

MARKETING

Luxury retail: Why a customer should love your packaging first, and then your product

February 22, 2021



The White Company, an English retailer of linens, home decor, dinnerware and furniture at Brent Cross Shopping Center in Barnet, North London, England. The brand's customers expect the same clean, minimal and sophisticated designs present in all other branding elements to also be reflected in its packaging. Image courtesy of The White Company

By [Robert Lockyer](#)

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

With packaging, looks *do* matter. In the digital age especially, that all-important outer shell is often the first physical point of contact a customer has with a brand, so the impression it leaves needs to be a positive one, as this will then influence consumers' respective thoughts and feelings towards the brand and their overall experience with it.

The look of the packaging, understandably, plays a key role in making this impact. It needs to look neat, presentable and fit for purpose first of all, which will come down to the quality of materials used, for example, and then in line with what they were expecting of the brand, next.

To achieve this, it is common for packaging to carry a brand's logo, colors or other visual cues. But while most brands have mastered this, more can be done by taking into consideration wider brand values, and then developing packaging solutions that represent them.

For instance, an increasing number of luxury brands in recent years have adopted more minimalist images to represent more timeless and classic brand values, and their packaging elements have been updated to reflect such a shift. As a result, it is common for designer bags, boxes and inserts to be sleek in design, with minimal branding, often with just a name printed on them while also being in the company's recognizable colors.

Take [The White Company](#) as an example. Whether a customer places an order online or makes an in-store purchase, there are clear preconceptions of what is to be expected from the brand's packaging.

While color is an obvious one, customers expect the same clean, minimal and sophisticated designs present in all other branding elements to also be reflected in its packaging. And they are not wrong.

When they receive a package from the brand, or walk out of the shop with a bag, they are left with a clear and consistent overall experience, which will then evoke positive feelings towards the company and its products, and ultimately, a repeat purchase.

Not only this, but the smart and sophisticated design of such boxes affords them greater status, and therefore use, enabling them to be used in replacement of gift wrapping and even as decorative household items.



Este Lauder packaging is as attractive as the product's aesthetics inside. Image courtesy of Este Lauder

Love is green

When packages can be reused in this way, they are also better for the environment. And with an **increasing number of customers desiring greater sustainability from brands** as well as ways to reduce their own carbon footprints, investing in eco-friendly packaging only does the company favors.

Ultimately, sustainability is a question of ethics, and by tapping into consumers' deep rooted personal values by aligning their activities to them, brands can certainly encourage deeper connections and better engagement with customers. Over time, this translates to repeat purchases and even brand loyalty and advocacy, for which things all brands strive.

The offering of sustainable packaging, therefore, becomes yet another reason for customers to choose and love a brand and its products, and going forward, this will help set certain companies apart from competitors.

Therefore, any investment will be worthwhile. With high-quality packaging that meets consumers' expectations and leaves them with a positive overall experience and feelings towards the brand, companies can encourage behaviors that only provide greater commercial value to the business, as well as protect our planet. And that certainly should not be a second thought.

An online affair

Another thing that should not be dismissed is the prominence of online retail.

Unarguably, global **ecommerce sales figures are on the rise**, and the COVID-19 pandemic and its related disruption have only accelerated the digital-first shift.

Although not the most obvious matter, packaging has a huge role to play in ensuring products can be shipped to customers all over the world, safely and efficiently.

Before a product even reaches a customer, it has likely been packed and passed around in many different ways, and by the time it does become theirs, these various packaging elements must have done their job well and enabled it to arrive on time and in one piece. If it does not, it is likely customers will have already developed unfavorable perceptions of the brand, and no matter how much they had desired the product, their experience will have been tainted and the feeling of ick will prevail.

While this is a test for the functionality of a brand's packaging, the online route via which it has arrived at a customer's door means brands need to think far beyond this in the digital age.

As mentioned previously, in these instances, the package is often the first physical touchpoint a customer has with a brand, and as well as meeting their expectations, they also need to be impressed by what they see in order to really fall in love with their purchase.

The whole experience of receiving and opening an order needs to be just that an experience. And while quality and functionality have some part to play in this, the real love story is created through offering customers greater value, whether that be with additional uses, higher quality materials, or personalized interactions, for example.

That last point is where there is a real sweet spot, particularly for ecommerce sales. The physical distance between customers and an online seller can drive great disconnect and have detrimental impacts on engagement. Therefore, by reinforcing the online sales journey by personalizing packaging elements, this gap can be narrowed.

Personalization in this way can be anything from tailored message cards, through to smart QR codes that take customers straight to the brand's social media channels, for example.

But whatever method is chosen, the experience must be straightforward, interactive and feel unique and relevant to each individual customer. This will allow them to get a real sense of the brand, what it stands for and exactly why they should love its products.

AS IT WOULD SEEM, when it comes to packaging, the age-old saying is not true: while a package's contents are important, as ultimately, that is what the customer has paid for, it is what's outside that counts.



Robert Lockyer is founder/CEO of Delta Global Source (UK) Ltd.

Robert Lockyer is founder/CEO of luxury packaging provider [Delta Global Source \(UK\) Ltd.](#), Leicester, England.

© 2021 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.