

Package Like An Expert—Even If You Aren't

(NAPSA)—On an average day, small-business owners must play the roles of accountant, secretary and human resources specialist, among others. One crucial role often overlooked, however, is that of packaging and shipping expert. If shipping products is a large part of one's business, the way the product is packaged is important because it is the first opportunity to make a positive impression on customers. The following quick tips are designed to help businesses package products so they arrive on time, unharmed and visually appealing.

Get It There On Time: To ensure that products arrive on time, it is essential to use adequate postage so the product will not be returned to sender—leaving the customer to wonder when, and if, the order ever will arrive. Rather than guessing how much postage to use, business owners can utilize the United States Postal Service's online postage rate calculators.

Get It There In One Piece: Nothing can alienate customers more than receiving broken merchandise. To prevent product breakage during shipping, business owners should make sure an adequate amount of the proper packaging material is used.

One packaging material option is Instapak Quick foam-in-bag packaging by Sealed Air Corporation. To use the product, simply apply pressure to designated areas of the bag to mix two liquid components contained within. When the liquids mix, packaging foam is activated inside the bag and rises to form a protective cushioning for the products to be shipped. It is a good way to create custom packaging just in time.

By visiting www.instapakquick.com, shippers can access a calculator that determines how much of the foam cushioning is needed to adequately protect a



product based on its dimensions and weight. The calculator is able to determine whether foam packaging is the best option for the specified product.

Through the Web site, users also can access the “Packaging Options Finder.” This interactive section of the site features a pull-down menu that enables users to select the product being sent and discover the best possible packaging options to meet their needs.

Get It There Attractively: A series of focus groups was conducted by 3M recently on how Internet consumers viewed the packages they received. Consumers proved to be quite savvy about the shipping process and hold a strong opinion that the shipping container should be close to the size of the product inside.

A real irritation for customers is receiving a small product placed in too large a box, surrounded by “peanuts” or other fillers, such as shredded paper. The messy and unattractive “peanuts” came up again and again as the biggest gripe.

To combat this messy packaging dilemma, there are attractive packaging options that do not require a larger-than-necessary box. Foam-in-bag packaging, cushioned mailers and inflatable packaging are just a few of the alternatives that protect the product without wasting space. To learn more about packaging options or to receive answers to packaging questions, call 1-800-568-6636, or visit www.sealedair.com.