

# Re:Focus

simple ideas to help you thrive

by Simon Sinek

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## Distorting reality

I went to the supermarket recently. Among many items I bought, I picked up a bottle of olive oil. It wasn't until weeks later that I noticed something quite remarkable. What I bought, what I saw on the shelf as a bottle of olive oil, was not in fact olive oil. I had been duped.

The label on the package had been designed in a way to blend the words "Italian Sunflower" into the background to make them, well, disappear. The words "Extra Virgin Olive Oil," in contrast stood out clearly from the background color. It wasn't until I looked on the back of the package that I saw the truth: "85% sunflower oil - 15% extra virgin olive oil." Only on the back of the package did they refer to their product as "Mediterranean Blend Oil." You can click on all the images below to make them bigger and see what I mean.

Technically, all the truthful information was on the package. But it was all presented in a way that seemed to purposefully hide the truth. The company seemed to have taken steps to make it more difficult for me to know what I was getting. This is nothing short of deception.

Why do some companies need to trick us to buy their products? Are their products that bad? Is marketing that hard or that expensive? What are they hiding or overcharging for that they feel the need to lie and deceive?

I started looking for other "technically accurate" packages. I found this one in an airport lounge. I thought I was eating parmesan asiago cheese until a closer inspection revealed I was in fact eating a "Parmesan Asiago style process cheese food" with a "parmesan & asiago-type flavor." If you look really closely at the package, you'll see that they do tell me all the facts. Look next to the word "asiago," you'll be able to see it. It's tiny and hard to read, but it's there: "style." (click on the picture to take a closer look). It's not cheese. It's something in the flavor and style of cheese.

I visited the websites for both companies to try to learn more.

The cheese one was tricky. The manufacturer, Dairyfood USA, Inc, makes no reference to their Glacier Ridge Farms brand or their parmesan & asiago-style flavor cheese food. In fact, they don't make much mention of anything.

As for the maker of the Italian sunflower oil with a hint of olive oil, the manufacturer's site makes no mention of the Pi Oli brand or their Mediterranean blend oil in their list of products.

Makes you wonder, what are they trying to hide?