

Sustainable E-Commerce Packaging - Market Share Analysis, Industry Trends & Statistics, Growth Forecasts (2024 - 2029)

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Abstracts

The Sustainable E-Commerce Packaging Market size is estimated at USD 34.41 billion in 2024, and is expected to reach USD 50.83 billion by 2029, growing at a CAGR of 8.12% during the forecast period (2024-2029).

Manufacturers and consumers are becoming more aware of the environmental consequences of packaging waste, resulting in an incremental need for sustainable packaging solutions that reduce waste and utilize eco-friendly materials. The behavior of eco-conscious consumers in developed regions like Europe and North America gravitates toward environmentally sustainable packaging, which can be made from recycled, biodegradable, or compostable materials.

Key Highlights

Sustainability is a major driver of purchase decisions and brand affinity in e-commerce. Retailers and e-commerce packaging vendors are taking action by incorporating sustainable packaging choices like corrugated boxes made from recycled materials, paper-based alternatives, and simplistic designs that decrease material usage.

E-commerce stakeholders substantially recognize the requirement to make sustainable packaging viable for small businesses that supply products to these platforms to achieve targets. This comes when multiple governments and individual retailers look for options to curb the usage of single-use plastic. Several e-commerce companies are banning single-use plastics in their packaging supply chain.

For instance, in July 2023, Walmart unveiled its groundbreaking decision to help make

the everyday shopping experience more sustainable by reducing packaging waste related to online purchases. The firm is moving from plastic to recyclable paper mailers. Rightly-sized cardboard box packaging would allow customers to consolidate shipping on e-commerce orders and eliminate the use of disposable plastic bags. This switchover was estimated to remove 65 million single-use plastic bag mailers, or over 2,000 metric tons of plastic waste, from United States landfills by the end of 2023.

The past few years have seen a continual consumer purchasing shift toward e-commerce and away from brick-and-mortar stores. The use of online shopping in the United States has been increasing in the past few years. According to the US Census Bureau, e-commerce retail sales as a percentage of total retail sales in the United States increased from 9.1% in 2017 to 15.4% in 2023. The surge in online purchases necessitates the need for effective, eco-friendly, and sustainable packaging choices.

However, fluctuations in the raw material prices backed by the constant supply chain-related issues caused by sudden geopolitical events (like the conflict between Ukraine and Russia and other trade tensions between countries) may dent the market's top line in the upcoming period. Fluctuations in the prices of raw materials have the potential to impact the total production expenses and subsequently impact the ultimate pricing of the completed products or services.

As the e-commerce sector grows, technological advancements are being developed to ensure customer safety and security. Examples of such advances include shipment applications facilitated by sustainable RF and RFID labels, which help track the product, the manufacturer's facility, the information of the delivery partner, and the shipper's warehouse. Online shopping is becoming increasingly popular in both developed and emerging markets like Indonesia, India, etc., and customers are taking advantage of convenient packaging solutions that monitor product information during the shipment and delivery process, providing lucrative market opportunities.

Sustainable E-Commerce Packaging Market Trends

Online Sales of Consumer Electronics is Expected to Drive Top-Line

Manufacturers of consumer electronics packaging products are increasingly using protective packaging items, such as air bubble wraps, air pillows, and other inflated packaging products, to shield devices. It is anticipated that in the future, these packaging alternatives will satisfy the requirements of all electronic categories. The packaging of small consumer goods in blisters works effectively. This plastic packaging

makes the items stand out and offers tamper protection while still being straightforward to open.

Electronic product packaging that is environmentally friendly is growing in popularity. Regulators and government authorities have vigorously pushed for eco-friendly or green packaging. Brands and consumers alike are recognizing the necessity of protecting the environment from non-biodegradable packaging trash. For instance, in January 2023, Flipkart introduced an e-store for sustainable products. The company hopes that it will be able to make a difference and encourage informed buying decisions while being transparent, consumer-oriented, and eco-friendly.

According to the investment analysis firm Aventus and a key CA firm based out of India, Dewan P.N. Chopra & Co., the size of the consumer electronics market across India from 2017 is expected to increase almost five times by 2025 to USD 30.6 billion. Therefore, this significant uptick in online consumer electronics across the country is anticipated to push the demand for recyclable and biodegradable sustainable packaging options in the coming years.

Several global companies like Amazon, Alibaba, Walmart, and others are gradually understanding that the environmental impact of devices extends to packaging as well. Amazon set a robust objective to have all Amazon device packaging completely recyclable by the end of 2023, a new record for the consumer electronics sector. About 79.5% of product launches in 2022 were fully recyclable.

Using appropriate materials is crucial in making consumer electronics packaging sustainable. By carefully selecting the materials for wrapping, packing, and transporting electronics, it becomes simpler to achieve business' carbon emission targets and sustainability objectives. Embracing sustainable packaging solutions for electronic products not only helps in reaching these goals but also attracts the increasing population of environmentally conscious consumers who prioritize eco-friendly choices.

North America to Hold Significant Market Share During the Forecast Period

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the transition to e-commerce sales and raised awareness of the environment and sustainability in the United States. Consumers increasingly turned to online shopping, and that pattern endured even when stores reopened, resulting in the demand for eco-friendly packaging. E-commerce spending in

the United States is rising, driven by the convenience of home delivery, merchants' omnichannel capabilities, and contextual customer experiences.

The United States Plastics Pact recently published its annual report, highlighting its efforts to create a circular economy for plastics, primarily through a reassessment of packaging design. The consortium has successfully achieved its initial objective of identifying a list of problematic and unnecessary materials that it seeks to eliminate from plastic packaging by 2025. However, other aspirations, such as ensuring that all plastic packaging is reusable, recyclable, or compostable, may not be met by the 2025 deadline.

Several players across the region consistently make efforts by launching products or starting initiatives with vertical or horizontal integration to boost environment-friendly packaging for e-commerce channels. In June 2023, Boox, a sustainable e-commerce platform, partnered with ReturnBear, a package-free returns network in Canada. This collaboration aims to enhance Boox's services in the Canadian market by promoting a more circular system within the e-commerce industry. As a result, Boox will extend its solutions and services to industry partners throughout Canada, effectively implementing the packaging loop within the region.

Canada's e-commerce infrastructure is highly developed and closely integrated with that of the United States. The major online retailers in Canada include Amazon, Walmart, Canadian Tire, Costco, Best Buy, Hudson's Bay, and Etsy. Overall, North American consumers increasingly rely upon the Internet to place orders. Internet consumer sales have grown more in the past decade than traditional retail sales.

The total percentage of e-commerce is rapidly growing in terms of total retail sales, primarily in developed countries like the United States and Canada. According to the US Census Bureau, the value of retail e-commerce sales in the United States has been growing significantly, especially after the pandemic. In 2023, the value of e-commerce retail trade sales in the United States exceeded USD 1.118 trillion, marking a significant increase from USD 762.68 billion in 2020. Overall, as consumer lifestyles and food demands change and retailers work closely to accommodate those demands, packaging is anticipated to experience a dynamic transformation.

Sustainable E-Commerce Packaging Industry Overview

The market studied is fragmented, with major vendors accounting for most of the market share. The presence of many players in the market impacts the pricing of services, making it a direct competing factor, especially for small-scale vendors. The vendors are expected to focus on providing one-stop-shop services, providing them with a competitive advantage. Some of the major players in the market are Amcor Group GmbH, Smurfit Kappa Group, WestRock Company, and DS Smith PLC.

September 2023: Global sustainable and e-commerce packaging firm Smurfit Kappa notified its intentions to acquire a key paper and paperboard manufacturing firm, WestRock, for USD 11.2 billion to create Smurfit WestRock, one of the largest global paper packaging company generating a combined annual income of USD 34 billion. Upon the declaration, the agreement was anticipated to be finalized during the second quarter of 2024.

June 2023: Procter & Gamble (P&G) China unveiled its partnership with Dow, a key material specialist firm, to introduce an air capsule for e-commerce packaging. The capsule has been created to minimize unnecessary packaging while ensuring the products' safety. Dow has stated that the innovative design is inspired by corrugated parcel boxes and results in a 40% decrease in material weight. Additionally, it features an all-PE mono-material composition.

Additional Benefits:

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