



SIX WAYS OF REDUCING PLASTIC USE IN SHIPPING

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Plastic can be incredibly useful. It helps companies to get products to their customers and retailers hygienically, neatly, safely and efficiently. It is a fact that plastic is also usually the packaging option with the lowest carbon footprint option – see our blog 'paper v plastic'.

However we all know that far too much plastic ends up polluting our planet – in particular our oceans. One piece of research suggests that a horrifying 9 – 10 million individual pieces of plastic end up in our oceans every single year. This is clearly unsustainable, and we need to work together to stop it – fast.

SO HOW CAN YOU DO YOUR BIT TO DRAMATICALLY REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF PLASTIC YOU USE IN YOUR PACKING AND SHIPPING PROCESSES?

WELL, THERE ARE SIX ECO-FRIENDLY OPTIONS THAT YOU COULD EXPLORE:

1. Could you get rid of the plastic entirely by replacing it with paper or cardboard? Whilst arguably paper has a higher carbon footprint than plastic, it is also generally accepted that paper will break down into a harmless matter very quickly in the atmosphere. With modern advances in packaging design, there are plastic-free options for almost every packaging application.
2. Could you reduce the quantity of plastic being used? Maybe you could leverage technology to source a stronger, thinner plastic that would do the same job. Where a plastic free alternative is simply not a solution, there are options to significantly reduce the amount of plastic used in almost every packaging process.
3. Could you consider closed loop packaging? Perhaps you could introduce reusable packaging with a system for ensuring that recipients return the packaging for reuse? Whilst this is a challenging solution that won't work in every situation, there are certainly companies who are making it work – so it's worth exploring.
4. Could you offer a recycling service? At the end of the day the main problem with plastic is what happens to it at the end of its life. Could you offer a 'return to sender' option so that your plastic packaging can be recycled properly, and sustainably?
5. Could your pack size be revisited? Would it work to double the quantity of goods per pack – reducing plastic packaging at the same time? Or maybe you could dispense with the plastic portion of your primary packaging and rely on the secondary and tertiary packaging? Again not

an approach that will work every time but one that definitely works in some situations.

6. Could you explore recycled plastic options? Whilst they are still plastic, because they are recycled these are more friendly to the environment than virgin plastic. What's more, when companies request recycled plastic options it incentivises both private and public sector recycling schemes to improve their systems and processes, and to improve the quality of the recycled output. This in turn will reduce the amount of plastic that ends up polluting our planet.

