

Packaging That Keeps On Giving

By JoAnn R. Hines, Packaging Diva



This is the time of the year when the media is all a frenzy about consumer product packaging. Whether its 'wrap rage' over hard to open packaging, too much packaging, or just packaging and general is everybody has something bad to say about product packaging. Most of the time people just complain and never consider solutions but a few companies are coming up with feasible product packaging programs.

It's common knowledge that the green movement is getting considerable traction. There have been a host of eco friendly product packaging claims and innovations. Companies are seriously looking for ways to resolve the consumers of dissatisfaction over excess or too much product packaging. Although many companies are trying to come up with eco friendly packaging alternatives the answer may not be just to have a 'greener' package but to reconfigure the packaging purpose altogether.

The key is to think about packaging differently. Its not going away as so many people would like to suggest. Packaging has a job to do and considering how few problems we have with products, packaging IS performing as intended. So what other options are there?

Several businesses have begun reusing discarded packaging and turning it into other products. The most notable being Terracycle that has several partnerships with major CPG companies. They take back your old packaging and you even get paid for it like they do with bottle surcharges. From the used packaging they create a whole host of new products and the consumer is happy.

New terms have surfaced packaging that is 'recycled' that it be 'repurposed' for secondary use. Good examples with be glass containers that have a secondary life, aluminum tins that can be used for other purposes or any package that can be reused in a different method from its primary purpose. This concept has been around for a while, its just that many companies are getting more creative about it.

In addition there are other things to think about, ways that packaging can give back to its users by or donating proceeds to other needy causes. The latest rage is celebrities using product packaging to support their special causes. We've all seen the use of the pink breast cancer ribbon on product packaging but other causes are coming to the fore. You will see statements such as X percentage of proceeds are given back to X charity or a % of profits will be donated to a specific cause. Not sure who monitors that this really happens but the sentiment is good anyway.

Lastly products like the Cargo lipstick packaging that gives back as another product entirely. When you plant the package embedded with seeds it turns into flowers.

However you package your products think creatively about the packaging. Can it see another like as something else or is it just something going into the trash. As brands struggle for differentiation one way might be to create packaging that keeps on giving long after the product is gone.

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