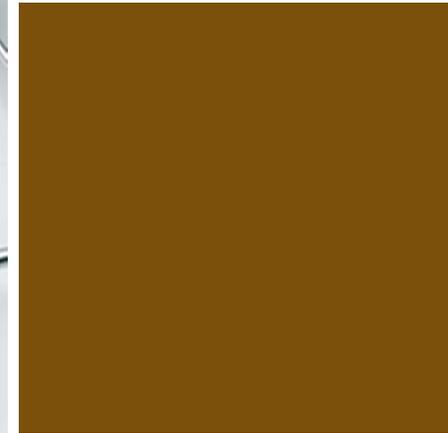
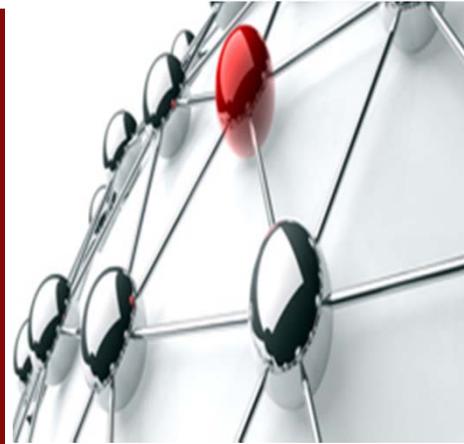




SynapsesQuali

Revealing motives, Inspiring actions



Safety information on household products

Better Regulation & Safe Use Project – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research conducted in Belgium, Poland & Spain

July 2016

Disclaimer: These findings represent feedback obtained from consumers and not necessarily the A.I.S.E perspective. Copyright: A.I.S.E. 2016



International Association for Soaps,
Detergents and Maintenance Products

Objectives & Methodology

■ Main objectives:

- Check **how important safety information is considered by consumers** and how they find the info they need
- Evaluate how safety information present on labels of laundry/homecare products is **read/not read** by consumers (special focus on safety information, CLP icons and A.I.S.E. safe use icons)
- Observe the **reactions that are generated when** consumers are invited to focus their attention on how the safety information is presented on (back) labels

■ Methodology:

- 30 Face to face interviews have been conducted
- 1h45 each – Field work end June 2016
- 10 interviews per city/country
 - Brussels North, Belgium
 - Madrid, Spain
 - Warsaw, Poland
- Mix of consumer profiles (gender, ages, singles/couples, with and without kids)
- All buyers and users of the concerned HH cleaning products

Interview guide/main steps:

Spontaneous (intro)
Eye tracker exercise
Focus on safety- perception, ranking
Crisis scenarios
Back label analysis, take out
Consumers' suggestions

Spontaneously, for consumers, safety is not a key criteria and back labels of HH cleaning products seem to be quite rarely checked

- **In general, there is no spontaneous mention that “safety” is a key criteria for purchase decision or use behaviour by consumers**
 - Instead, influencers are price, loyalty to brand, novelty, convenience, comfort etc
 - Exception: eg parents with young child (0-2y) or people with slight skin problem
- **Back labels of most household cleaning products = hardly read by the majority of consumers** (even by those stating they would usually do so) ;
 - If so, in specific situations (e.g. new products), and more focus on “safe USE instructions”
 - Rationale : “I know” ; implicit pack design signals ; back label = “unpleasant reading”
- **No one spontaneously mentioned** (before focusing their attention on back labels) that they had noticed **any change** related to the safety information (i.e. CLP introduction)
- **Eye tracking learnings** (front label 3”, back labels 10” each – 3 different products shown):
 - **Huge variability** in the way to decode and read the different back labels : top/bottom/pictos
 - But some **lay-out elements help** reinforce ways to notice the back label (eg clear frame vs too crowded, structure, colour codes for background etc)
 - Front label more easily depicted vs back (due to greater clarity)
 - **Variables tend to reinforce focus on CLP pictos or A.I.S.E. icons** (eg text in “block”, pictos in a specific coloured background (for A.I.S.E. ones)
 - But overall the spontaneous recollection from consumers after the eye tracking indicated **no major focus on safety aspects** related to these products.

Consumers tend to find safety information in a faster and more intuitive way through other channels than on back labels

- **The current safety perception of these products differs according to consumer profiles and product categories :**
 - Trust/mistrust in sector & risk/no risk of products
 - 3 product groups: “nocive”, “balanced”, “safe”
- Nevertheless, without reading any safety information on back label of these household cleaning products, **consumers tend to use other signals and points of reference than the back label** to evaluate the potential risks:
 - Their **intuitive perception of risk/safety based on personal and family experience** with these cleaning products, reinforced by frequency of usage and trial and error
 - The **basic characteristics of the product** (eg front label, pack design, place at point of sales)
 - ✓ Its function and the perceived level of power/aggressiveness required to reach its goal
 - ✓ The perceived softness or aggressiveness of key ingredients (which is expected by some to get the job done)
 - Some **pack design elements** (eg colour, opening system, pack shape, lay-out of front and back label) help convey the signals of power/danger or, on the contrary, safety.



When requested to focus their attention into the safety information on back labels, consumers highlight some key weaknesses in the current approach

■ **Even in crisis situation (as tested during interviews), back labels are rarely read !**

- In such stressful situations (eg ingestion, eye spray etc), consumers' spontaneous reaction is to panic, call doctor/PCC, rinse with water etc ... but not read the back label.
- When invited to do so, they express some clear difficulty to find the right information and even if found, they doubt that this will actually help them manage this situation ; some suggestions provided (eg PCC number, structure of the info to be clearer, use pictos etc)

■ **Consumers do not help feel helped by the current CLP pictograms, even with the associated text ; they cannot distinguish the level of risk or safety of different products**

- No clear idea **which product carrying these symbols is more or less dangerous**: 
 - ✓ Based on CLP pictograms' observation (no clear distinction between "irritant" and "corrosive")
 - ✓ And confirmed confusion after reading all text linked to each CLP pictogram
 - ✓ All were surprised to discover sometimes the same type of warnings mentioned on hand dishwashing products or laundry detergents (ie corrosive)
- **For consumers, this does not reflect the concept of "classification"** as there is no "gradation"
- Impression that **all information is quite similar** and that **all products have the same level of hazard**

■ **A.I.S.E. safe use icons were in general clearly understood**

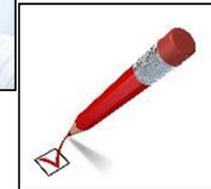
- Seen as complementary information, and understood as **highlighting "precautions" to consider before/during and after usage**
- Often considered as good practice **"already known but good to be reminded"**
- Some pictos should ideally come with an accompanying sentence
- Some precautionary instructions (CLP) may be repetitive vs A.I.S.E. icons (= easier to understand)



This “focus” exercise on back labels has generated varying reactions among consumers but with a clear consensus that the current system does not help them distinguish the level of safety or risk

■ 3 types of reactions have been observed AFTER this deep focus on safety information :

- 1) Either **generating lot of fear** and reinforcing idea that all these products used on daily basis are quite dangerous
=> more observed in BE and ES among some profiles
- 2) Or **confirming that most cleaning products are potentially dangerous** and time to opt for more natural and eco-friendly products
=> more observed in BE and ES among some profiles
- 3) Or **no real impact**, considering all this safety information as legal obligations but excessively alarming and not aligned with real risk of these products if correctly used
=> more observed in Poland and among some profiles



■ According to consumers, the new CLP classification is **not seen as a tool helping them to differentiate the level of safety between these products**

- On the contrary, this new CLP icons and text tend to present the products on the same level of danger ; even more confused when two CLP pictos appear on pack !
- This is seen by some as **potential risk of “banalisation”** that could impact the safe use of these products for future generations

*“Not all products are equally dangerous but with this way to present safety information, there is the risk that next generations of consumers will be no more able to distinguish what is safe from unsafe, risk to trivialize all these products”
(Belgium, FR, Male, one child, 34 y.o.)*

Expectations and suggestions from consumers for possible improvements to the back labels and ways to convey the safety information

- **Back label is still considered as the main channel to provide safety information and instructions**
- **Keep it simple, comprehensive and propose a more structured way to present this safety information and safe use instructions on back labels, enhancing the following key topics:**
 1. Specify the **level of danger/safety** of the concerned product, with new system easy to identify and positioned at same place on each back label
 2. Detail the **possible risks and advice for safe use => A.I.S.E. safe use icons**, again positioned at same place on each back label
 3. Provide **basic safety instructions in case of accident**
 4. Mention the **phone number of local toxicology/anti poison centre**
- Important to **separate the different topics with frames / colour background**
- If a new system is developed, consumers **expect additional communications channels, next to back labels:**
 - Such as TV campaigns, folders etc (but not necessarily Point Of Sales, QR codes yet)
 - And led by regional or national **public authorities**, whom they consider as the more legitimate source to evaluate the safety level of each product and to convey this message in an impartial and independent way