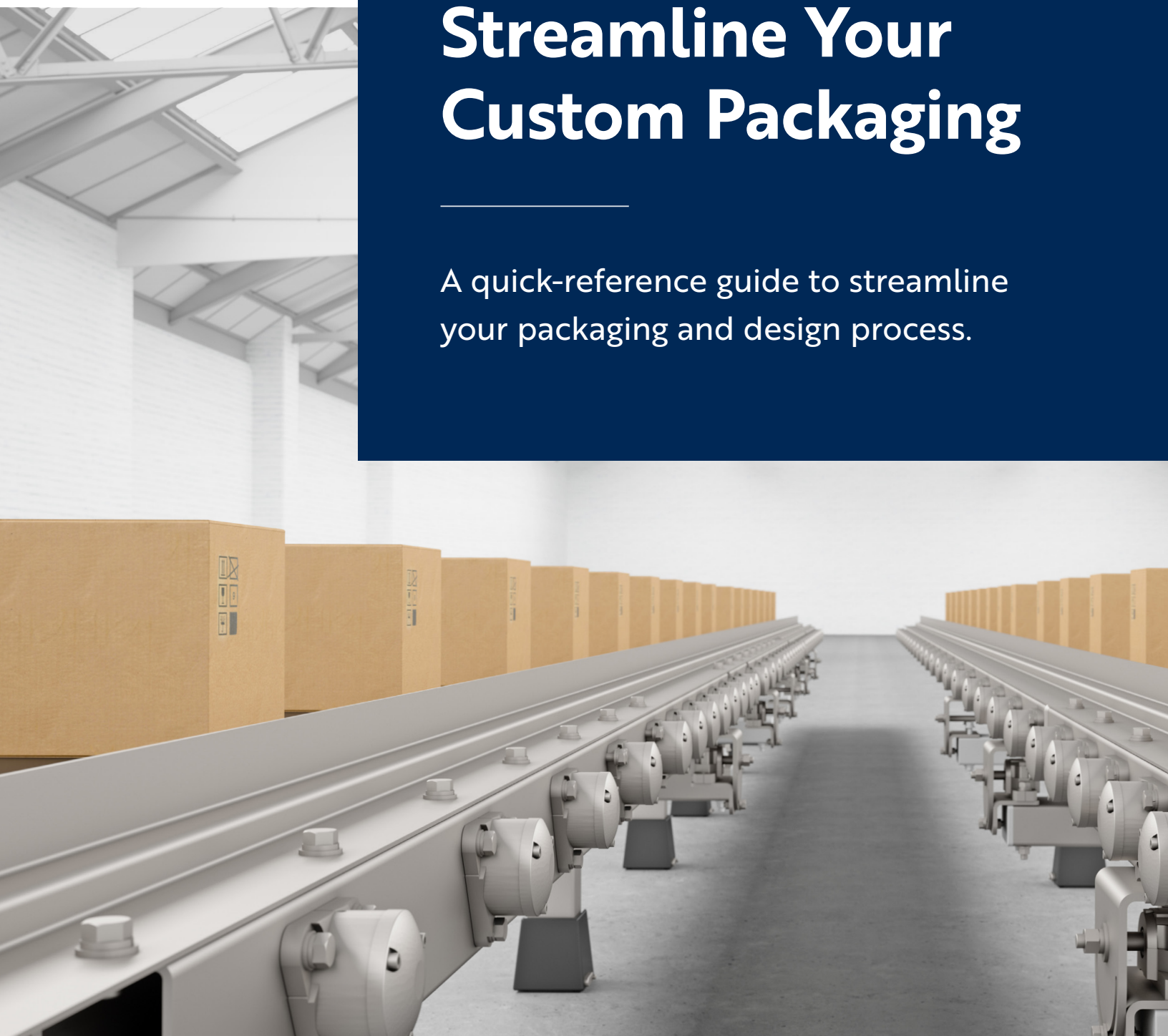




Streamline Your Custom Packaging

A quick-reference guide to streamline your packaging and design process.



Maybe you've been assigned to create a new packaging design for another SKU that's part of an existing product line. Or perhaps you've been tasked with reducing your overall packaging costs. Or maybe you have to change a pack out configuration on existing items.

Whatever the reason for your packaging project, we encourage you to take a step back for a few minutes to learn how you can streamline not only your packaging, but the packaging design process as well.

In this quick-reference guide, we'll share expert tips on:



An Efficient New Package Design Process



Optimizing Your Current Packaging



An Efficient New Package Design Process

Customizing anything involves a well-thought-out process to ensure the right outcome. Below, we share five important steps to create a smooth, efficient packaging design process:



By following this proven process, you'll avoid unnecessary headaches, and ultimately, you'll experience a packaging design that not only meets but exceeds your expectations.

A woman in a yellow blazer and dark dress is shaking hands with a man in a dark suit. The woman is holding a blue folder. The background is a light-colored tiled floor.

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Selecting your supplier

Samples:

Carefully evaluate your prospective supplier's work by asking for actual project samples.

Solutions:

Learn how they solved customers challenges and find out what benefits the customers experienced.

Project Management:

Ask to meet with both the designer and packaging professional who will manage your project.

Necessary Tools:

Consider if the supplier has the essential in-house tools—such as a sample table and CAD—that will facilitate a speedy and efficient design process. Digital rendering capability, for example, is very effective for team collaboration and can make all the difference between a timely design process and one that's agonizingly slow.

Material Selection:

Determine if your supplier can design with and deliver an entire range of packaging materials. Working with a material neutral supplier ensures a full range of paper and plastic options.

Creative Skills:

Consider the supplier's creative skill set and if they have the project management know-how to smoothly guide your project to a successful conclusion.

Understanding all stakeholder needs

Take the time to ask, “What’s the reason for our design project in the first place?”

For example, if you’re redesigning existing packaging, determine why you’re changing the design. The more information you can share with your packaging design team stakeholders, the better.

Ask your marketing team:

- If they have specific package styles or graphics processes they’d like.
- Whether they have an image in mind that they’re trying to replicate.

Ask your operations department:

- If they have concerns pertaining to space limitations.
- If they can provide valuable data on shipping failure rates or product returns which will help you understand product fragility issues and how to approach your packaging’s structural design.
- If the design is for a new SKU of an existing line, can the other products be considered part of this design project for potential packaging SKU consolidation.

Ask your accounting team:

- To confirm whether there is sufficient budget for your packaging project. If you’re embarking on a new product launch, there might even be an incentive to seek out premium packaging to help boost sales

Communicating well along the way

Effective communication—from initial design concept through implementation—is paramount. While some designs only require minimal initial adjustments, others may require several revisions. Gaining sufficient feedback from both your supplier and stakeholders is imperative during this phase.

Effective communication also includes using digital renderings that help to visualize proposed changes. This makes it easier and faster to collaborate on required design changes. Effective communication (including listening) and interpersonal skills, as well as project management capability, will keep design projects on track.

❗ *Gaining sufficient feedback from both your supplier and stakeholders is imperative.*



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Prototyping and testing

Prototyping enables you to actually visualize design concepts early on. Prototyping also provides the opportunity to examine how your contents will fit the packaging design.

Your packaging designs should undergo preliminary testing for structural integrity. Dynamic and static testing that simulate handling, along with drop tests should be performed before your team receives designs for review.

In addition, an in-house digital press allows your supplier to create samples for various needs. Full-color premium quality printing (without a print or die investment) means faster production times for market tests, promotions and much more.



A great custom package design is only as good as how it stands up to the rigors of shipping and handling.

Implementing and follow-through

And finally, partnering with the right custom packaging solutions supplier means you'll benefit from the latest leading-edge and competitively sourced materials. You'll also rely on your supplier to not only implement and manage rolling out your new packaging but ongoing inventory programs as well.

By capitalizing on a custom packaging design supplier with the right skillsets, talent, and reputation for solid customer service, you'll end up with a resource you can depend on for many years to come.

❗ *Partnering with the right custom packaging solutions supplier means you'll benefit from the latest leading-edge and competitively sourced materials.*




Optimizing Your Current Packaging

When it comes to custom packaging designs, bulky and expensive does not mean it's better.

Rather, it's important to perform a regular audit of your custom packaging to ensure you are maximizing your resources while minimizing costs and packaging materials. Here, we share a few ways to streamline your custom packaging.





Perform a structural packaging review

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Perform a structural packaging review

Taking a fresh look at even your most established packaging processes may uncover opportunities for some real impact and cost savings. That's when a skilled custom packaging design team can offer alternatives that you may not have realized were available.

For example, consider bulky corrugated inserts used for product bracing or as spacers:


- Do they really need to be so bulky?
- Is there an alternate configuration that can reduce the amount of material being used?
- Is there an alternate material that would provide better protection and/or better aesthetics?

Review your use of foam - don't assume more is better

- There are many different foam structures each with distinct advantages and characteristics. At times, upgrading to a higher cost foam will provide a lower cost due to the ability to reduce your package footprint. Or, it may create the opportunity to consolidate the bracing foam to accommodate several of the other SKUs in your line. That kind of redesign can deliver significant savings and benefits throughout your operations.

Review all internal additional packaging

- Perhaps you have continuously improved your product design so that fragility issues may no longer be a concern or may be mitigated by the product design evolutions. So, you may be able to reduce the internal packaging now needed.
- Review any inserts and inner trays in use. Could the inserts be redesigned to improve the labor cost to assemble them? Could the number of SKUs be reduced? An unbiased and thorough design review may uncover solutions that incorporate all the aesthetic and structural requirements within a more sophisticated but more efficient package concept.

 *So, if you haven't looked at your structural packaging components in the past couple of years, it's probably time to bring in a custom packaging design team for a thorough review.*



Evaluate your box sizes and shipping methods

For busy shipping departments that use many different size boxes and void fill, when was the last time you reviewed the entire line of shipping components and methods?

Have you considered the possibility of reducing the size of the number of boxes in use? If that seems like an overwhelming task, a good custom packaging solutions provider can manage that entire analysis with you. In the process, you might find that it makes sense to convert lighter weight items to poly mailers, or that adding a conveyor here or a taper there will speed up output.



Review corporate sustainability goals




With an ever increasing awareness of our impact on the environment, your corporate sustainability initiatives may be expanding as well. You may even be able to reduce your overall costs by looking carefully at some of the drivers of excess and unrecyclable packaging.

A few examples are:

- **Redundant packaging components** – if there are 7 or 8 parts to your final package (multiple inserts, inner cartons, liners, bags etc) there could be opportunity to redesign for SKU reduction
- **Recyclability of materials** – either plastic and paper bonded together which renders them unrecyclable, or converting to materials with higher recycled content
- **Ecommerce packaging** – if your business relies increasingly on internet commerce sales especially through Amazon, reconsider just overpacking the existing retail package. Designing for the safe transit of an individual package shipment may not only reduce your overall packaging , but reduce costs while better protecting your products.

Any of these initiatives could help you quickly make great strides towards your sustainability goals.



Streamline with fulfillment services



Look beyond the constraints of your operation to see if fulfillment services can help increase output, improve efficiencies and help you maximize your labor.

Pre-assembly of packaging can take up a lot of space and manpower.

Could a redesign streamline the number of sku's in your packaging? Inserts and trays can often be combined into a single element of the package. Or the individual inserts can be redesigned to reduce the labor component. If pre assembly is still required, perhaps outsourcing that process could alleviate your capacity constraints.

If your packaging includes instruction manuals, warranty cards or promotional materials, that could also be outsourced. These can be sorted and bagged offsite and brought back in as one complete unit ready to add to your final package.

Consider fulfilment services as additional capacity to help you meet seasonal demands.

Or take those special retail package configurations off line to a well resourced fulfilment services provider, preserving your space and labor for your production needs. They can even ship directly from there to your business or consumer accounts.

If you are venturing into ECommerce, you probably need to reconfigure the packaging for that marketplace. And to do it right could take a separate production line and separate shipping operations and maybe even some additional equipment. Or let a fulfilment services manage the entire operation for you even shipping to your B2C customers on your behalf.



Think outside the box to see how fulfilment services could help you increase your capacity, enter new markets and grow your business.



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There you have it.

These are just a few examples of how custom packaging solutions, including fulfillment services, can help you improve your packaging operations and uncover real cost savings.

Looking to streamline your custom packaging design and process? Contact us today for a custom packaging consultation.

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