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Packaging solutions for Ecommerce – Can Beloved Bubble wrap be replaced?

FEATURED INSIGHTS RESEARCH

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Bubble wrap

noun

Meaning:

1. (for business owners) Protector of fragile goods, shock absorber
2. (for most) stress buster & source of unadulterated happiness

Today from sunglasses to a giant wooden almirah, everything is ordered online and customers expect it to reach without a scratch. Rightly so!

But it's tough. Many online sellers have confessed that with poor logistics and infrastructure available here, it's a herculean task to protect their products from damage. In one of our earlier feature, Mehul Agrawal, Co-founder of FabFurnish had shared with IOS, "Two major show spoilers of the current logistics scenario are damaged products and delayed deliveries."

Importance of Internal Packaging

Companies have realized that packaging (not just the outer pretty box) is the key to reduce high returns and customer grievances. A customer may not appreciate how his pair of sunglasses came intact after a hard journey through air cargo and potholes filled roads. But he/she will definitely make the displeasure of receiving a broken pair known to all.



Gaurav Vora, Director, Dynaflex

IndianOnlineSeller spoke to Gaurav Vora, Director of Dynaflex Private Limited, the market leader in ecommerce packaging material, to understand major changes observed in e-commerce companies' approach towards packaging function over the years. Mr. Vora said,

"Today the scenario has changed as companies now focus on damage reduction, pilferage reduction, customer satisfaction, frustration free experience, reduction in returns rate, efficiencies, speed of packaging along with cost are considered before selecting a preferred packaging partner for designing specs of packaging."

He further added, "However in the past, cost was the only driving force and none of the above factors were considered. Initial days, companies did not realize the importance of packaging for reducing pilferage in transit, reducing breakages, brand building and differentiating from competitors leading to instant customer connect and efficiencies in packaging."

Cardboard boxes and plastic bags act as a great carrier for regular goods. But for fragile and semi-fragile products an additional & effective layer of protective packaging material is required to wrap the actual product. Be it a pen drive or a mobile phone cover.

And that's mostly Bubble wrap! Bubble wrap is the most commonly used & trusted material while packing fragile products, but it can be expensive and space consuming. So are there any alternatives? There are. Read on to know about them.

Air cushion plastic bags/strips



Air Cushions (source: StoroPack)

Air filled pillow bags help in filling empty spaces, block & bracing, and wrapping products. Available in various sizes and shapes, they are said to be great shock absorbers, reliable and durable. Depending on the quality, air pillows can be puncture resistant, ecological and recyclable. Being lightweight makes it economical as you can save on shipping costs.

Styrofoam/Thermocol beads, balls & peanuts



Styrofoam peanuts (source: charnpack.com)

There are polystyrene peanuts and an eco-friendly starch based version, which one can use to provide cushioning. Super-light, durable, reusable and recyclable are basic features of foam balls that have been used to protect fragile products from many years.

Corrugated paper wrap & bubble



Corrugated Bubble (source: ecoenclose.com)

With rising focus on making our planet green, many prefer environment friendly material such as recycled corrugated wraps. It is touted as biodegradable alternative to bubblewrap and peanuts. Although you will have to opt for totally thick paper wraps with heavy padding to protect extremely fragile products. But they offer effective scratch protection to products made from glass, metal, and ceramic.

Alternatives VS Bubble wrap – which one is economical?

We told you about the available alternatives. But are they as economical as bubble wrap. Not according to Dynaflex's Gaurav Vora. Here's what he had to say when we asked if there is any economical alternative to bubblewraps, "Cost has to be considered, cost of time needed for packaging, speed which will result in lower or upper output, cost of damage in transit, return and replacement (which is incurred three times), loyalty and customer satisfaction by aesthetics and branding."

Elaborating further he said,

"Keeping all of the above in mind, bubble wrap is today the most economical, light weight, easy to procure material in the market compared to use of paper, foam and thermocol. Since bubble is light weight & occupies large volume, it goes in volumetric freight which increases the cost of product in transit beyond a certain distance or radius. To counter this most companies like us at packingsupply.in are opening warehouses with bubble manufacturing facilities in major cities. This will provide uniform pricing and supply across the country."

Looks like bubble wrap is hard to beat when it comes to economical yet effective packaging options. But there sure are plenty of options if your priority is to switch to materials that are environment friendly and/or are reusable & recyclable.

Did we miss any packaging material? Let us know.

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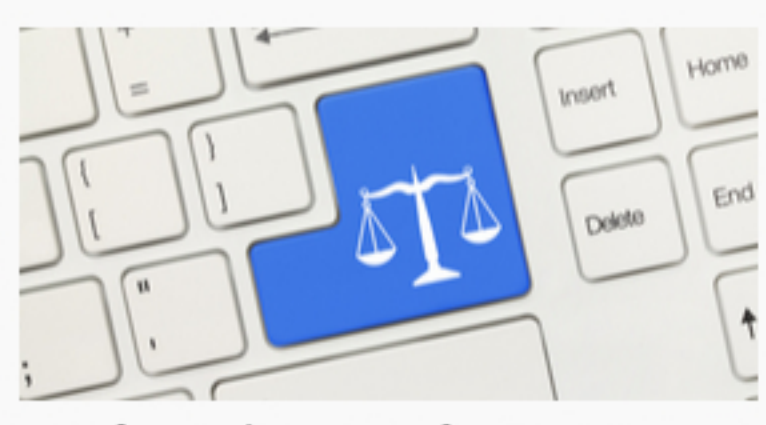
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