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Consumer Preferences Shaping Packaging Trends in 2022

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When it comes to consumers shopping the grocery store, it's not just the food inside the package that counts. Shoppers are reconsidering every part of their food-buying routine, including the way their food is packaged.

It's not enough for packaging just to catch a shoppers' eye on the shelf. According to an **Oct. 2020 McKinsey report** (<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/paper-forest-products-and-packaging/our-insights/sustainability-in-packaging-inside-the-minds-of->

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us-consumers), “Sustainability in packaging: Inside the minds of US consumers,” shoppers say the following packaging attributes are important or very important:

- Hygiene and food safety: 77%
- Shelf life: 67%
- Ease of use: 61%
- Environmental impact: 43%

In addition, consumers say they are more brand loyal now than they were before the pandemic. According to Yotpo’s “**The State of Brand Loyalty 2021: Global Consumer Survey** (<https://www.yotpo.com/blog/the-state-of-brand-loyalty-2021-global-consumer-survey/>),” nearly 85% of consumers say they’re more likely to become loyal to a specific brand whose values align with theirs.

For this reason, exceeding shoppers’ expectations—including in food packaging—can help drive sales and consumer retention in the long run.

Food safety

Food safety is a priority for consumers and retailers alike. Consumers want to know their food is fresh and will last once they bring it home, and retailers want to ensure that food sells while it is fresh and that margins aren’t undercut by wasted product.

The last two years have brought a specific set of challenges to food safety protocols. Ongoing disruptions in the supply chain increase the potential for delays in product delivery to the store, and inconsistencies in consumer demand add another variable for supermarket buyers to consider. Therefore, it’s crucial that food packaging support freshness and safety protocols amid unpredictable circumstances.

Traceability continues to be a primary focus within the industry. According to **FMI** (<https://www.fmi.org/blog/view/fmi-blog/2022/01/28/retail-food-safety-professionals-set-food-safety-initiatives-for-2022>), the **FDA** has proposed heightened standards for traceability to be implemented this year to prevent foodborne illness and facilitate in investigations. Labeling is an important consideration in packaging decisions—for distributors and retailers alike.

In addition to traceability information, labeling can help execute marketing initiatives, deliver branded messaging and facilitate cross-promotions within the store. From keeping fresh foods on the shelf to increasing cart averages, focusing on the details in labeling can be a gamechanger.

Sustainability

Food waste isn’t just a threat to margins; it can undermine sustainability efforts as well. Among shopper preferences, sustainability continues to increase in priority. According to NYU’s 2021 **Sustainable Market Share Index**

(<https://www.stern.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/assets/documents/Final%202021%20CSB%20Practice%207.14.21.pdf>):

- Consumers' preference for sustainable products has increased during the pandemic, with sustainability-marketed products accounting for 16.8% of CPG purchases in 2020 alone.
- Sustainability marketed branded products currently enjoy a significant price premium of 39.5% compared to their conventionally marketed branded counterparts.

The same principle applies to sustainable packaging. **McKinsey** (<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/paper-forest-products-and-packaging/our-insights/beyond-covid-19-the-next-normal-for-packaging-design>) reports that, across all end-use segments, 60-70% of consumers say they are willing to pay more for sustainable packaging, and recommends that initial steps to increase packaging sustainability include simple, cost-effective changes, including:

- Eliminating unnecessary packaging
- Increasing the use of recycled content in packaging material
- Communicating sustainability narratives to consumers more effectively

Perhaps the easiest way to meet consumers' varied packaging preferences is to turn to a supplier whose products check the most important boxes—a trusted partner who can help retailers understand their packaging needs and their consumers' values to help make a difference. Kwik Lok, for example, continues to push the envelope in terms of bringing simplicity, efficiency and sustainability to food packaging. As the global leader in package closures, Kwik Lok offers best-in-class solutions across supermarket categories.

Kwik Lok's Eco-Lok bag closures, for example, are made with up to 20%, renewably sourced plant-based resin that requires less fuel to manufacture than standard closures, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and material usage overall. Kwik Lok's selection of closure labels are perfect for eye-catching branding and key product information.

From its sustainable manufacturing processes to its partnerships with the brands it serves, Kwik Lok offers the products and expertise retailers need to compete for shoppers' loyalties in 2022. To learn more, visit www.kwiklok.com (https://www.kwiklok.com/new-products/?utm_source=grocerybusiness&utm_medium=kl_branded_article&utm_content=content_consumer).

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