

DEEP DIVE:



Four packaging trends and how
you can stay on top of them.

HOLMEN
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WHAT IS THE NEW BOX?

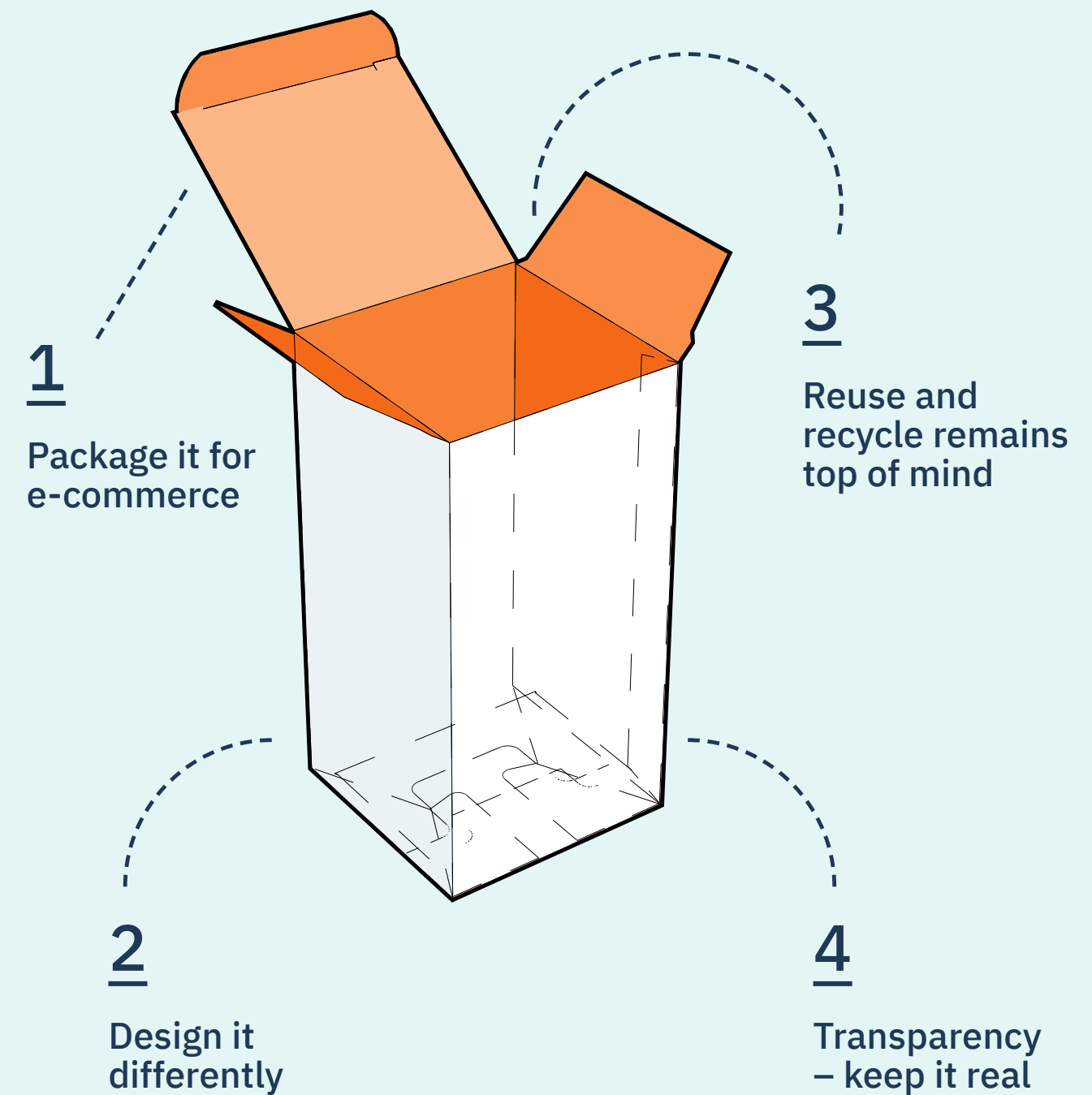
A number of packaging trends have accelerated since the Covid-19 pandemic threw a curveball at the world. The packaging world has changed and now is a good time to give your packaging a rethink and design it to optimise your brand image and benefits.

The world is changing. It constantly is. But sometimes there comes along one of those major events or shifts that accelerates this change. It can be a major conflict leading to new alliances and technologies or a single invention like the smartphone. A shift where the world is turned upside down creating new markets and leaving others behind. We dare to say that the Covid-19 pandemic is one of those defining moments, a pandemic that has and continue to transform us and our society. A new era.

The final answers are for the historians to know but we can already now see how Covid-19 and its effects have changed consumer behaviours for good and made way for a series of new inventions and transformations. But how about the packaging industry? What is post-Covid packaging? This deep dive will explore four major packaging trends and present you with tips and practical guidelines.



Four areas to keep in mind when designing your next package



1

PACKAGE IT FOR E-COMMERCE

Lockdowns and cabin fever... There's no denying that the Covid-19 pandemic gave e-commerce a rapid boost while saving the livelihoods of many retailers too. According to a 2021 study by personal finance start-up [Credit Karma](#), 70 per cent of Brits say buying online and on mobile phones have become their preferred shopping methods, up from less than half that prior to the pandemic.

Regardless of channel, customers expect a consistent shopping experience, so brands need to ensure their packaging provides the same convenience and brand experience as in the shop. For example, add an attractive branded bag with the package or a "personalised" message to replace the in-store greeting.

Unboxing can enhance consumer loyalty

With e-commerce, unboxing of the package becomes a part of the consumer experience. Unboxing suggests a great deal about the brand before consumers even see the actual product, so consider it as part of your product advertising.



Pierre-Antoine Henry
of Quadpack.

"Brands need to think about how the product will appear as it is unboxed, how easy it is to open, how sustainable the packaging will look to the consumer, and if it is optimised or wasteful. This will be particularly important for premium brands," says Pierre-Antoine Henry, head of market development for Quadpack, a global manufacturer and provider of hybrid packaging solutions for beauty brands.

Shipping poses another challenge. A product going through the e-commerce journey will be handled up to 20 times more than in traditional retail (Source: DHL, Deep Dive). The increase in handling increases the risk for damage to follow, so packaging needs to be

robust and fit to handle the different environments that it might be exposed to. It's the last mile that is the most difficult to control and when damage occurs, it doesn't matter if the blame is put on the shipper or co-packer; the customer relationship is still with the retailer or the brand.

Package protection with ISTA

Many packaging suppliers are now certifying their packaging to the new ISTA 6 standard, co-developed with Amazon. It ensures that packaging used in e-commerce meets certain standards when it comes to protection against shock, vibration, atmospheric changes, leakage and other shipment hazards.

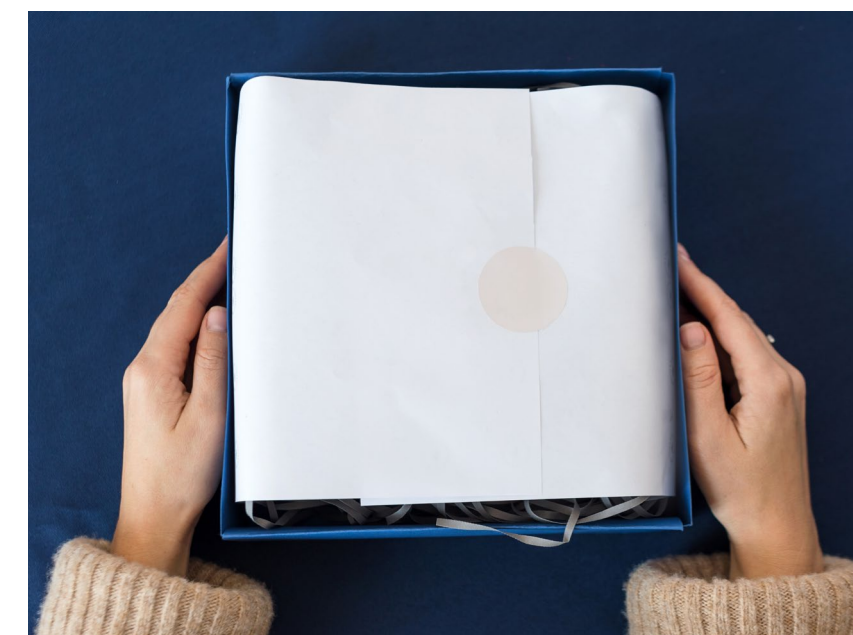


Photo: Istockphoto

2-5 × e-commerce growth

According to "The future of work after COVID-19", a [McKinsey report](#) from 2021, e-commerce grew two to five times faster in 2020 than prior to the pandemic. In China, it grew 1.6 times faster, in the US, 3.3, in Germany, 2.3 and in the UK, a whopping 4.5.

2

DESIGN IT
DIFFERENTLY

Photo: Tide

Good package design needs to tick a whole bunch of new boxes today, including designing for greater sustainability, unboxing and e-commerce. “Packaging today is mostly designed for omnichannel selling, and if there is too much secondary and tertiary packaging that can feel wasteful to consumers. This is where designers can make the world a better place,” says David Feber, a partner at McKinsey & Company who works primarily in consumer packaged goods and industrials. “Designers should be asking ‘How can I reduce waste and optimise this package design for sustainability and e-commerce?’”

Tide invest in smart design

Tide detergent managed to substantially reduce its shipping footprint with a bag-in-box format. The volume of both primary and secondary packaging material was reduced with the clever all-in-one box. The challenge for the designers was to create an attractive box from scratch for e-commerce, cut out wasteful packaging and ensure the package would protect against leakage. Messaging to consumers was also crucial and in addition to commu-

“After the pandemic, I think we will look at design from the perspective of the rebirth of packaging.”

Ivan Alonso, Associate Creative Director at Handsome



Ivan Alonso
Associate
Creative
Director at
Handsome.

nicating its brand message, the Tide “Eco-Box” has instructions for consumers on how to separate the cardboard and plastic for recycling. One of the design objectives was to ensure ease of disposal for the slimmed down packaging.

New technologies and more active engagement with partners are needed, along with creative and

thoughtful designs to address the requirements of the supply chain and consumer needs, says Feber.

Use augmented reality for impact

Ivan Alonso, Associate Creative Director at Handsome, a holistic experience design agency based in Austin, also expects to see a push for more sustainable and thoughtful designs, with less material, but at the same time more intention and function. “We’ll start to see more packaging that incorporates augmented reality. The packaging itself will hold less information, but provide the stage for more immersive and impactful experiences that allow consumers to interact and find the information that is most important to their purchase decision or customer retention.”



3

REUSE AND RECYCLE REMAINS TOP OF MIND

If consumers and brands weren't thinking about sustainable packaging before, they certainly are now with the pandemic and rise in e-commerce. Renewable and recyclable materials are bigger than ever, with paper being at the top of that list.

"Brands are putting a lot of research and development effort into making paper compatible with the formulas used in beauty products. In particular, creating a barrier with the paper means that it can still be recycled while enabling the use of the formulas we have today," says Pierre-Antoine Henry, head of market development at Quadpack, a global manufacturer and provider of hybrid packaging for beauty brands.

Replace plastic with bio-composites

The thing that is really going to drastically change the game is biosourced materials, or bio-composites, he points out. "These are materials that replace plastics, but which can be used in the same way as plastic. You still inject it in the same machines and the same moulds, so they are more efficient from an economic point of view for the production of large volumes."

Innovative materials

Wellness brand Seed has a "less is more" approach to packaging, something that is rooted in the ethos of their brand. Everything from the FSC-certified paper box, to the glass bottle, to the mycelium tray made out of mushroom root has been thoughtfully sourced. Their pouches are biodegradable and the foam used for insulation is made out of edible corn.



Amy Nelson-Bennet
Co-CEO,
Positive Luxury.

Make it functional and beautiful

Multi-purpose packaging is another plus for sustainability and brand image, especially when packaging can be so well designed that consumers want to keep it and reuse it. "A well-constructed box or carrier bag and gift box will get used again and again, and there is a growing voice for refillable solutions," says Amy Nelson-Bennett Co-CEO, Positive Luxury. Some home fragrance and candle producers have adapted this approach, she adds.

"Rather than throw the containers in the bin after use, they are making them so beautiful that consumers are keeping them as decorative items – it's packaging as art almost."

x7

Did you know that fresh fibre can be used up to seven times through recycling and create packaging material long after it starts the journey from the forest? To make this work, a flow of fresh fibres needs to be added to keep the process running. Without the addition of fresh fibres into the loop, the recycling process would stop within six months. (Deep Dive – Transparency sourcing)



4

TRANSPARENCY
– KEEP IT REAL

Discerning consumers have heard it all before. No wonder they've become sceptical. Consumers want more transparency not only about the products and their contents, but also regarding the entire chain of command. Brands have to provide that in order to retain loyal customers.

Check on your supply chain

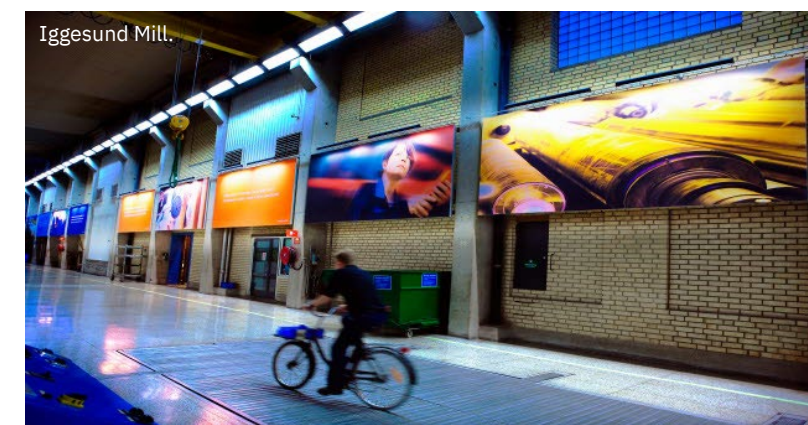
"One positive outcome of the pandemic is that it accelerated a push for businesses to do good," says Amy Nelson-Bennett, Co-CEO of Positive Luxury. "Consumers have become more educated and are asking for evidence of companies behaving ethically both environmentally and from a social perspective. We see how people's values have changed since the pandemic. There is greater respect for nature, more questions about fairness, and companies are asked more about their supply chain and if everybody is paid fairly, treated well, and how companies are supporting the communities where their products are made."

You've laid all this out for consumers after a great deal of time and effort so don't forget to do the same with the package! What is the package made of? Is it FSC-certified? Who made it? Was it made using renewable energy?

**FSC ensures responsible practices**

When focusing on paperboard supplies, there are two particular areas to look for: FSC Forest Management Certificates and FSC Chain of Custody Certificates. These need to be in place to enable a certification of the final product. If you choose to source from a supplier with both of these certificates, you know they are taking responsibility for

the whole chain, from seedling to product and in the management of their forest for generations. FSC certification also ensures that workers' rights are protected in accordance with the International Labour Standards, and that health and safety practices have been implemented which meet or exceed the recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO) code.



Iggesund Mill.

Nothing to hide

Most European board and paper mills can offer full traceability for their products, all the way back to the origin of where the trees have been harvested. (Deep Dive Futureproof packaging)

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information or discuss
possible solutions?

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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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