coffees, with one box to be the same size (when packed in a protective outer) as the coffee’s shipping box. As a result, the focus was on the colour, finish, and graphics. However, the brief requested some changes to the chocolates themselves, in order to package the product effectively and improve their appearance. The agency therefore worked on an appropriate print and logo for the top of the chocolates to display the brand, which was to be applied “a transfer system” [BA18]. These aspects were designed to appropriately communicate the brand’s premium positioning. Focus groups were undertaken to assist the design process.

A number of broadly similar designs were created, and subsequently tested with consumers. Eventually, a final design was reached, similar to the original box, but with changes to the:

1. Colour and graphic design (also redesigned on the existing box to match).
2. Layout of the chocolates, which were placed on an angle in a ‘stacking’ effect. This enabled the right number of chocolates to be contained, whilst keeping the same ‘footprint’ as the coffee box (which contained six tubes of coffee in a larger corrugated box).
3. Shape of the chocolates, and the addition of a logo printed onto the top.
4. Construction of the box, to provide a more sturdy, premium feel.
5. Protection of the chocolates, adding a cushion to prevent them from moving around in transit.

The final design was presented back to the team within the Expressease SBU and, after a few minor alterations, approval was given to begin manufacturing. The next stage, with respect to the packaging, involved buyers putting out a tender for the manufacture of the packaging. Concurrently, the factory in Switzerland made moulds for the chocolates. Following this, a contract was signed with a new Chinese supplier which had provided the lowest tender to produce the boxes, and the product was considered to be “ready to go to market” [BA14].

However, at this stage, two problems were identified in the pre-production transport tests. First, the taste of the chocolates was tainted when they had been through the distribution channel. Second, they were being damaged in transit. As a result, the confectionery PTC’s expertise was called upon.
When the project reached the confectionery team, they were effectively “firefighting”, as the project was running late and could not go to market until some of these problems had been addressed. Speed was critical. It quickly became apparent that the external design agency had not “done their work properly” [BA14]. The team believed that this was due to them being “largely specialists in graphic and aesthetic design [and not a] proper packaging team” [BA14]. When designing a cushion which kept the chocolates securely in place, they “hadn’t fully addressed the issues of protection and safety [and particularly] the issue of tainting or the impact of distribution” [BA14]. As a result, small shavings were breaking off and were “not arriving in perfect condition”. In addition, “the smell was wrong” [BA18]. As none of the tests on the chocolates themselves had shown any issues, the team believed this was due to something within the box tainting the flavour.

The team set about simultaneously investigating the two issues. Tainting was the most urgent priority, as it affected the product’s safety. The outsourced supplier made the box from a solid coated board. The team did not know what was causing the tainting, but this was a key issue with the chocolates, as they were heavily affected by other smells close by, effectively absorbing them. A number of tests were undertaken to identify where the problem originated: testing the chocolates against others that had not been boxed, and working with the factory to examine the different parts of the box.

Eventually, by exposing the chocolates to each part of the box individually (such as the board, coatings, inks and glue), the tainting was isolated down to the latter. This was identified by not gluing some boxes, then packing the chocolates into them, immediately solving the issue. As a short term solution to get the product into the market, it was found that introducing “a forty-eight hour airing prior to being packed” [BA14] for transportation to the European factory (to then being filled with chocolates), removed enough of the smell and prevented the tainting. This was quickly implemented, but in the longer term, new glue was introduced to resolve the problem.

The second problem proved more complex to resolve. Eventually, through a series of tests (posting and drop tests onto a direct surface, and trying different trays with differing configurations), the problem was narrowed down to the top edge of the chocolates. The ‘stacked’ style of arrangement for the chocolates was resulting in
bits from the top edge breaking off. The cushion did not provide adequate protection, and where it applied pressure to this top edge, this caused flaking. On some occasions, the chocolates were also able to move about and flip too much. The most obvious solution was to “reduce the slant or to change the edge of the chocolate” [BA14], but SBU did not want this unless it was completely unavoidable. The stacked slant was considered to be “key to the design and communicated the modern and clean lines of the brand” [BA14]. To an extent, SBU were willing to sacrifice additional costs in order to retain the design’s essence.

The problem was ultimately solved by developing a counter tray, placed on top of the chocolates and effectively mirroring the bottom tray. This was seen to be the most obvious solution, and the team quickly developed and tested a tray with only a small number of prototypes being made before it was perfected. The tray could be made from a clear plastic, with only a moderate increase in costs compared to the original protective sheet. Pressure was transferred across the surface of the chocolates, which were held more securely in place. Whilst the team was not completely happy with this solution, as it was not as aesthetically pleasing as it would have liked, it was the best solution identified. In addition, the solution would have no associated costs from production line changes, as this part of the process was not fully automated, thus personnel could just as easily place this counter tray in the box.

These changes largely overcame the flaking, enabling the product to be quickly taken to the market. Given the delays which had occurred, this was of critical importance: allowing the product to be launched as close as possible to the originally planned date. However, neither the packaging team nor the category manager was completely satisfied, as some flaking was still evident. In order to overcome this, as a longer term solution during the year following the product’s launch, the colour and finish of the bottom tray were changed to a more pearlescent effect, which meant that the flakes showed up less.

However, even this solution was not considered sufficient for the brand: it was necessary to “change the product itself” [BA20]. A new chocolate mould was developed, which had a slightly more rounded off shape and added radius to the edge (to a degree virtually invisible to the consumer, thus considered beneficial enough to outweigh any negative impacts on perceptions). Throughout this process
of designing and redesign, the team carried out drop testing, and continually posted boxes to members of staff with a questionnaire to gather feedback.

These changes were implemented during the first year after the product’s launch. The final change involved the introduction of the new mould, requiring some investment in retooling. This created brand markings on the top, replacing the transfer system; and ridges were also added, to enhance the chocolate’s appearance.

Figure 8.4.8: The Expressease Chocolate Box

8.4.5 Project J: Development of New Packaging for an existing Chocolate Spread ‘Choko’

Project J focused on the development of new packaging for an existing product. The product was sold primarily in Turkey, but also across some emerging European Countries. The project was initiated based on the results of a market research project undertaken in Turkey by the confectionery marketing team. This had identified some “issues with the existing packaging of the chocolate spread” [BA20]. Having identified this problem, approval was gained for a project to redesign the packaging.

The scope of this project, defined within the brief, was confined to the tub format. The packaging team and product managers, with some involvement of other decision makers, put this brief together. The emphasis on redesigning the aesthetics of the tub was seen to fit with the product’s selling proposition, and the firm’s existing manufacturing expertise. The continued use of a tub format would “…not affect the product’s retailing …. [which] is a concern as we don’t want this to lead them to re-evaluate the product’s positioning [on the shelf] or their willingness to stock it” [BA20]. Buyers were especially influential in the decision to retain a tub as this was
“...seen to be more likely to keep any cost increases to a minimum” [BA14].

The project which ensued followed the company’s ‘Fast Pack’ design process, depicted in Figure 8.4.10. It began with an initial intensive two-day ‘Fast Pack’ session, held with key decision makers and stakeholders.

Figure 8.4.9: Picture of existing packaging for ‘Choko’

![Picture of existing packaging for 'Choko'](#)

Figure 8.4.10: Summary of key stages in development of Choko

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‘Fast Pack’ Process of Packaging Development  Implementation