

# HOW TO CREATE A MORE SUSTAINABLE BRAND

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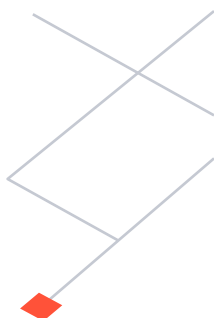
# SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING: OPTIONS AND CHOICES TO ENHANCE YOUR BRAND.

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Over the last decade, the idea of eco-friendly, sustainable packaging has grown from trend to expected best practice. There's a new-found awareness and emphasis among businesses and consumers alike on more efficient resource management and conservation. We're unsure what to do about these problems, but many of us are certainly concerned about what size carbon footprint we're leaving for the next generation to sort out. Not to mention the seemingly insurmountable problem of what we're going to do with all that plastic in the ocean and landfills. These days, receiving a box of Styrofoam peanuts as packing material for an item bought online is about as welcome as a toothache, and thankfully, just as rare.

Chances are, you've made some changes to your own packaging strategies to make them more sustainable, and if so, you've likely found that it's not only good for the environment, it's also good for business. Your customers get the not-so-subtle message that you care about how your design and packaging choices affect the quality of the world we all have to live in, and your efforts don't go unnoticed.

But becoming more eco-friendly is not easy. (If it were, we'd all be further along, and we wouldn't have to create this white paper.) There are a myriad of issues to work through, right down to the type of adhesive to use to make labels sticky, but also not so stubborn as to resist removal entirely. It takes clear intentions and deliberate planning to work through the consequences of every design decision from product development and manufacturing to shipping containers in order to make better, more eco-friendly choices. So, we'd like to help. It's the aim of this white paper to present you with actionable information you can use to adopt a sustainability mindset and build a business that can do well by doing good.



## The Good, Better, Best of Recycling.

Single-use plastics are particularly harmful. They can be made out of fossil fuels and toxic chemicals, and carbon emissions from producing and incinerating plastics are increasing at an alarming rate. Once used, they're trash, and their convenience makes that trash ubiquitous. But that convenience isn't free. We can easily see the cost on our beaches, in our oceans, along our highways and everywhere in between, including up and down our food chain.

That's why putting an emphasis on recycling is a better way to go. And when it comes to making choices about those little running arrow triangles, there is a hierarchy of Good, Better and Best.

"Good" is using material that *can* be recycled.

"Better" is *using some* recycled material.

"Best" is using *100% recycled* materials.

Depending on where your organization is in its journey to becoming a more responsible corporate citizen, these tiers of "goodness" not only give you choices, but they also provide a roadmap for greater sustainability. The trick is not to be satisfied at whichever tier you're in, and to keep an attitude of pushing the (recyclable) envelope because there are always improvements to be made. Be aware that each choice offers its own particular balance of material, cost, and availability. But developing and keeping a sustainability mindset can direct your organization to ever more cost-effective and responsible use choices.

## And if you can't recycle it, reuse it!

One area that's becoming increasingly popular as an alternative to recycling is reuse. This category is being made viable by advances in the efficiency and safety of cleaning methods to ensure these materials are safe and devoid of contaminants. There's so much activity around this technology, there's even a [Reusable Packaging Association](#) that would be happy to provide you with more info.





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### Choices, choices, choices.

There are more options than ever to choose from when selecting sustainable packaging. What follows doesn't list every option, but these are the most popular for plastic and paper:

#### Eco-friendly recyclable plastics

Different plastics degrade at different rates. The trick is to create versions that disappear after they're used. Like,

**Bioplastics:** This classification includes biodegradable plastics whose plant-based content attracts naturally-occurring microorganisms to break down the material either in home compost piles or industrial facilities. And they do it much quicker and without the toxic consequences of regular plastic. Cornstarch-based bioplastics are a prime example. It decomposes quickly and completely and can be used to make everything from grocery bags to thermal insulation.

**Plant Fiber Material:** this type has the added advantages of being able to be molded and having good buffer strength. The range of material is expanding every day, too, with packaging materials made from corn, mushrooms and even seaweed and algae, being added to the growing list.

#### Eco-friendly Recycled Plastics

This classification of materials comes from two main sources, and are largely repurposed into product packaging. The first type is,

**Beach and Ocean Plastics:** With more and more plastic ending up in the ocean, it's more imperative than ever that this source of recyclable plastics be aggressively mined. Reclaimed ocean and beach plastics have the ability to be transformed into a wide range of uses, including but not limited to, building materials, paving, clothing and yes, product packaging.

**Post-Consumer Recycled Content (PCR):** PCR is typically sourced from landfills and reprocessed for a variety of uses, including product packaging. Because of FDA regulations, you must use food grade PCR where the original source of the plastic can be ascertained.





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## Choices, choices, choices.

### Paper

There's plenty of innovation going on in creating sustainable options for paper:

**Recycled Paper:** Procured from a variety of sources, recycled paper can also be obtained in varying ratios when mixed with new paper. They range from 20% to 100%.

**Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certified Paper:** FSC papers come from certified sustainable forests, and cannot be illegally harvested, or mixed with material from genetically-modified forests.

**Paperboard:** One of the more inventive uses for this recycled material is as a replacement for glass. Beverage companies are discovering why dairies have known for years—paper cartons cost less to use and ship than glass.

**Paper Void Fill:** Bubble wrap doesn't compare with this eco-friendly, recyclable, reusable alternative. It's cheaper than plastic, but because it provides superior cushioning because it fills more of the excess space.





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# THE THREE AREAS FOR SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

An organized way to look at your potential for sustainability innovation is to break them down into three key areas:

Your product.  
Your packaging  
Your shipping.


**Your Product:** Take the opportunity to make sustainability a part of your brand.

It used to be the consumers didn't care all that much about the sustainability of the products they were buying. But that trend is changing. And it's not just fashionable to be more aware of our various impacts on the environment, it's rapidly becoming expected, with more cases of companies large and small adopting best sustainability practices. (If you doubt the impact taking such a position can have on your reputation, just imagine your toughest competitor taking that position and publicly drawing attention to your lagging eco-friendliness.)

As with any shift in approach or strategy, it's best to begin by adopting a new set of values, communicating the change to your entire organization, and backing up your words with action. For instance, talking about wanting to build a more sustainably manufactured product is meaningless without giving your designers enough leeway to pursue that end result.

You'll also want to look up and down your supply chain. How sustainable are the raw materials you're using? Is there a way to shift to something more eco-friendly, or an alternative manufacturing process for the same material that's more energy-efficient? Speaking of which, take a look at the energy you use to make what you use. You could be overlooking a green opportunity close to home.

This isn't meant to be an exhaustive list of how tos, and it's obvious that achieving greater sustainability is easier said than done, but it is worth doing and doing well. It's always a delicate balance of the ideal combination of materials, the right amount of lead time, and pricing that's favorable enough for you to achieve your sustainable objectives. You'll want to keep an eye on your competition and benchmark your product against theirs to see whether you—or they—have earned sustainability bragging rights.

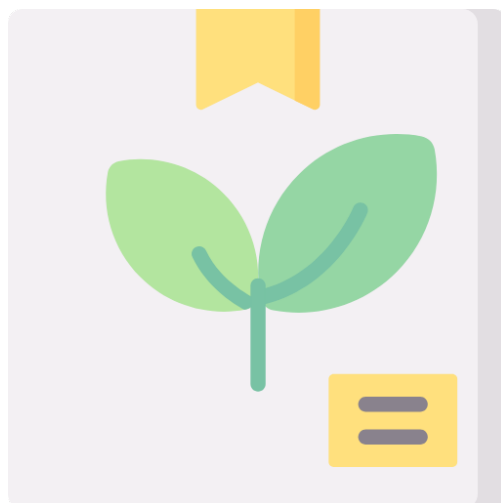


## Your Packaging: How your product is presented speaks volumes about your company, your values and your brand.

Apple's iconic packaging has always led the league in minimalist design, but recently the tech giant has made even greater strides towards more sustainability. In one case alone, Apple reduced the iPhone 12's packaging by a remarkable 50%. The company made decisions not just about how to present their latest flagship product, but also made the decision to pare down what needed to be included because of shifting market conditions, like leaving out the charger, for instance, because research showed people already had enough of them lying around.

Their work included more than just reducing volume though. Overall, they also replaced over 90% of the plastic in previous packages and replaced it with certified eco-friendly paper. In this way, Apple lives its progressive values and communicates them, making their brand not just stand for elegant design, but packaging that's responsible as well.

That's probably one of the most prominent examples of using packaging to communicate something about the brand. But just because you're not a globally famous behemoth doesn't mean you can't copy Apple's dedication to its values. You can be just as single-minded in your pursuit of greater sustainability and you can make it part of your brand and reap the rewards of that commitment.







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Here are [6 ideas](#) you can adopt to make your sustainability message stand out:

**Think ahead.** Make sure any packaging you develop or use is designed to be recycled from the beginning, as part of a corporate guideline for your own company and your suppliers.

**Less is more.** Does it have to be packaged at all? That's probably the first question that needs to be asked. After all, part of a stand-out packaging strategy is to have the least of it possible.

**Toss your plastic.** In general, plastic is more difficult to deal with than paper. It's harder to recycle, it breaks down into environmental persistent components, which are all toxic, and it's more expensive. Do you need any more reasons to get rid of it?

**Here today, gone the next.** Materials that disappear in one way or another—either by being biodegradable or compostable—are a great choice because they provide the unbeatable advantage of just going away when they're no longer needed.

**Got ink?** Ever think about the toxicity of the inks used in your packaging? You're not alone, but this is an area that's garnering more and more attention as plant- or soy-based inks are becoming more widely available to replace the predominantly oil-based status quo.

**Sustainability isn't just smart, it's beautiful , too.** Some of the world's most iconic brands have cleverly moved to more sustainable packaging with impressive results. And why not? If you're doing good by doing well, you've earned your bragging rights.





## Your Shipping: Because sustainability doesn't end when your product goes out the door.

Shipping is a prime target for reducing waste and increasing recycling. Since there are few aesthetics in shipping worth considering, it's a great place to get a win by pushing your sustainability quotient as far as it can go.

Here again, there are so many more options available besides plastic bubbles and wrappers. You can go with biodegradable packing, certified paper solutions and even plant-based options. There's form—how big does the shipping container really need to be—as well as function to consider—how much protection really needs to be provided for the trip from factory to the customer. And you don't have to go it alone. Apple may have a team of designers focused on nothing but packaging, but all you need is a packaging specialist and a few clever designs to try out and refine.

If you do decide to undertake the effort to reduce your shipping footprint, you'll be in good company there, too. A 2020 article about Amazon detailed the company's efforts to eliminate hundreds of millions of pounds of plastic and paper. Most recently, Amazon completely swore off single-use plastic in every one of its 50 fulfillment centers in India, a major effort with a massive payoff. If they can do it, you can do it.



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# BEING MORE SUSTAINABLE MAKES YOU A BETTER BUSINESS

Beyond the obvious opportunities to use less and recycle more, thinking deeply about how market dynamics are changing the way your customers use your products or interact with you can affect how you manage your supply chain. And it will also reveal surprising opportunities to replace, reduce, recycle, renew and recover.

Such a holistic approach was taken by WM (the former Waste Management) in its constituting of the Phoenix Open, one of the largest events on the PGA Tour, as a zero-waste event. In this case, the trick was to think ahead, but in every direction. Years of experience running the event and making it more sustainable each year, gave the company a runway of sorts to tackle those remaining issues that needed to get them to 100%. Having that experience was invaluable, but so was the pre-planning that went into choices about materials, logistics, procurement, energy usage, and transportation.

That's the kind of 360° effort a comprehensive program requires, but one might be tempted to expect that from a company named Waste Management. It also illustrates how performing a social good translates to a competitive advantage. The Phoenix Open is not only one of the most heavily attended events on the Tour, it's also one of the most unique and most successful.

## ABOUT ANVYL

Anvyl's Production Management Platform streamlines supply chain communication, automates workflows, and delivers real-time production analytics from order to delivery. Companies across the globe use Anvyl to mitigate risk across their supply chains and save millions of dollars in operational costs. Anvyl's digital platform delivers transparency across the supply chain, surfaces key production insights for users and provides predictive analytics to improve operations efficiency. Visit [www.anvyl.com](http://www.anvyl.com) or email [sales@anvyl.com](mailto:sales@anvyl.com) to start developing a sustainable packaging strategy that meets your business needs today.

