



Why I Am Thankful For Packaging

By JoAnn R. Hines, Packaging Diva

Despite all the hue and cry around the holidays about bad, bad packaging few of us would be celebrating anything without it. Packaging makes the world go round and impacts your lives in many ways you never considered.

I thought it was time to reiterate the positive role packaging plays in modern society. The role of the package has changed over the years from functioning as a simple container to becoming an integral part of our society. Yet most people aren't aware of the package's important aspects or don't understand how it works. They just know that it exists especially when they perceive it as a problem.

Let's take Thanksgiving for example whether you had turkey or Tofurkey for Thanksgiving the packaging made it possible! Innovative packaging technology allowed you to buy these products at retail, uncontaminated, undamaged, ready to use and readily available.

Let's digress even further, did you brush your teeth this morning? What is toothpaste without having a package to make it possible for you to use it. What did you have for breakfast? Eggs, bacon, toast, fast food? Packaging plays an integral role in all these products and making them available to consumers or even exist. Simply put packaging makes products happen!

I'm not going to expound in depth on all the 'real' things packaging does, but think of the primary responsibilities of the package. On the 'short' list: It protects, conveys or transports the product so that it arrives undamaged or unbroken. It educates or tells us what is inside and what to do with it. It sells or persuades us to buy what's inside. It makes it easy for us to buy, use or consume it. Remember, that's just the short list for the role packaging plays in your life.

Now let's look at the issues that arise without packaging: Broken or damaged contents (smashed potato chips, broken crockery, no turkey or Tofurkey). Plus it educates you too. How many servings are there? What temperature do I cook it? Where and how do I plug it in? How do I put it together? Will it color my gray, help me lose weight quickly, or attract (think about cosmetics)? Can it be cooked in the microwave? What's for dinner, I pod anyone? The list goes on and on.

Now what's real? Sorry to say but there are some real idiots out there lambasting packaging without understanding why. Sure packaging contributes to the waste stream, and yes some things are overpackaged or hard to open. Yes, the packaging industry can do a better job in reducing the amount of packaging.

WrapRage is now the 'in' buzz word from now to after Christmas. How hard it is to open or how dangerous it is when you do. But, seriously think through your day from the time you get up to your last bedtime snack. How many of those things could you use, do or accomplish without packaging?

So think before you rant. Understand before you condemn, product packaging as the bane of your or society's existence. Remember this for the most part you can't have a product without a package. Most importantly, packaging is our friend. And I'm thankful every day for packaging!

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