

# Thinking Outside the Box: Custom Packaging Strategies for Creative Marketing, Branding, and Sales



## REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

Successful companies must continuously differentiate their products and brands from their competitors to win global markets. Packaging — in many cases, the customer's first impression of a product and brand — is critical.

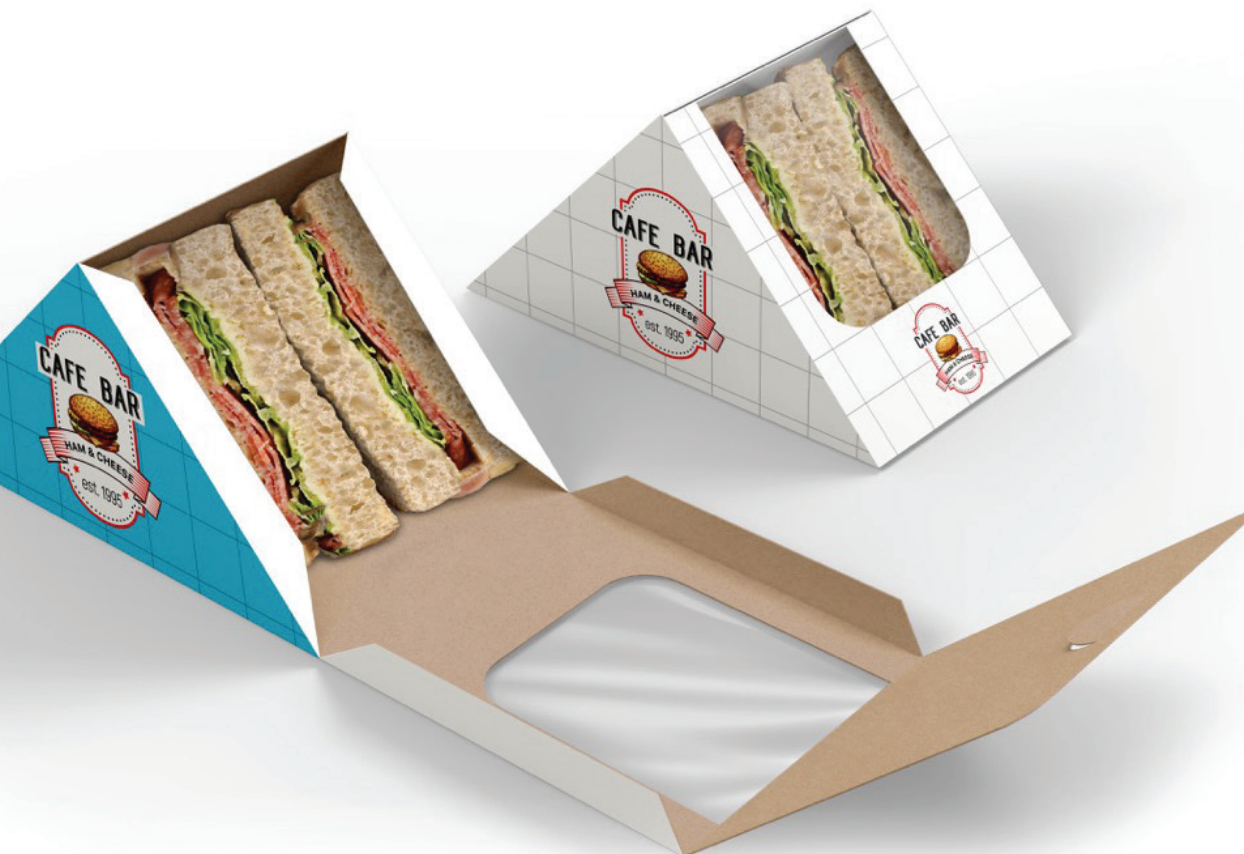
Custom packaging creates unique and memorable pre- and post-purchase experiences for consumers. Smart businesses leverage this strategy to achieve greater impact in their marketing, branding, and sales programs.

## Custom Packaging: What is it?

Custom packaging is designed to immediately and powerfully deliver a company's brand promise and unique value messaging on the packaging of a specific product. It incorporates highly differentiating characteristics such as shapes, colors, materials, text, and design elements.

Custom packaging, created with state-of-the-art, wide-format, direct-to-package printing:

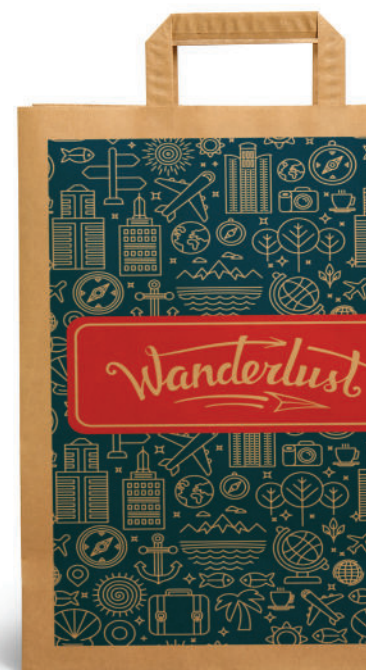
- Attracts customer attention by cutting through competitive noise to become the first and most memorable impression in the purchasing journey.
- Immediately identifies the brand and product with the company's distinctive brand logo and designs — making it instantly recognizable to new and repeat customers.
- Delivers the product's promise through its visual presentation, then provides a memorable unboxing experience. This promotes post-purchase delight plus encourages positive word-of-mouth and social media discussions.
- Increases the product's perceived value by creating a “halo effect” that imparts the expectation of quality.





## How to Create It

1. Start with the customer. Effective custom packaging requires a deep understanding of the product user's needs. How does the product's promise fulfill the user's expectations? What will the user consider a successful experience? The goal: capture user expectations in an aesthetic display that builds anticipation — before the package is opened.
2. Leverage and reinforce the company's brand identity, messaging, and value proposition. Utilize brand colors, logos, and typography to create a package instantly recognizable to customers and highly differentiated from competitors.
3. Focus on design and materials to support and enhance the first rule of packaging — functionality. Besides protecting the product during shipping and handling, complying with regulations, and meeting cost parameters, consider the user touchpoints — ease of handling, carrying, opening, unpacking, and storage.
4. Design for sustainability — an increasingly important customer criterion. In addition to user-friendliness, packaging must be environmentally sustainable. Custom packaging should incorporate eco-friendly materials and designs that eschew excess waste and are easy to recycle or reuse.
5. Digital, direct-to-package printing provides new opportunities for personalization. It enables the printing of the user's name, specific instructions, and personalized offers to create a unique unboxing experience.



## How Manufacturers Use Custom Packaging to “Think Outside of the Box”

Custom packaging solved the dilemma facing a 30-year-old firm. While the company wanted to print high-quality branding on the exterior of its wood-paneled shipping crates, it did not have the needed technology.

**The solution:** an AstroNova T3-OPX digital A3-wide-format inkjet direct-to-package printing system and a customized heavy-duty transport featuring a unique laser alignment system. This approach allowed the in-line printing of high-quality brand graphics plus simplified accurate panel loading. The solution enabled the firm to increase brand visibility and maintain manufacturing productivity while continuing to fulfill growing customer demand.



An offset printing company identified a growing demand for customized printed designs and logos on paper carrier bags. But, the opportunity came with numerous variables — from varying bag sizes, thicknesses, designs, and print runs to the need for durability, moisture resistance, wide print areas, and quick turnarounds. **The answer:** an in-house printing system powered by an AstroNova T3-OPX digital, A3 wide-format inkjet direct-to-package printing system. The technology featured electrical actuators for quick changeovers — and AstroNova durable, water-fast pigmented inks. Installed in multiple facilities, the solution is fueling the firm’s growth in a competitive market, plus accelerating the OEM’s time to market.



A packaging company serving food industry retailers sought to offer customized packaging to its brand-conscious retail customer base — including brand names, logos, and other custom artwork printed directly onto their packaging materials. Integrating an AstroNova T3-OPX digital, A3 wide-format inkjet direct-to-package printing system with their production line provided the flexibility and wide range of options that enabled the fulfillment of customer requirements in the desired quantities.



Limitless flexibility was the customized packaging requirement for a leading specialty corrugated packaging manufacturer catering to bakeries and delicatessens. The company's "no limits" demands included package shapes and sizes from circles to trays, grease- to freeze-proof coatings, minimum order quantities without waste, and creativity in print designs. Fortunately, integrating an AstroNova T3-OPX digital, A3 wide-format inkjet direct-to-package printing system met the "no limits" challenge while delivering the flexibility required for the practicalities of product shipping, storage, and handling.



"Samples in 60 Seconds" was a critical goal of a global specialist in solid and corrugated board manufacturing, converting, and high-quality package printing. The company sought to expand online with its digital print design and fulfillment innovations. The AstroNova T3-OPX digital, A3 wide-format inkjet direct-to-package printing system was installed at the firm's headquarters. It enabled the company to achieve its goal with speedy and efficient turnaround times and samples in medium- to short-run quantities. With the challenge overcome, the company is replicating the solution in its worldwide divisions.





## Conclusion

Custom packaging is a proven marketing, branding, and sales strategy. It attracts and retains customer attention, boldly identifies both company brand and product, communicates the product's promise, and builds value for customers. Learn more about AstroNova's solutions for custom packaging at [www.astronovaproductid.com](http://www.astronovaproductid.com)



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