

Please Don't Hate Me Because I Love Packaging

By JoAnn R. Hines, Packaging Diva



Seriously, people packaging makes the world go round. It's something that you take for granted every time you brush your teeth, drink a beer or take a pill. All those products are delivered to you for your consumption because of the packaging. Packaging that does its multifaceted assignments of getting the product to you ready to use or consume in pristine, sanitary and hopefully un-tampered condition.

So let's have a little reality check:

- Who screams the loudest when products are damaged or broken when you get them home?
- Who avoids that damaged or dented container like the plague?
- Who used their microwave this week?
- Who stopped for fast food?
- Who ate an egg or some potato chips?
- Who got a prescription filled?
- Who bought an appliance or an electronic gadget?
- Who had an operation?

I could go on forever about how packaging impacts your everyday life but the plain and simple truth is you wouldn't be able to do any of those things without the packaging.

If you just spend a few minutes looking around you to see what products you have in your home or your work. How do you think they got there? Product manufacturing and distribution is a complicated process. One that goes on behind the scenes that you never even think about.

My favourite analogy is to compare packaging to the #2 lead pencil. One company extrudes the leads, one makes the wooden casing, one makes the eraser, one

makes the metal banding and guess what someone assembles all the components. That's packaging!

There are lots of fingers in every process much of which goes on behind the scenes. Stuff that you never consider.

- The seal that you have to pull to open or twist keeps your product sanitary and uncontaminated;
- The hologram that you see when you purchase something authentic keeps it from being counterfeited;
- The zipper that you zip that makes it reclosable;
- The little tray that you place it on that makes it microwaveable;
- Those little carrots that are ready to eat or go in a lunch;

Packaging makes it all possible.

Other packaging facts you may not know that are important.

- Packaging is the third largest industry in the US; Packaging employs over a million people;
- There are over 10,000 packaging manufacturers in the US;
- Packaging contributes trillions to our economy;
- 70% of all packaging is food related;
- Packaging for the most part is recession proof.

Currently there is a lot of packaging bashing going on. Less packaging, green packaging, packing that works and of course hard to open packaging (Wrap Rage packaging). All of these issues have an element of truth. But packaging professionals did not set out to frustrate and anger the consumer. All these so called negative packaging elements are there for a reason.

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Let's go back to the primary tenets behind the role of product packaging: protect, convey, sell, inform and educate the consumer. Packaging does all of that and more. Those hard to open packages are that way for a reason and its better to err on the side of too much packaging rather than too little. Companies are feverishly trying to rework packaging to remove the excess but when products are damaged and returned it's the consumer who ultimately pays the price.

So before you get on your soapbox decrying the bane of packaging try to understand what your packaging complaint is really all about. We will try really hard to fix it.

Yes, packaging goes make the world go round. So please don't hate me because I love it and can't live without it.

JoAnn Hines
Packaging Diva
Integrating Packaging With Consumers
Wants And Needs
PackagingDiva@aol.com

www.packaginguniversity.com/
www.packagingcoach.com