

converter

PAPER & BOARD • FLEXIBLE PACKAGING • FOIL • NONWOVENS • CARTONS • LABELS • FLEKO

magazine

Carton, Board & Paper

The rapid rise of e-commerce can be illustrated by Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon.com and the richest man in the world. Last year, his fortune reached \$112 billion, the result of the largest year-over-year growth in personal fortune ever seen. Here we look at how a necessary by-product of this rise - delivery boxes - can be used to attract repeat customers

Better branding for E-commerce shipping boxes



TakeCareOf.com branding

Many brands still rely on e-commerce packaging that is unremarkable in appearance and not adequately representative of their brand expressions. The vast majority of packages are bland, an ends to a means – a delivery device and nothing more. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, to begin with e-commerce was novel and nascent. For traditional retailers, it started as a source of tack-on revenue – and the approach to it has not changed with the practice's proliferation. So, in effect, we are shipping 2018 products in 1998 boxes. The second reason is security. Simply put, the flashier the package, the more likely it is to be stolen. But this assessment ignores the inside of the box and, in terms of the exterior, is too absolutist. Although it may be unwise to give away key details of a box's contents on its outside, there is still room for the package to make more attractive. After all it is the first impressions that count to

consumers – even after they have purchased the product online.

Considering the boom in boxes appearing on our doorsteps, e-commerce packages offer a lot of potential from a customer engagement and retention perspective. A bland box is lost real estate for effective branding. Recently, many traditional brands are waking up to the importance of their brands permeating the entirety of their sales efforts – including e-commerce. In addition, online-only retailers are discovering the benefits of extending branding far beyond their websites, identifying their packages for what they are: the first touchpoint with their customers. More e-companies are treating their shipping boxes as firm handshakes rather than tepid hellos.

From a printing standpoint, the technology is available not only to beautifully e-commerce packages, but to do so both expediently and cost-effectively for customers. For example, Sutherland Packaging, Andover, NJ, recently invested in a new large format graphic printer offering the sort of double-sided, one-pass printing capabilities, suitable for corrugated e-commerce packaging. In doing so, the company are finding that its experience in corrugated point-of-purchase (POP) displays is highly translatable to 'jazzing up' e-commerce shippers.

For both POP displays and e-commerce corrugated printing, versatility is the key – especially the marriage of enhanced-graphics litho printing with less traditional approaches. Among Sutherland's range of specialties, the company gained a hefty portion of our market share thanks to its direct printing technique, which circumvents the



Above: Shaker & Spoon exterior

traditional practice of mounting a lithographic label over corrugated substrates. Suitable for the retail consumer products sector and club store displays, this maximal impact, cost-effective full-colour technology enables customers to save on both material expenditures and shipping times. In addition to direct-to-corrugated and lithographic label printing, Sutherland Packaging also offers high-speed digital production with exacting colour matching. This ability to provide ultra-customised, hybrid solutions such as combining direct-to-corrugated with litho printing or conventional printing methods with digital opens up a world of possibilities to e-commerce customers looking to spruce up their corrugated shippers.

How exactly this plays out differs from customer to customer, of course, but generally speaking, a goal here is to make the outside more attractive without giving would-be thieves a concrete reason to go front porch shopping. Meanwhile, the inside gets a complete makeover, becoming a veritable brand-in-a-box. The e-commerce shipper Sutherland Packaging produced for Elysium Health is a prime example of this dichotomy: All business on the outside, a brand fiesta on the inside.

The shipper made for Take Care of, an online vitamin retailer, is another

example of an e-business 'shaking hands' with consumers through its e-commerce containers. The overarching message – uniqueness and personal care – is introduced on the outside and eloquently expanded upon once opened. Shaker & Spoon, which delivers ingredients and instructions for innovative cocktails, rotates its shipper's colour scheme to suit its recipe of the month.

Low key on the outside, vibrant on the inside. That is the emerging rule of thumb in a once-emerging sector – e-commerce – whose growth seems limitless. It is time for printing and branding to catch up with the times.

► sutherlandpackaging.com



Below: Elysium interior