



# Research Findings

## Most Americans Say That the Design of a Product's Packaging Often Influences Their Purchase Decisions

### Products Packaged in Paper/Cardboard Perceived as Being More Attractive and Higher Quality by Roughly Two Thirds

**Chicago, IL, May 2, 2018** — Most Americans agree that the design of a product's packaging (72%) and the materials used to package a product (67%) often influence their purchase decisions when selecting which products to buy. Package design is seen to be even more important when buying a gift, with eight in ten agreeing that packaging design can influence their gift selection (81%). For two thirds, paper and cardboard packaging makes a product more attractive than other packaging materials (67%), and similar proportions agree that paper and cardboard packaging makes products seem premium or high quality (63%).

- Younger adults (ages 18-34), the more educated (especially those with a post graduate degree), the more affluent (earning \$50,000 annually or more), and parents are significantly more likely to say their purchase decisions are often influenced by both the package design and the materials used for packaging compared to their demographic counterparts.
- Similar demographic groups are also more likely to feel cardboard packaging can make products both more attractive and seem premium or higher quality. A greater proportion of women (70% versus 65% of men) also agree that paper and cardboard packaging makes a product more attractive than other packaging materials.

Most (83%) agree that paper and cardboard packaging can be innovative. In fact, roughly seven in ten Americans feel that this type of packaging allows for more creative packaging designs than other packaging materials (75%) and that products packaged in paper or cardboard seem more artisanal or hand-crafted (69%).

According to the recent online survey conducted by Ipsos on behalf of the Paper and Packaging Board, seven in ten (71%) say they are more likely to buy brands that package their products in paper or cardboard than in other materials – and this is especially true for both those aged 18-34 and those over the age of 55 (72% each vs. 68% of those ages 35-54), those with a post graduate degree (78% vs. 69% less than a bachelor's degree), and the more affluent (76% with HHI of \$100,000 or more vs. 69% of those earning \$50,000 or less). Roughly three quarters say they are more likely to buy products packaged in paper or cardboard than in other materials because they are better for the environment (78%) and less wasteful (74%). Additionally, more than six in ten would purchase products packaged in paper/cardboard so they can reuse the packaging (63%).

For nearly nine in ten, paper and cardboard packaging is seen to be generally easy to open (88%) and easy to recycle (88%). More than eight in ten Americans also agree that paper and cardboard packaging is less wasteful than other packaging (84%) and more in line with today's expectations than packaging made from other materials (81%).

When it comes to personal preference, just over two in five (42%) Americans say they favor products that are packaged in paper or cardboard compared to only 13% of adults who prefer products to be packaged in plastic. Meanwhile, two in five (44%) say they don't have a preference. However, if they were shopping for a product and came across two identical versions – though one was packaged in paper or cardboard and the other packaged in plastic – the majority admit they would be most likely to buy the paper or cardboard package (68% vs. 32%, plastic package).

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## Research Findings – continued –

- Millennials (46% of those ages 21-38) are much more likely than older respondents (40% of those ages 39+) to prefer products to be packaged in paper or cardboard.

Roughly half (49%) of those surveyed say they would be prepared to pay a little more for products packaged in paper or cardboard. The fact that paper and cardboard packaging is recyclable is most appealing to those surveyed (66%), while roughly two in five say they like that it is easier to open (42%) and made from renewable sources (36%). Being able to reuse paper and cardboard packaging (29%) and the fact that it's lightweight (28%) are mentioned by just under three in ten as qualities they like most about paper/cardboard packaging, while roughly one in five like it because they feel it's inexpensive (20%) and durable (18%). Not quite one in ten prefer paper and cardboard packaging because it suggests premium quality (8%), while 6% say they like most that it comes in interesting designs. Very few (4%) say they don't like any of these things.

- Younger adults (57% of those ages 18-34), respondents with a post graduate degree (58%), those with a household income of at least \$100,000 (55%), and those who prefer products packaged in paper (69%) are especially likely to say they'd pay a little more for products packaged in paper or cardboard.

### Paper and Cardboard Food Packaging

Most Americans think about how perishable food is stored and shipped before it gets to their grocery store, including nearly half who think about this a great deal/moderate amount (47%) and another 26% who think about this occasionally. In contrast, roughly one in four (27%) say they rarely/never think about this. Those most likely to think about how perishable food is stored and shipped before it gets to the grocery store include men (50%), those under the age of 35 (51%), the more educated (54% of those with a postgraduate degree), and those with children living at home (50%).

Seven in ten Americans report feeling confident that perishable food is safe to eat when packaged in paper or cardboard (70%). In fact, the majority agree that products packaged in paper or cardboard give them a sense of safety that they don't get with other materials (61%). Two thirds also agree that paper and cardboard packaging gives them confidence that the product inside has not been tampered with (66%) or damaged (66%).

- Confidence in food products packaged in paper or cardboard is greatest among younger respondent (18-34), the more educated, those who prefer paper packaging, and those with children living at home.

If given the option to have perishable foods such as meats and produce packaged in paper, in plastic, or in Styrofoam, plastic is ranked first (48%) though nearly two in five would prefer paper packaging (38%). Only a few in comparison would want perishable foods such as meats and produce packaged in Styrofoam (15%). Americans are split when it comes their preferred packaging for fresh liquids such as milk and juice, with more than a third saying they would prefer plastic bottles (39%) versus another three in ten who say they would instead opt for paper/cardboard cartons (31%) or glass bottles (30%).

### About the Study

These are the findings from an Ipsos poll conducted April 13 - 18, 2018 on behalf of the Paper and Packaging Board. For the survey, a sample of 2,002 adults ages 18 and over from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii was interviewed online, in English. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points for all respondents surveyed.

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## Research Findings – continued –

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos’s online panel (see link below for more info on “Access Panels and Recruitment”), partner online panel sources, and “river” sampling (see link below for more info on the Ipsos “Ampario Overview” sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2016 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, region, race/ethnicity and income.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online nonprobability sampling polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following ( $n=2,002$ ,  $DEFF=1.5$ , adjusted Confidence Interval=4.0).

For more information about conducting research intended for public release or Ipsos’ online polling methodology, please visit our [Public Opinion Polling and Communication](#) page where you can download our brochure, see our public release protocol, or contact us.

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Ipsos has been listed on the Paris Stock Exchange since 1999 and generated global revenues of €1,780.5 million in 2017.

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