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## Freiden Skincare: Evolving Stigmas for the Sake of Wellness

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The University of Southern Mississippi

Freiden Skincare: Evolving Stigmas for the Sake of Wellness

by

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A Thesis  
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## **Abstract**

Frieden (pronounced free-den) is the German word for peace and self-reconciliation. Frieden is a skincare line infused with Cannabidiol, a natural compound found in marijuana plants that can be used for treating pain without the hallucinogenic side-effects (thanks to no THC being present in the product). Health benefits of Cannabidiol extend to topical relief from chronic pain, anxiety, depression, and a multitude of other forms of reprieve from discomfort.

Through my research, I discovered that in a world of fast fixes and reactive remedies, visual communication has influenced consumers to be more thoughtful with their purchases. Thanks in part to social media and explosive advertising, consumers are stepping out of their traditional brand loyalty in hopes of having new results with the next big thing, in this case, Frieden. Capitalizing on this ideology, this project exploration was intended to unite the consumers' need to stay "on trend" with the influence of packaging design, ultimately creating a brand that de-stigmatizes the use of Cannabidiol as a household remedy.

**Key Words:** Honors College, research, CBD, packaging, color, design

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## List of Abbreviations

CBD	Cannabidiol
THC	Tetrahydrocannabinol

## Chapter 1: Introduction

In a world of fast fixes and reactive remedies, visual communication has influenced consumers to be more thoughtful with their purchases. Thanks in part to social media and explosive advertising, consumers are stepping out of their traditional brand loyalty in hopes of having new results with the next big thing. Capitalizing on this ideology, this exploration hopes to unite the consumer's need to stay "on trend" with the magic of packaging design, ultimately creating a brand that de-stigmatizes the use of Cannabidiol as a household remedy.

With revolutions in modern medicine and research into sustainable living in the last century, humans are living longer and getting stronger. This has come at a cost, however. According to a study conducted by the Institute of Medicine of The National Academies, 100 million Americans suffering from chronic pain every day.<sup>1</sup> Chronic pain is categorized as persistent pain signals that typically continue for weeks, months, or even years.<sup>2</sup> On top of this, 18.1% of Americans report to suffer from anxiety, propelling it to the number one mental health issue plaguing North America.<sup>3</sup> Each of these is treatable, but in a culture ravaged by opioid crises and holistic remedies on the rise, alternate health solutions are becoming readily available. One alternative that has shown to be a forerunner for reducing chronic pain and anxiety in patients is Cannabidiol (or CBD), a protein derived from the marijuana plant.

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<sup>1</sup> "Chronic Pain Statistics: Facts, Figures And Research [Infographic]," The Good Body, October 05, 2018, accessed March 27, 2019, <https://www.thegoodbody.com/chronic-pain-statistics/#100-million-Americans>.

<sup>2</sup> "Complex Regional Pain Syndrome Fact Sheet," National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, accessed March 27, 2019, <https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Complex-Regional-Pain-Syndrome-Fact-Sheet>.

<sup>3</sup> Jim Folk, "Anxiety Disorder General Statistics." Anxietycentre.com, accessed March 27, 2019.

Initial research into Cannabidiol showed that the general public does not favor the use of elements from a plant that has such negative stigmas surrounding it. In spite of decades of medical research, cannabis is still the root of this super protein. Studies show that in the late 1980's and early 90's, CBD research was focused on how it could be used as neuropath in treatments for depression, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder.<sup>4</sup> Although this research has been available for decades, in recent years it has become popular in the holistic wellness community. While often falsely associated with the hallucinogenic qualities provided by another of cannabis's other primary compounds, *Tetrahydrocannabinol* (THC), Cannabidiol can be extracted on its own and paired with a carrier such as hemp oil to be administered topically.<sup>5</sup> This topical application has been proven to relieve joint pain, reduce anxiety, soothe depression, and is associated with mood stabilization.

Due in part to the substantial advances in technology and research in this field in the last few decades, Cannabidiol is slowly integrating itself into a functional part of society. In reference to the aforementioned research and evidence of its successes, CBD provides its own leg to stand on in the fight for it to be a normalized part of the wellness conversation. Because of its growing success despite hesitant, more conservative consumers, CBD, in conjunction with its "carrier" oil is becoming a trendy new way to treat day-to-day issues. Infusions of CBD have hit the market in states with looser cannabis laws in the form of oral supplements, topical solutions, vapors, and even cannabis infused beverages. The competitive landscape for CBD products is growing; it

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<sup>4</sup> Crippa et al., "Translational Investigation", 2.

<sup>5</sup> Alexandra Klotz et al., "Cannabidiol for Treatment of Childhood Epilepsy—A Cross-Sectional Survey," *Abstracts of the 44th Annual Meeting of the Society for Neuropediatrics* 9, no. 731 (September 7, 2018): , doi:10.1055/s-0038-1675903.

is predicted to reach a market profit of \$22 Billion by the year 2020.<sup>6</sup> Because of this proposed upward spike, every manufacturer is looking for a way to capitalize on CBD. This research has used this momentum to create packaging and branding elements to elevate the ideology behind CBD-infused skincare remedies to create something that bridges the gap between medical and functional marijuana.

### *Consumers and Packaging*

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The endeavor to create a product that marries consumers' positive reception of a product with an understanding of intentionally designed content is not a feat for the faint of heart. While proving difficult, visual communication has always played a role in coercing consumers to purchase the more credible and *aesthetic* product. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has elevated it to a much more relevant role in consumer culture than ever before.

Designer Stephen Knapp writes:

“Giving a new product a competitive edge has become more and more difficult over the past few years. The marketplace is consumed with an avalanche of similar products—some with their own unique merits, but most basically alike.”<sup>7</sup>

The challenge that comes with design in this climate is creating something new, marketable, and life-changing without the gimmicks that advertising often employs.

Another challenge found with a new brand for something that is so new is keeping it contemporary, timeless, and functional, while also serving the appropriate, current aesthetic well enough to be chosen by initial impression alone. The competitive

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<sup>6</sup> Elisabeth Garber-Paul, "Exclusive: New Report Predicts CBD Market Will Hit \$22 Billion by 2022," Rolling Stone, November 15, 2018, , accessed March 27, 2019, <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/new-study-cbd-market-22-billion-2022-722852/>.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Knapp, *Packaging* (Rockport, MA: Rockport Publishers, 1995), 2.

landscape of skincare products is broad and serves varying markets, but research serves to show that consumers all have the same agenda: they buy what works, and they buy what looks good on a shelf.<sup>8</sup> Packaging plays a key role in what looks good and ultimately works well. Packaging is defined as “the technology and art of preparing a commodity for convenient transport, storage and sale.”<sup>9</sup> Studies have also shown that consumers have increased stimulation in the brain when viewing packaging deemed “attractive” than when viewing packaging that is neutral.<sup>10</sup>

### *Consumers Definitions*

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When developing packaging, it is important to understand the breadth of what a consumer searches for in this “commodity for sale”. An abstract from Siti Asriah Immawati states the function of packaging is delineated through a funneling process from varying elements that all end at the same outcome: the consumer’s re-interest in purchasing the product.<sup>11</sup> His breakdown envelopes the process of product packaging, its relationship to brand awareness, and the ultimate re-purchasing of the item.<sup>12</sup> If the packaging can successfully cultivate a relationship between the consumer and a brand, the packaging successfully reaches its audience. Audience reach is a simple concept to initially develop but becomes more difficult when reaching a specified market or

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<sup>8</sup> M. Estiri et al., "Food Products Consumer Behaviors: The Role of Packaging Elements," *Journal of Applied Sciences* 10, no. 7 (2010): 538. doi:10.3923/jas.2010.535.543.

<sup>9</sup> Marianne Jahre and Carl Johan Hatteland, "Packages and Physical Distribution," *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management* 34, no. 2 (2004): doi:10.1108/09600030410526923.

<sup>10</sup> Amy Finn, "Looks Matter: How Great Packaging Can Lead to Greater Sales," HubSpot Blog, September 12, 2014, , accessed March 25, 2019, <https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/looks-matter-how-great-packaging-can-lead-to-greater-sales>.

<sup>11</sup> Asriah Immawati, "The Product Packaging Design And Advertisement Attraction On Brand Awareness And Its Impact On Repurchasing Teh Botol Sosro Among Young Children At Tangerang City," *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business Development* 2, no. 1 (2018): 148.

<sup>12</sup> Immawati, “The Product Packaging Design...”, 149.

demographic through tangible, applied products. For instance, studies show women are much more influenced to purchase and further re-purchase a product because of packaging that educates them on the product's ingredients over one that looks less visually appealing, even when the same information is present.<sup>13</sup>

Audience interaction with a package can be categorized in a variety of ways, but scholars agree that in the study of buying habits, color is the number one factor that drives consumers to a product.<sup>14</sup> Color affects not only the visual interpretation of a product to the consumer, but also uses their recall to associate that color with a certain memory or association to a brand. The most successful brands have recognizable color associated with them: take Coca-Cola for example. Their familiarity and simplicity of their script has evolved over the generations, but one thing has remained: Coca-Cola red, a uniquely coined color that immediately communicates the heritage at a glance.<sup>15</sup> This is not to say that all good brands are one color, however. In many cases, a specific color combination or pattern is just as recognizable. A brand's equity, often interchanged with brand awareness, is the most powerful thing it can possess. This means that a product is more recognizable not only for the name, but for visual information the brand represents as well.<sup>16</sup>

Consumers are conditioned to recognize these brands in an instant. Be it by color, package shape or another strategy, it takes a consumer about 7 seconds to notice a stand-

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<sup>13</sup> Nawaz Ahmad and MohibBillo & Asad Lakhan, "Effect of Product Packaging in Consumer Buying Decision," *Journal of Business Strategies*, 6, no. 2 (2012): 8.

<sup>14</sup> Ahmad, Lakhan, "The Effect of Product Packaging", 8.

<sup>15</sup> Amy Finn, "Looks Matter: How Great Packaging Can Lead to Greater Sales."

<sup>16</sup> Larry Percy and John R. Rossiter, "A Model of Brand Awareness and Brand Attitude Advertising Strategies," *Psychology and Marketing* 9, no. 4 (1992): doi:10.1002/mar.4220090402.

out product on a supermarket shelf.<sup>17</sup> The personality of a brand is immediately activated once the product is removed from the shelf and handled by the consumer. This is the first and also last impression the audience has with a product before they choose to return it to the shelf or toss it in their cart. An impression sets the tone of purchase, so the impression must prove something.<sup>18</sup> Research also shows that shape influences consumer relationships with a product. The way a box ergonomically fits in your hand, the closures on the package, and even the texture of the package's finish influences the credibility of a product from first impression to purchase.<sup>19</sup>

Factoring in the relevance of color to the consumer is also pertinent to this research in the psychoanalytical side of the audience's perception of packaging. Jean-Paul Favre writes "colors act on the sub-consciousness and the resulting sensations are then transferred to the consciousness. These feelings, in turn, generate reactions."<sup>20</sup> This idea suggests that every time a person reflects on a color they see in packaging, they generate a reaction to the piece. Further research into color theory and human interaction with color shows favor toward some colors, and adversity toward others. Defined social classes also experience favor in color; patrons of higher incomes prefer soft, simple shades of color, while lower income consumers prefer brighter colors and more bold patterning.<sup>21</sup> This can be attributed to the ideology that colors hold value and meaning: the color red is viewed as aggressive and passionate while the color blue is seen as more

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<sup>17</sup> Viktoria Alervall and Juan Sdiq Saied, "Perspectives on the Elements of Packaging Design A Qualitative Study on the Communication of Packaging," (Bachelor's thesis, Blekinge Institute of Technology, Sp. 2013), 9.

<sup>18</sup> Ahmad and Lakhan, "Effect of Product Packaging in Consumer Buying Decision," 1.

<sup>19</sup> Siripuk Ritnamkam and Yada Chavalkul, "The Influence of Textured Surfaces of Cosmetic Packaging on Consumers' Feelings," *Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal* 1, no. 3 (August 03, 2016): , doi:10.21834/e-bpj.v1i3.357.

<sup>20</sup> Jean-Paul Favre & Andre November. *Color and Communication* (Zurich: ABC Verlag, 1979), 21.

<sup>21</sup> Favre and November, *Color and Communication*, 32.

intellectual and calm.<sup>22</sup> Color can also be used to generate an urgency and a need to fulfill that urgency within the consumer. The need for a good night's rest can be suggested with colors like blues and greens while the need to fulfill an aesthetic is achieved by using blends of color harmonies and balanced proportions of a palette in a design.<sup>23</sup>

## *Color*

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Color is the first visual element used to attain customer attention. The value of this increases when applied color psychology begins to encourage the consumer to pick a specific package.<sup>24</sup> Looking at the scope of design in the market currently, there is room to improve. A top competitor in the skincare industry, Glossier displays excellent shelf presence in the cleaner, more reserved color-way, as is appropriate for their more exclusive demographic (see fig. 1). The colors used in Glossier's brand and packaging are undeniably effeminate and overly clean, which is suitable for their brand appearance. Brickell Men's displays the same level of reservation by sticking to a two-color packaging system (see fig. 2). One might notice the difference in how these items are marketed; the women's product has significantly more design and aesthetics in place in comparison to the stark and simple, yet still well-done, black and white packaging for the men's product.

Associations by gender are a large part of consumer culture today. Every baby shower is pink or blue, and a gender reveal party always has a colorful cake once cut. The psychology behind gendering colors is not necessarily wrong, but a deeper look at color

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<sup>22</sup> Favre and November, *Color and Communication*, 32.

<sup>23</sup> Favre and November, *Color and Communication*, 34.

<sup>24</sup> Alervall and Saied, "Perspectives on the Elements of Packaging Design", 3.

shows that some colors stretch beyond just “boy” and “girl”, and pink and blue. Studies have found that blue is a “deep and feminine color which rests in a relaxed atmosphere...It is preferred by adults and expresses a certain maturity which, however, recalls childhood memories.”<sup>25</sup> This recall is particularly important when branding products for a certain market, like this product’s chosen demographic, because it nudges the status quo and stands out in the competitive landscape.

### *Frieden*

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Previously, a business problem had been proposed: CBD is not trusted, and design influences the consumer to trust products. Visual communication is no more than artists solving this business problem. The culmination of this research has led to the creation of a skincare brand that marries CBD with beautiful, informed design for the consumer. Before endeavoring to develop a brand for such a wellness product, however, this concept was researched extensively. To begin, market research looked into what world-wide markets offered strands of marijuana. From there, research looked into where heavy CBD-to-THC ratios were most present in these global strands. It was found that in Germany there is the highest concentration of CBD-to-THC ratios in their cannabis plants. The research developed for this brand is based off the existing strain of marijuana called *Harlequin*, which tested around the 5:2 CBD/THC ratio.<sup>26</sup> Because this product’s ephemeral nature in conjunction with the State of Mississippi’s laws surrounding recreational marijuana use, *Harlequin* will be the point of reference for all cannabis-related statistics since no cannabis will be directly sampled.

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<sup>25</sup> Favre and November, *Color and Communication*, 22.

<sup>26</sup> "Harlequin," Wikileaf, , accessed March 25, 2019, <https://www.wikileaf.com/strain/harlequin/>

After doing extensive research on names and potential concepts surrounding this brand, the research developed into a word list consisting of synonyms pertaining to peace, wellness, and serenity. Because of the side-effects of CBD and the German-based strands of marijuana, the brand developed into the name *Frieden*. Frieden, pronounced Fri·d(ə)n, is German for peace and wellness and represents self-reconciliation.<sup>27</sup> These are also attributes that are consistent with the effects of topically applied cannabis, so the name needed to be representative from the first glance on the shelf.

### ***Function of Design***

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When making decisions for the visual aesthetics that would encompass Frieden, the design was always driven by the elements mentioned previously: timelessness, color, and peace. The brand needed to speak to a wide audience with specific emphasis in women ages 25-50 who were interested in expanding their skincare routine to new-market methods. While it was simple to propose new-age ideas to make this product fit a certain “look”, Frieden also needed to be seen as a credible and trustworthy product that could communicate safety of use. Many consumers invest far too much into their skincare routine for it to not feel serious.

To visually communicate safety and strength, the logo for Frieden was comprised of a wordmark system with a few secondary extensions (see Fig. 3). By designing a strong sanserif typeface to be used in other brand collateral, there is a tie back to clinical, safe packaging with a colorful twist. When deciding to create the secondary icon of a wink, there were two primary rationalizations. The first being that it hearkened back to

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<sup>27</sup> "German Translation of "Peace"," Collins English-German Dictionary, , accessed March 25, 2019, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english-german/peace>.

the early days of digital dialogue when emoticons were non-existent, and a semicolon and parenthesis were all that were available. Because of the demographic this is reaching, it adds a nice bit of heritage and audience appreciation without being too direct. The secondary purpose for this icon is to be a note of reassurance when you see the packaging. Frieden represents a lifestyle brand, so the icon sends a wink of encouragement each time the packaging is closed (secondary icon will be applied to the tops of boxes and containers). The colors chosen for this secondary also refer back to the color blue's power of recall to adolescence, which connects the secondary to the use of color throughout the brand.

Visual perception of this product is extremely important, as is with all packaging, but it is especially important when uniting two perspectives. Use of typography, color, and pattern all create a brand essence for Frieden that ultimately determines the success of the solution. The packaging for Frieden will be comprised of blue glass bottles, varying packaging lines of color correlations to their infusions, a brick-and-mortar store exhibition highlighting the packaging, and extensive point-of-purchase collateral. Each decision that was made directly relates to the research done into color theory and customer re-purchasing in regard to brand equity.

Colors that are part of Frieden's brand each represent part of human psychology and how Frieden's purpose affects that psychology. For instance, blue glass bottles will house many of the products in Frieden's collection. While blue bottles are great for preserving products and increasing their shelf life, the primary purpose for choosing blue bottles is because blue is a color of trust and peace. Favre states "...blue is concerned with the inner, spiritual life...the darker the blue, the more it draws us towards infinity";

the dark blue of the bottles almost begs the consumer to read into what the product represents.<sup>28</sup> The other variations in the palette each represent a mood that Frieden encompasses: orange for happiness, pink for peace, yellow for vibrancy, green for harmony in nature. By applying each of these in patterns with organic shapes and active pencil sketches, the brand seems to have more whimsy and life than standardized, over-the-counter prescription packaging would. This pattern applied in contrast with the strong wordmark gives Frieden credibility that intersects aesthetics.

### ***Conclusion***

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Frieden mixes shelf-presence, brand equity, personality, and holistic wellness into one big brand. Through the design of Frieden, the stigmas that surround such a positive discovery in the cannabis industry are mitigated and consumers can explore a new way to reduce pain, stress, anxiety, and other mental and physical ailments that plague consumers.

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<sup>28</sup> Favre and November, *Color and Communication*, 24.

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Reference Images:



Fig. 1: Glossier



Fig. 2: Brickell Men's

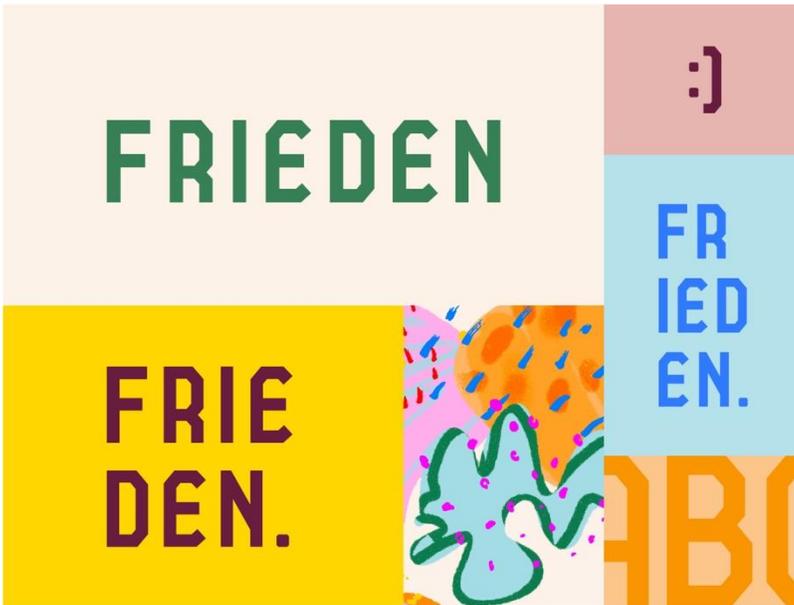


Fig. 3: Frieden Brand

## **Appendix**

### Final Brand Successes

On April 17, 2019, Frieden's pop-up store opened in the George Hurst Gallery.

The exhibition was up for one week and allowed people to enter the gallery and interact with the brand. Through many trials and errors, the product was completed and successfully communicated its message to a consumer audience. Below is the "process" that brought me to the final opening night. Photos of the final space are attached at the end after the process. A PDF of the Appendix is included in the Dropbox link below:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/p279vymldjf2zw/Graham-Capstone-Appendix.pdf?dl=0>