



FOODSERVICE PACKAGING STRATEGIC SOURCING GUIDE

The decision to source new foodservice packaging for your establishment is important — but it doesn't need to be difficult. This guide will take you through important details to help organize your needs.

SOURCING OPTIONS

There are three options for sourcing foodservice packaging: directly from a packaging manufacturer, through a foodservice distributor, or at a retailer such as a club or “cash and carry” store.

1. Reasons to buy from a packaging manufacturer:
 - You are looking for customized packaging (graphics, size, shape).
 - You have high volumes (usually defined as more than 1,000 cases per year).
 - You have an established distribution network.
 - You may be considered a strategic or national account.
 - You have no distributor in your area that carries the desired product.
2. Reasons to buy from a foodservice distributor:
 - Your needs will be met by stock packaging (some custom packaging services available).
 - You have low volumes (usually defined as less than 1,000 cases per year).
 - You are looking for the distributor to deliver the packaging to you.
3. Reasons to buy from a retailer:
 - Your needs will be met by stock packaging.
 - You have low volumes (usually defined as less than 1,000 cases per year).
 - You are able to deliver the packaging from a retailer to your foodservice operation.



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DO'S

- DO evaluate packaging decisions early on during your menu development.
- DO communicate to your supplier all the features and functions the packaging should have.
- DO test samples by using them, not simply seeing them empty. (Tip: To simplify testing, use packaging under the maximum condition or environment.)
- DO consider the environmental attributes of the packaging.
- DO think of your foodservice packaging as potential advertising.
- DO review the packaging budget prior to moving forward with a custom package.

DON'TS

- DON'T assess only the lowest cost option.
- DON'T assume that custom packaging is the best option.
- DON'T conclude that all foods and beverages can go in the same packaging.
- DON'T forget to periodically assess your packaging to make sure it still meets your needs.
- DON'T neglect any regulatory or compliance requirements based on where the package will be sold.

MEETING YOUR PACKAGING NEEDS

Foodservice packaging comes in many shapes, sizes and colors for all types of foods and beverages. The more information you can provide to, and request from, your potential packaging suppliers, the better a supplier can meet your needs. The following pages serve as a request for proposal (RFP). You can simply fill it out and distribute it to potential packaging suppliers, or use it as a guide to create your own RFP.

Alternatively, you may complete and submit the RFP to the Foodservice Packaging Institute by email to fpi@fpi.org. Once received, FPI will distribute it to its members, which include most of the foodservice packaging manufacturers in North America.

FPI offers other resources, including a free quarterly newsletter to keep up to date on the latest in foodservice packaging innovations and a comprehensive product listing. Both may be found at www.fpi.org/products.





FOODSERVICE PACKAGING REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

COMPANY CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____
Company: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER FOR YOUR POTENTIAL PACKAGING SUPPLIERS

Are you replacing an existing package?

No Yes [Describe existing package] _____

What will go in the package?

Beverage [Explain] _____
 Food [Explain] _____

How much will go in the package?

Single portion [Provide approximate total ounces] _____
 Multiple portions [Provide approximate total ounces] _____

What will be required of the package? Select all that apply:

- Keeps hot items hot [Provide duration and temperature] _____
- Keeps cold items cold [Provide duration and temperature] _____
- Keeps frozen items frozen [Provide duration and temperature] _____
- Does not absorb grease / juice
- Resistant to leaks
- Has a light or heavy weight / strength

What type of material(s) would you consider for the package and why? Select all that apply:

- Paper, i.e., paper, paperboard, molded fiber, etc. [Explain] _____
- Plastic, i.e., PET, polypropylene, polystyrene, PLA, etc. [Explain] _____
- Aluminum [Explain] _____
- Other [Explain] _____



What should the packaging look like? Select all that apply:

- Must fit in with a suite of packaging [Explain] _____
- Particular color or shape [Explain] _____
- Different compartments [Explain] _____
- Base and lid hinged together
- Base and lid in separate pieces
- Different dome or lid options for the same base
- Film-sealable or tamper-resistant
- Embossed or printed graphics (logo, special design, etc.) [Explain] _____
- Area for labels (nutritional information, heating instructions, etc.) [Explain] _____
- Clear component needed to display food item

What will you do with the packaged item? Select all that apply:

- Fill the package at the store / retail site
- Fill the package at an off-site location (i.e., supplier / central commissary / kitchen) for shipment to the store / retail site
- Store in a hot display case [Provide dimensions of shelf space and number of shelves, if known] _____
- Store in a cold display case [Provide dimensions of shelf space and number of shelves, if known] _____
- Store in a freezer case [Provide dimensions of shelf space and number of shelves, if known] _____
- Place under a heat lamp
- Place in a microwave or an oven for warming or cooking [Explain] _____
- Use with automated equipment
- Lid it
- Stack it

What do you expect your customers will do with the packaged item? Select all that apply:

- Heat or re-heat in a microwave or oven
- Freeze it
- Open or close it several times
- Cut and / or eat the items out of the packaging
- Delay consumption of food or beverage
- Use it to serve foods, such as a catered function

Which environmental features would you like the package to have? Select all that apply:

- Recyclable
- Compostable
- Contains recycled content
- Made from bio-based / renewable materials

Please answer the following questions related to volume, delivery and distribution:

- What is the estimated annual volume for this package? _____
- What is the expected frequency of orders, including seasonal differences? _____
- Will this package be delivered to a single location or multiple? [Explain] _____
- Geographically, where will this product be used? _____
- Do you currently work with a distributor? [Provide company name(s)] _____

Please answer the following questions related to the decision process:

- What is the decision-making process? _____
- Who is involved? _____
- What established timetables, approval milestones are involved? _____
- Do you have an ultimate deadline? No Yes [Provide date] _____
- Will there be staged tests before a full rollout of the packaging product? No Yes
- Will several packages be tested internally? No Yes

Please answer the following questions related to costs:

- What is the estimated retail-selling price of the packaged product to the consumer? _____
- What is the target price point for this package? _____
- What are your payment terms? _____
- Are there any special rebate programs? No Yes [Explain] _____
- If there is a price revision mechanism (e.g., possibility of adjusting prices due to raw material cost changes), please explain: _____

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR POTENTIAL PACKAGING SUPPLIERS

- Do you offer stock options that may fit my packaging needs?
- Do you have any new products in development that may fit my packaging needs?
- What is your minimum order size?
- What are your pack sizes and counts (case and inner)?
- How are items packaged / shipped (palletized, sleeved, boxed, etc.)?
- What is your lead-time for regular stock orders?
- What is your lead-time for development of new packaging?
- Do the packaging items under consideration meet appropriate compliance requirements (regulatory, insurance, etc.)? [Ask for specific compliance requirements]
- Do you conduct audits for good manufacturing practices, food safety, etc., in your operation(s)? If so, what scores were achieved? [Ask for specific audit requirements]
- Do you have an inventory of terms to include that is associated with the proposal?
- May I receive samples? [Ask for specific requests]