

## Packaging 101: Your roadmap to packaging

Who: Andy Kurtts, Buttermilk Creative and Amanda Brigham, Belmark

Date: August 13th, 2025

Time: Noon to 1 pm

### Summary:

The session focused on the essential aspects of packaging within the specialty food sector, emphasizing its significance in branding and consumer engagement. Andy Kurtts from Buttermilk Creative and Amanda Brigham from Belmark co-presented, sharing their expertise on packaging design, vendor relationships, and the challenges faced by emerging brands in the industry.

Andy highlighted the importance of packaging as a consumer's first impression, noting that emotional appeal drives 95% of purchasing decisions. He cautioned against common design pitfalls, such as cluttered visuals, while Amanda emphasized the unboxing experience's role in fostering customer loyalty. Both presenters stressed the need for cohesive design that aligns with brand strategy and the necessity of sustainable packaging options, which should be standard rather than an additional cost.

The discussion also covered the initial steps in the packaging process, where Andy advised establishing a solid brand strategy and understanding the target audience before engaging designers. He pointed out that practical considerations, such as shelf life and packaging structure, should take precedence over aesthetics. Amanda added that collaboration between brand founders and design teams is crucial to meet both functional and market demands, while also acknowledging the potential for errors during the proofing stage.

Regulatory compliance was another key topic, with Andy outlining the essential elements that must be included on packaging, such as product name, logo, and nutrition facts. Amanda detailed the various product lines offered by Belmark and the importance of selecting appropriate materials. The presenters discussed lead times for different packaging types and the significance of clear communication with suppliers to avoid complications. They concluded by addressing the legal implications of packaging claims, emphasizing the need for accuracy to prevent costly issues.

### Chapters & Topics:

#### Opening Remarks and Introductions

Andy Kurtts and Amanda Brigham discussed the importance of being polite to AI, referencing their experiences with voice assistants. They also touched on the biography of Steve Jobs and the role of Siri's creator.

## Importance of Packaging in Specialty Foods

Andy Kurtz, Founder and Creative Director of Buttermilk Creative, and Amanda Brigham from Belmark discussed the importance of packaging for specialty food brands. They highlighted their experience in the industry and the unique services offered by Belmark, which caters to both new and established brands. Their collaboration aims to provide valuable insights for businesses looking to enhance their packaging strategies.

## The Importance of Packaging in Consumer Decision-Making

Andy Kurtts highlighted that packaging serves as a brand's promise and must effectively communicate the brand's values and strategy. He pointed out that cluttered designs and weak visual hierarchies can confuse consumers, leading to a loss of trust. Amanda Brigham added that the unboxing experience is crucial, as poor packaging can result in negative consumer experiences that affect future purchasing decisions.

- \* Importance of packaging in consumer decision-making

## Packaging Design and Sustainability Insights

Amanda Brigham discussed the significance of packaging in reflecting customer experience and the importance of sustainability in packaging choices. She advocated for flexible ordering to accommodate changes in packaging needs without incurring waste. Andy Kurtts added that packaging design should be an iterative process, allowing brands to adapt based on customer feedback and market trends.

- \* Common pitfalls in packaging design

## Packaging Strategy and Design Process

Andy Kurtts discussed the foundational steps in developing packaging, starting with a clear brand strategy and understanding the target audience. He noted that engaging with a designer should come after clarifying these elements, as they will inform the packaging needs. Amanda Brigham added that understanding the product's unique requirements is crucial for determining the appropriate packaging type.

- \* The role of collaboration between designers and packaging suppliers

## Packaging Essentials for Emerging Brands

Andy Kurtts highlighted essential components for packaging, such as the product name, logo, net weight, and certifications, which are crucial for compliance and brand differentiation. He provided examples, including Lindsay from My Better Batch, who effectively uses certifications to stand out in a competitive market. Kurtts also mentioned the significance of including a founder story, instructions, and tips to enhance customer engagement.

## Packaging Innovations and Considerations

Andy Kurtts outlined the regulatory requirements for packaging, such as the nutrition facts panel and allergen statements. Amanda Brigham elaborated on the unique offerings of their company, including pressure-sensitive labels, flexible packaging, and folding cartons, while stressing the significance of material selection and sustainability. She also mentioned the various print methods available to cater to different customer needs.

\* Sustainability practices in packaging

### Packaging Strategies for Retail and Direct-to-Consumer

Amanda Brigham highlighted the variety of customizable folding cartons that can enhance product presentation. Andy Kurtts elaborated on the significance of packaging design in retail, focusing on the need for bold branding and clear product claims. He also discussed the unique considerations for direct-to-consumer packaging, such as creating a memorable unboxing experience and ensuring durability during shipping.

### Lead Times and Minimum Order Quantities in Packaging

Andy Kurtts and Amanda Brigham addressed the complexities of lead times in packaging, noting that the timeline begins once a proof is approved. Amanda pointed out that while labels can be delivered in 24 hours, other types of packaging, such as flexible packaging, may require more time. They also discussed the significance of minimum order quantities, which can vary by packaging type and may pose challenges for founders.

### Packaging Challenges and Solutions

Andy Kurtts from Buttermilk Creative addressed the challenges of packaging design, warning that any changes post-approval can lead to issues. He stressed the importance of understanding retailer requirements and working with experienced partners like Belmark to navigate these complexities. Amanda Brigham confirmed that they collaborate with larger brands to ensure compliance with packaging standards.

### Packaging Compliance and Best Practices

Andy Kurtts from Buttermilk Creative addressed the significance of including daily value percentages on Nutrition Facts labels, especially for protein claims. He noted that companies could face legal challenges if their packaging is not compliant, sharing examples of clients who had to make updates to avoid litigation. Hannah Wheeler from Blue Slate expressed concerns about adding health claims to their packaging, prompting Andy to advise on the importance of accurate wording and documentation.