

International Shipping

Is Sustainable Packaging More Expensive In 2022?

Would you like to start using sustainable packaging but you're not sure of the costs? This post will show you the different options available to you.



By Lauren Green, October 14, 2022

Key points:

- 52% of online shoppers in the UK/US want brands to reduce their packaging to be more sustainable
- There are 3 main types of sustainable packaging which are all made of different materials
- Choosing a sustainable packaging option will save you money in the long run

Sustainable packaging is becoming more and more popular, as businesses and individuals are growing more environmentally conscious. With more people looking for a sustainable packaging option, a lot of people are considering the cost. Many people have been asking 'is sustainable packaging more expensive?' In this post, we will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of sustainable packaging, how to package an item sustainably and how to make the switch to a more environmentally friendly choice.

According to Statista, in 2021 a survey revealed that 52% of online shoppers in the UK and US wished that brands would make products with less packaging, 36% said that they want brands to be more transparent about their sustainability practices, and 28% of people said they appreciated brands who partnered with local environmental groups.

Another report states that almost 9 out of ten US shoppers would be willing to wait an extra five days for their packages to be delivered in order to improve sustainability if they were given an incentive.

What Types of Sustainable Packaging Are There?

Compostable packaging

Compostable packaging is made from paper, cardboard, or bioplastics. It breaks down naturally over time when it is left in the right environment. As it is made from organic materials, it doesn't leave any harmful or toxic chemicals behind as it breaks down.

Biodegradable packaging

Biodegradable packaging is made up of materials that can be decomposed by microorganisms, which include algae, bacteria, and fungi. Bio-based plastics are a popular form of biodegradable packaging and can be made up of mushrooms, cornstarch, seaweed, and other forms of plant-based materials.

Recyclable packaging

Recyclable packaging is made of materials that can keep being used over and over again after processing. The most common recyclable materials include paper, card, metal, and glass. Corrugated cardboard is the most popular form of recyclable packaging.

Benefits of Sustainable Packaging

There are many benefits to switching to sustainable packaging and very few disadvantages. The main benefits for businesses include:

- Improve your brand image - With so many eco-conscious consumers now, it makes sense to keep them happy and opt for a sustainable option. It can also build trust with your customers which is a huge win
- Doing your bit for the environment - By choosing to use sustainable packaging, you will be putting out fewer chemicals and less waste and will stop packaging going to landfill
- Easy to reuse and recycle - Sustainable packaging can be used over and over again which will save you money



Cost of Sustainable Packaging

There are a fair amount of sustainable packaging options that are available at different costs depending on what you would prefer to use. It is important to note that while the upfront costs of sustainable packaging material may be more expensive than non-sustainable materials, you will be saving a lot more in the long run, so try to think ahead.

Not forgetting plastic tax - In April 2022 the plastic packaging tax was introduced and if you are importing or manufacturing over 10 tonnes of plastic packaging then you may be taxed. So it's of course best to avoid this by switching to a sustainable alternative now.

A quick Google search for eco-friendly packaging or sustainable packaging materials is sure to pull up a lot of results. There are many places that you can choose from to source your materials - again, with Amazon being a great choice or EcoEnclose which offers free samples. It's always best to do your research and find sustainable packaging supplies that best suit your needs. Some companies may offer more advantages than others and the pricing can vary. Take some time to compare the options available and remember that your choice of packaging affects your customers.

If you are a business then it is always best to send your items out in branded, sustainable packaging so your customer can recognize who the package has come from. Branded packaging looks more professional than packaging that does not have the company name or logo on it and can look much nicer than plain packaging.

Related post: Sustainable Packaging Guide

Switching to Sustainable Packaging

It is easier than you think to switch to sustainable packaging and there are some great alternatives to typical packaging. Kraft mailing bags are a paper alternative to plastic mailing bags and are becoming increasingly popular. They are biodegradable and can be easily recycled. Eco-friendly poly bags are another good option and are a great alternative to plastic bags. They are made from recycled LDPE.

Making the switch to sustainable packaging doesn't have to be expensive or difficult. Many companies are now switching to sustainable packaging and trying to reduce the amount of packaging they use. Amazon is one of the companies that have made huge changes to the way they package their products and have significantly reduced the amount of packaging material they use.

Amazon has invested in technologies and materials that overall, have reduced per-shipment packaging weight by 38% and removed more than 1.5 million tons of packaging. Amazon has also rolled out a Frustration-Free Packaging (FFP) Program and the goal is to reinvent the packaging experience. This program welcomes packaging that is more sustainable, fully recyclable, easy to open, and can be shipped without the need for additional protection. By the end of 2021 over 2 million products were found to be suitable for the FFP program.

So Is Sustainable Packaging More Expensive?

In short - no. Choosing a non-sustainable packaging option can not only cost you money in the long run but it could also cost you your customers. Even though there may be a difference in cost between sustainable options and an option such as plastic, it's always best to go for the sustainable choice. Choosing a cheaper option upfront will not pay off in the future, so take some time to look around and find a reputable supplier. Once you have found a sustainable packaging supplier and built a relationship with them, then they may be able to offer you discounts on future orders, so don't let the original costs put you off.

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