

14 PACKAGING TIPS

From Holmen Iggesund

**HOLMEN
IGGESUND**

Whether eyeing your product in a store or opening a mail-order package, you want customers to say “wow.” They need to see, touch, feel and even smell your brand. It’s all about that emotional experience when all senses are engaged. Packaging is an important part of creating the “wow” effect that makes people connect with your brand and drives sales. Here are a few tips to make your packaging live up to its full potential.

1.

FEEL THE DIFFERENCE

Does your packaging have what it takes to engage consumers’ senses and create an emotional connection?

Now, what about the outer packaging and the material it is made of? The majority of secondary packaging solutions for premium consumer goods are made of paperboard. But do you think all paperboards are pretty much the same?

Well, that is not entirely correct. Paperboards might appear similar at first glance, but there’s a world of difference in look and feel. Making the right choice can go a long way to enhancing the premium character of your brand on the shelf and when unboxing. The “wow” experience involves sensuality, mystery, authenticity and quality. The ability to support special effects and techniques such as embossing and foiling, is key to creating this appeal. So, beware of letting a third party make this decision for you. Touch, feel, compare and decide for yourself.

2.

ENSURE BROAD AND ACCURATE COLOR REPRODUCTION

Does the paperboard you use have the right whiteness and surface properties for consistent, accurate color reproduction over a broad spectrum?

When selecting your paperboard, beware of just looking at an unprinted sheet. Why? Because it’s very difficult to know how well the white shade you are viewing will handle a broad color spectrum, including those hard-to-reproduce skin tones. Since most commercial print jobs involve a full coverage, four-color process, you should ask to review a printed sample.

This is especially important if you print a special baby blue, pink or other light tone. The fact is, many paperboards include high amounts of optical brightening agents (OBAs) or dyes that create a bluish white that can adversely affect the end print result. So trust your eyes and don’t simply accept a specified whiteness value. Remember that no paperboard is 100% white. The important things are the perceived whiteness and end print results you get. Also, remember to check that the paperboard has a smooth surface that efficiently absorbs the ink.

3.

AVOID THE FADE FACTOR

Can you feel confident that the paperboard has a lasting whiteness that helps resist yellowing, fading and damaging shade changes?

Exposure to light can cause your packaging to fade. You might have noticed several boxes from one print run sitting next to a newly produced batch that looks quite different on the shelf – more yellow, slightly faded. Naturally, this can have an adverse impact on the premium image of your brand.

So why does this occur and how can you avoid it? One reason is a trend favoring a more “bluish white” that may have a superficially fresher look. The problem is that this shade is often achieved by adding higher levels of optical brightening agents (OBAs), which deteriorate over time. The more OBAs used, the faster the change. So, make sure the paperboard you are using contains moderate amounts of OBAs, so that a consistent level of whiteness can be guaranteed.

4.

SHAPE IT YOUR WAY

Does the material you are using give you the freedom to create unconventional shapes?

Want to create shapes that go beyond a conventional box? Oval shapes? Cylinders? Hexagons? Shapes that mimic the physical product inside? The ability to sculpt your box could be vital in helping your brand stand out. So, if your printer tells you it's not possible due to the structural limitations of a specific paperboard, check what kind of board they are suggesting. Ask for a multi-layered SBB (also called SBS). SBB stands for solid bleached board and is a paperboard made of 100% virgin bleached chemical fibers. This choice opens up design possibilities that other types of paperboard (folding boxboard, monolayer SBB or recycled board) do not offer. The multi-layer SBB has exceptional resilience to deformation under pressure, providing excellent elasticity, stiffness and compression strength. Like a trampoline, the box can be bent into shapes without cracking or ripping, on the fold or against the grain, and then flex back.

Make sure the paperboard has a lasting whiteness.



5.

TEASE WITH TEXTURE

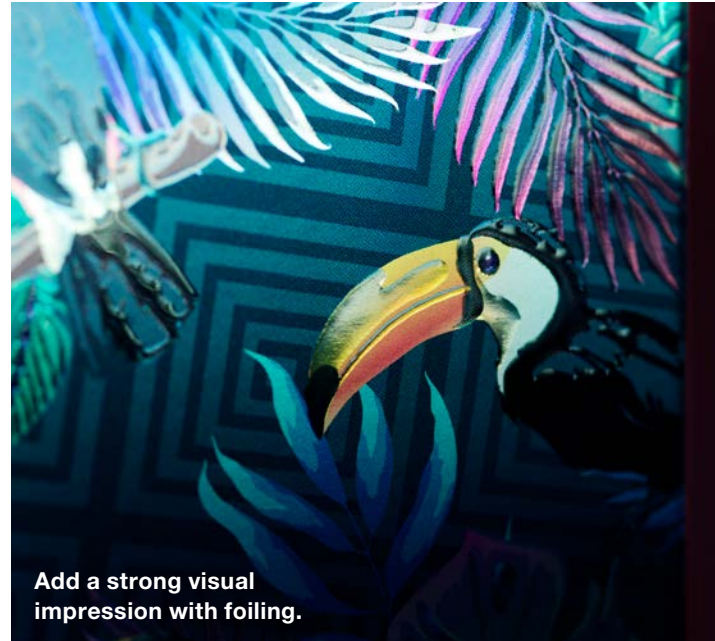
Do you want to create high embossing effects, elegant finishes or sophisticated printing – not just on the outside of the box, but also the inside?

Nothing says premium quality like a heightened tactile experience. Deep, intricate and well-defined embossing or debossing can add an extra touch of class that sets your products apart. But achieving these effects requires a paperboard with a smooth surface and excellent structural properties.

One key advantage of using a multilayer solid bleached board is that you can create fine details without worrying about unpredictable cracks in the board surface. Some SBB products also have a light coating on the reverse side to facilitate good ink distribution, making it possible to print on both the inside and outside of the box. Make sure to use the product is best suited for your purposes.



**Make an artistic feel
and delight the senses
with embossing.**



**Add a strong visual
impression with foiling.**

6.

DAZZLE WITH FOIL EFFECTS

Interested in adding special foil effects but unsure whether your board can take the punishment in the press or converting operation?

Adding a metallic shine or varnish to your cosmetics or liquor box is a good way to grab consumers' attention. It makes them stop, take notice and run their fingers over the glossy surface. It signals a premium brand. There are many ways to achieve this but remember – you may need a board that can withstand up to 20 press-passes or more, depending on your desired finishing effects.

The importance of board flatness and dimensional stability are often overlooked by ambitious designers. They want a lot of dazzling effects but forget that it takes a stable sheet (with no curl or twist) to avoid misregisters in the press runs. As a result, you may end up spending a lot of time and resources on printing and finishing effects but may have to throw away parts or all of your production and start all over again. So, make sure you are using a board with an excellent dimensional stability.



A paperboard with strength in all directions will resist cracking along the folds.

7.

REFLECT HIGH VALUE

Have you considered using a high-shine mirror effect to grab the consumers' attention?

Shiny metal finishes on outer packaging help create a glamorous look. Traditionally, this has been achieved by gluing gold or silver foil material onto the paperboard, which tends to highlight any irregularities or surface defects on the packaging.

One way to avoid this problem is to use a high quality paperboard with metalized PET laminated on the print side - if it's done with a light polyethylene (PE) thermoplastic polymer in the coating process. This polymer smooths out any irregularities in board surface – much like spackling a rough wall before applying paint. Properly done, this high-shine approach also has the ability to faithfully reproduce the most sophisticated printing images with digital or traditional techniques. As a result, you get an enhanced mirror-like effect that is simply stunning.

8.

AVOID TEARING AND CRACKING

As a premium brand owner, do you want to safeguard your packaging from the risk of tearing and cracking?

Here's a little secret: many consumers become so attached to a premium box that they save it. They use it for different things, opening and closing it again and again. Some can't resist opening it while it's still on the shelf. So, it's important to use a forgiving material with strength in all directions; a material that resists cracking along creased folds, both with and against the grain. Otherwise, there is a risk that the premium feel of the box will vanish quickly.

Remember, some paperboard products can crack immediately and break after 20 or even fewer folds. So be sure to ask for a multilayer solid bleached board that can be bent, creased and folded several thousand times without breaking. Using a multilayer SBB gives the consumer a great experience and enables your box to withstand the toughest printing, converting and finishing processes.

9.

PROTECT MORE WITH LESS

Tired of hearing that you'll need to increase grammage or basis weight to provide sufficient stiffness and the protection your product needs?

Beware! When you are going to pack a new, slightly heavier or bulkier product, you do not always have to use a higher grammage board.

Real strength is determined by your packaging construction and choice of material. It's about using an outer packaging material that balances stiffness with flexibility – a superior combination of elasticity, stiffness and compression strength. In other words, a multilayer board with lower grammage may actually let you achieve the same or even better strength and durability than some other higher grammage board. Not only does this represent a cost saving in terms of materials, it also helps to reduce transport costs and related emissions.

10.

CONSISTENT QUALITY = VALUE

Does your printer or converter worry about quality variations in the paperboard they get from batch to batch, pallet to pallet?

Actually, they should worry, and so should you. Not all paperboard manufacturers have integrated production facilities where they can maintain control over the pulp-making and board-manufacturing processes, as well as the sourcing and supply of the main raw materials. As a result, the paperboard quality may differ slightly, leading to varying results in printing, conversion and thus the end result of your packaging.

These quality inconsistencies can also have a big impact on your bottom line. If your printer or converter needs to start and stop the process or do reprints, you can find that a discount paperboard ends up costing you much more in the long run.

Choose a paperboard with consistent quality, in order to avoid impact on the bottom line.



Fresh new fibers are needed to feed the recycling process.



11.

BE PLANET FRIENDLY

Is your packaging material really as sustainable as you'd want it to be?

As the effects of climate change and environmental concerns are on everyone's agenda, both consumers and brands are on the lookout for more sustainable choices. When it comes to packaging, paperboard has an obvious advantage: it's a renewable material. What do we mean?

Well, wood is a continuously growing biomaterial that is part of the ecological cycle of nature. But here's the catch: you need to check that your paperboard provider is using sustainable methods to reduce environmental impact through the entire value chain – from raw material sourcing through production all the way to final delivery of the products.

Responsible paperboard manufacturers make a positive contribution to the forests by planting more than they harvest. However, only 9% of the world's forests are independently certified as sustainably managed. So, make sure you choose a supplier with sustainable practices from start to finish.

Another thing: did you know that there's a constant need to feed the recycling process with paper and board products made from fresh new "virgin" fibers? At the same time, the use of virgin fibers also ensures that the paperboard is stronger, cleaner, and can reproduce colors in print.

12.

GET THE RIGHT CERTIFICATES


Can your paperboard supplier provide you with all the quality and environmental certificates you need?

Certificates and standards are a positive way to set common benchmarks, and they can also be helpful in marketing your products. While these can vary widely, a look for the key international standards:

- Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®)
- Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC™)
- ISO certificates for quality management, environmental management and energy management
- OHSAS 18001, the international standard for management of occupational health and safety

In addition to the above, check if your supplier (or their group) is being assessed of any of the below institutions:

- Carbon Disclosure Project
- EcoVadis – Business Sustainability Rating
- Achilles – assessing sustainability sourcing



Your paperboard partner should embrace innovative product and process development.

13.

DEMAND DEEPER KNOWLEDGE

In addition to a superb product quality and reliable delivery solutions, can your paperboard partner provide knowledge and training to boost your business?

Specialist knowledge matters. Whether you're dealing with an issue before, during or after the packaging production, look for a partner who can support you all the way. A team of experts who embrace innovative product and process development and can help you achieve something truly special to make your products stand out on the shelf or enable a better total cost of ownership.

The best partners understand your unique local conditions and can provide your team with additional training regarding paperboard selection, printing challenges, sustainability and other issues.

They go beyond standard service requirements and can support you on a higher level. So, look into the additional services your supplier can provide and how you can benefit from their knowledge.

14.

ASK TO SEE REFERENCES

Ever get the feeling that your paperboard supplier doesn't fully understand the high demands of your industry and your product development team?

There are many different types of paperboard suppliers out there. Some are mainly product focused and will try to sell whatever happens to be in stock that day. Others may be keen to focus on beauty and cosmetics packaging but lack a deeper understanding of the extreme demands of the industry.

Be sure to ask for a reference list and check before making commitments. Do they have a long and successful track record? Have they worked with leading cosmetics and beauty brands? You've worked hard to establish your brand for the long term. Make sure you pick a partner who can support you into the future.

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Holmen Iggesund is the premium paperboard company for purposeful solutions. We invite our customers and partners to be part of creating the next generation of sustainable packaging solutions and graphical applications together with us.

We are part of the Holmen Group, relying on our own sustainably managed forests to ensure a renewable material for centuries to come.

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