

# Project 3: Packaging a Brand

Sean Maloney 1

## Creative Brief: Copic Markers

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### Current Design & Marketing Goals

Copic is a relatively new branch of the Too Corporation, which was founded in Japan in 1919. The current brand promise of Copic is the highest quality alcohol-based markers on the market that use their unique and refillable ink to help creatives produce their best work. The target audience is very wide, engaging teenagers all the way to the elderly. In terms of income, those with a high income will be able to afford more Copic products since they are a high-end, expensive art brand. The younger end of this audience range would most likely buy individual markers or smaller sets, while the more expected adult portion would be able to afford multiple full marker sets. Anyone who pursues design, comic illustration, coloring, or art as a hobby, career, or as a general interest would use Copic's products since they are used for both fine art and design sketching. Copic's markers originated in Japan in 1987, but since then the company has expanded to supply their products in more than 50 countries, including North America. They are distinctive in art stores due to their iconic branding look and feel, which matches their relatively high price. The ability to constantly refill the markers with the same Copic ink and to replace the marker nibs are competitive advantages that make the company stand out since users can keep the same marker for many years. Also, the extensive library of 358 colors offered gives users a variety of options to explore in enhancing their vision. Current direct competitors to Copic include Prismacolor and Faber-Castell, who produce high-end, alcohol-based markers that rival in quality and aesthetic. They are very successful since they have been established mainstream brands amongst the art community for far longer than Copic.

The three main products within the product line that will be the focus of this project are the Copic Sketch marker, the Copic Classic marker and the Copic Ciao marker. The standard and oldest in the family of products is the Classic, containing one Fine and one Broad nib. The newer and most popular is the Sketch, which has one Super Brush and one Broad nib. The newest member of the family is the Ciao, a less expensive and smaller version of the Sketch. These markers connect to other lines that Copic offers, such as fine liner pens and refillable ink, through consistent branding and design of the physical package. These lines of products all represent different stages or components in an artist's process of creation. Copic has a very recognizable visual style of their packaging and products that is sleek, modern and minimal. Their main color of use is a light gray, allowing the color diversity of their markers and ink to speak for itself. These markers connect to the promise of their parent company through out the full user experience. From the moment a person picks up a Copic marker, the sleek design communicates quality to them. Even when the marker eventually runs out of ink, the whole process of refilling the marker with Copic ink is made into a satisfying and relatively easy process. This all ties back to Copic delivering the highest quality alcohol-based marker experience so that their users feel empowered and inspired in their work.

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### My Design & Creative Process

The central conceptual ideas that I am building from for this line of products is that they are all members within the same family and that color deserves to be more of a central focus since that is what Copic is famous for. With my package designs, I am trying to express more clearly to the user what varieties of colors they can expect with the marker box design, and I am trying to make each individual style of marker (Classic, Sketch, Ciao) look more related to its sibling styles. For the 36-marker set package, I decided to increase the size of the text to indicate the number of markers in the box. I also enlarged the letter-number values of each marker in the box within their corresponding color square so that the user could reference them easier at first glance. On top of this, I grouped markers by general color, indicated by the colorful bands behind each row of values. On the back of the box, I included a URL and QR code so that the user can browse other Copic products and learn about the full library of colors that are offered. On the sides of the box, I included simple graphics that indicate what kind of marker is in the box. In terms of the markers, I slightly rounded the Classic marker so that all three products are more visually related. I added the system of a line just next to the cap of the marker that varies in thickness according to the style (Ciao is thinnest and Classic is thickest). I increased the presence of color on the caps of the markers and added symbols to indicate which is either the Brush or Broad end. Lastly, I enlarged the letter-number value of the marker on the body for better readability of vital information, moving the barcode to the other side that was previously empty.

These design choices are innovative and effective because they do a better job at not only catching the user's eye, but they convey information in a faster and clearer manner while still upholding the original brand feel of high quality. Functionality and better use of surface area are improvements that will make my design stand out from the current products. I believe that what makes Copic special, being reusable and offering a wide color selection, is what will entice customers to transition from their usual favorite markers. The Copic Classic marker is 15x15x145 mm, the Sketch is 11x16x150 mm and the Ciao is 12x12x150 mm. As for the 36 marker set container, the dimensions are 165x75x155 mm. The key feature that will distinguish this line of products from others on the market is the shape of the marker and thus its feeling in the hand of the user. Copic markers have a very visually iconic style that connects back to their parent company Too Corporation, so keeping this mood will communicate

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quality while the new improvements in color information will attract a new customer base. A significant challenge in redesigning this brand is working with the context of the brand's past in consideration. Trying to keep the visual style and feel of the products familiar to the original audience while making changes that are positive and breathe new air into the product line is much easier said than done. Especially with a company like Copic whose products are so iconic in their color scheme and shape, making any major alterations feels almost like changing the shape of the Coca-Cola bottle.

My design is a tasteful solution by fixing personal problems I have had with the products throughout my lifetime as an artist. The design process has been a balance between keeping the feel similar while improving the way that the information and color are displayed and digested. I decided to keep the size of the packaging the same as before, since each marker has a set size and altering those dimensions would reduce the amount of ink able to be stored. As for the marker set container, the current dimensions are already very optimal for housing 36 markers, so reducing the volume would decrease the number of markers able to be stored. The rounded edges and tight fit make for less material waste, but I decided to add rubber stoppers on the back side of the box so that it could be turned on its side and reused as an easy-access holder for any artist's workspace. The markers are quite sustainable due to their replacable nibs and refillable ink, allowing one marker to last at least an entire lifetime. The box is made of plastic since it must be transparent to view the markers, but the multi-purpose function of the box encourages the user to keep it for storage and transportation while working. I originally incorporated a handle on the top of the box for easier carrying, but ultimately decided against this element for the sake of minimal materials and maximum sustainability.

### Sources:

<https://www.copicmarkers.com/>

<https://copic.jp/en/>

<https://global.too.com/en/>