

Why Packaging Matters in Retailing: A Consistent Message Builds Customer Loyalty

The packaging of your product may be one of the last considerations that you make. For many business owners, the packaging itself represents a way to identify the product for your customers. But it can mean so much more if you understand how to utilize the opportunity to increase brand awareness and build customer loyalty.

The better you understand how packaging works to complete the sale, the more you can gain out of how your product is presented by the package itself. What follows are a few tips to help you get the most out of the packaging of your products.

Packaging can Make or Break Your Brand

Imagine all the effort put into researching, developing, and creating a product that has real customer value, only to see it fail to sell because of the packaging. That's because customers judge the packaging of the product as a reflection of the business which sells it.

If the packaging generates a poor impression, that can lead to consumers bypassing your product. Such poor presentation in packaging may include.

- Uneven or Poor Wrapping
- Not Enough Information
- Unclear Wording
- Bad or Unusual Color Scheme

While the product may be something a consumer desires, the packaging tells them about your company. The better the product is packaged, the more the branding of your business will be increased. Conversely, the poorer the packaging, the greater the negative impression. Focusing on getting the basics right in packaging is the first step towards building your brand.

Understanding the Buying Decision

The potential customer makes the decision to purchase your product based on several factors. Each factor usually falls into an order.

- Fulfill a Need or Desire
- Research
- Examine the Product & Customer Reviews
- Make the Purchasing Decision

Consider that people purchase products to fulfill a need or desire which may be real or simply perceived. Whatever that need or desire may be, the next step is normally researching the product. This can be as complicated as searching online to compare different products or as simple as comparing them in the store.

A vital part of the comparison process includes the overall quality of the product itself. The quality is reflected not only in the product, but how it is packaged.

Of course, many purchases are made on impulse. Which is when a customer may not have a need or desire and does no research but sees a product on the shelf and immediately pulls it to make a purchase. Such products tend to fill an immediate need or realization, but the packaging still plays a vital role. If the package is not up to snuff, the consumer may not feel the impulse to make the purchase.

Enforcing Quality Control

With all that is stated about understanding why consumers purchase products, it should be noted that all your packaging efforts must include solid quality control. It does little good to create a package that is unique and attractive only to see it destroyed in the shipping process.

The packaging must be made of good materials, have extra protection when being shipped, and be robust enough to stay in like-new condition to the point where it reaches the retail stores and beyond. While the packaging itself need not be unduly expensive, it does need to be made of high-quality materials that withstand impacts, scrapes, and aging over time.

Good quality control also plays into the brand of your company. Consumers are quite familiar with packaging to the point where it almost becomes a subconscious feature. As if we all innately understand the difference between good and bad packaging. Using robust materials is a strong part of the overall brand building when it comes to your packaging.

It's Better to Be Different Than Better

With so much competition, standing out from the crowd is critical to making a successful sale. The old saying of 'it's better to be different than better' shines because better is often a judgement call between similar products. But being different is more objective. And that means more consumers will see your product right away. This makes it easier for consumers to proceed to the next step which is the purchasing decision. It is where they read the information and judge what they see in terms of quality. While it is true that most consumers look for the best deal in terms of pricing, they also want the highest quality product they can get for their money.

And that is where packaging plays a important role. Not only does proper packaging create a positive impression, but it also helps the consumer make the decision to purchase the product. Quite often, the difference between consideration and making the sale comes down to how the product is packaged.

Deliver a Consistent Message in Your Marketing

The initial decision to purchase a product is only the first step. The goal is not just to create a customer, but to create a repeat customer. The foundation of virtually all companies that offer products or services is customers who buy repeatedly. In essence, once a customer is sold on your product, it is far easier to have them purchase again compared to finding a new customer.

This makes packaging a vital part of your marketing strategy. It is often the final piece that makes the sale. The importance in terms of messaging cannot be understated. What goes into the creation of your logo, color scheme, and overall presentation must be reflected in the packaging as well.

It is said that a typical customer says 'no' five times before they decide to make the purchase. Overcoming the doubts starts with a consistent messaging in your marketing and advertising campaign. And that includes the packaging which should reflect the message you have sent to consumers long before they see your product.

Consistent messaging in packaging is a vital part of the sales process. And while the overall quality, design, and presentation of the packaging is important, ensuring that it matches your long-term marketing efforts is what turns consumers into customers for life.

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About the Author:

Elias Amash, President of GRIP, is an industry veteran with more than 30 years of experience in global sourcing, manufacturing, distribution, retail merchandising, fulfillment, marketing, technology, and operations. He is a trusted partner to hundreds of retailers and has “leveled up” the industry with GRIP’s undying commitment to offering only the highest levels of service to its customers. Amash has published several books: 8 Skills That Pay Off Forever, The Top 10 Most Important Lessons, The Retail Advantage: How to Win the War with Amazon, Retail Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies and Why, The 50 Most Important Lessons in Life, The Future of Retail, Importing from China: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly, and 101 Bright Ideas: Winning Tactics to Increase Retail Sales.

About GRIP:

GRIP was incorporated by Charles Amash in 1980 and has grown into one of the nation’s top suppliers of innovative products to the retail industry. Located just south of Grand Rapids, Michigan, GRIP features a 200,000 sq ft state of the art warehouse facility including a 2,000 sq ft product showroom. GRIP carries a product line of over 1,000 specialty tools, tarps, automotive, cargo control, cleaning, LED lighting, magnetics, outdoors, household items, impulse and general merchandise. GRIP has a proven track record of excellence in supplying retail clients with innovative products, timely fulfillment, and world-class customer support. At GRIP, everything is about earning your business...one customer at a time. It’s about building relationships and fostering business partnerships that will last long into the future. Our goal is to have Customers for Life. The future at GRIP is exciting and we’re hoping that you can be a part of it as one of our many Customers for Life.

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