

A GUIDE TO CUSTOM BOX TYPES, STYLES, & MATERIALS

Not sure which box is right for your product?

We created this guide to give you a quick overview of common custom box types, box styles, and material options so you can choose the packaging that best fits your product.



UNITED GMG
PRINT MAIL PACKAGING

Types of Custom Boxes

Some boxes prioritize durability for shipping and logistics, while others focus on presentation or product protection. Here are several common custom box types used across many industries.

▶ Mailing Boxes

Mailing boxes are durable die cut boxes commonly used for e-commerce shipments. They typically feature interlocking flaps that allow the box to close securely without excessive tape. Because they combine strength with a clean presentation, mailing boxes are widely used for subscription boxes, online retail orders, and promotional kits.

▶ Shipping Boxes

Shipping boxes are heavy duty corrugated containers built primarily for transportation and storage. Their structure is designed to protect products while allowing boxes to stack safely during shipping and warehousing. These boxes are commonly used for bulk shipments, distribution, and industrial packaging.

▶ Folding Cartons

Folding cartons are lightweight boxes made from paperboard that are printed, die cut, and folded into shape. They are frequently used for retail packaging where branding and shelf presentation are important. Cosmetics, food products, pharmaceuticals, and small consumer goods often use this type of packaging.

▶ Rigid Setup Boxes

Rigid setup boxes are sturdy boxes that hold their shape and offer a premium appearance. They are typically made from thick board and wrapped in printed or decorative paper. Because of their durability and presentation quality, they are commonly used for luxury products, gift packaging, and electronics.

▶ Product Boxes

Product boxes are custom sized boxes designed to hold a specific item securely while displaying product branding and information. These boxes may include inserts or display windows to help position and showcase the product.

▶ Influencer Boxes

Influencer boxes are designed to create a memorable unboxing experience. They often include custom inserts, bold printing, and specialty finishes that highlight the product and brand. Companies frequently use these boxes for product launches, PR kits, and marketing campaigns.

▶ Prototype Boxes

Prototype boxes are short run packaging samples used to test design, structure, and product fit before full production begins. Creating a prototype allows businesses to review the packaging, make adjustments, and confirm that the final design performs as expected.



Custom Box Styles

Box styles describe the structural design of the packaging. The way a box folds and closes affects its strength, ease of assembly, and how it protects the product.

Style	Description	Best For
RSC (Regular Slotted Container)	One of the most common shipping box designs. All flaps are the same length and meet in the center when closed.	Shipping, warehouse storage, bulk distribution
REFT (Roll-End Front-Tuck)	Reinforced side panels roll inward to add strength. The front flap tucks into place to secure the box.	Subscription boxes, product kits, e-commerce packaging
RETT (Roll-End Top-Tuck)	Similar to REFT but closes with a top tuck flap, creating a clean opening experience.	Retail packaging, cosmetics, promotional kits
HSC (Half Slotted Container)	Similar to an RSC box but only includes flaps on one side, leaving the other side open.	Storage bins, parts containers, top loading packaging
FOL (Full Overlap Slotted Container)	Flaps fully overlap when closed, creating double layered protection on the top and bottom.	Heavy items, fragile products, shipments requiring extra durability
OPF (One Piece Folder)	Made from a single sheet that wraps around the product, creating a snug protective fit.	Flat products such as books, frames, and electronics
Telescope Boxes	Two piece design consisting of a base and a lid that slides over the top.	Gift packaging, presentation packaging, larger items
FPF (Five Panel Folder)	Similar to a one piece folder but includes an additional panel for extra edge protection.	Long or narrow items such as furniture components or metal parts

Custom Box Material Options

The material used to produce the box affects durability, appearance, and printing quality. Choosing the right material depends on the weight of the product, how it will be shipped, and the type of presentation required.

▶ Paperboard

Paperboard is a lightweight material commonly used for retail packaging. It provides a smooth printable surface that works well for detailed graphics and branding.

Best for: Retail packaging, folding cartons, lightweight consumer products

▶ Thick Paperboard

Thicker paperboard provides additional rigidity while still supporting high-quality printing. It is often used when packaging needs to feel more substantial while maintaining a clean printed appearance.

Best for: Premium retail packaging, electronics packaging, higher-end product boxes

▶ Corrugated Cardboard

Corrugated cardboard includes a fluted inner layer that provides cushioning and structural strength. This construction makes it ideal for protecting products during shipping and storage.

Best for: Shipping boxes, mailing boxes, protective packaging

Optional Customization Options

Beyond box type, style, and material, custom packaging can also include a range of enhancements that improve both visual presentation and functionality. These options allow businesses to strengthen brand recognition, protect products more effectively, and create a more polished customer experience.

▶ Printing Options

Printing your designed box has two key factors: the printing method and the type of printer used, which can vary depending on use, volume, and cost.

Printing method:

- Direct printing: Printed directly onto the board. Best for standard use, with lower cost and a quicker turnaround.
- Print to mount: Printed on a separate sheet, then mounted onto the board to get the clearest printing and avoid corrugated texture. Offers more control over finishes like gloss, matte, or soft-touch. Best for premium packaging.

Printing type:

- Digital printing: For shorter runs, prototypes, or packaging that may change frequently
- Offset printing: For high-quality graphics and consistent color in larger production runs

▶ Finishing Techniques

Finishing techniques add visual and tactile elements that make packaging feel more distinctive. These enhancements are often used to highlight logos, create contrast, or give packaging a more premium appearance.

Common finishing options include:

- Foil stamping to add metallic highlights to logos or design elements
- Embossing or debossing to create raised or recessed textures in the packaging surface
- Spot UV coatings to add gloss to selected areas for visual contrast
- Soft touch coatings to create a smooth, velvety feel

▶ Structural Additions

Structural enhancements improve how packaging protects and presents the product. These additions are especially useful when products require additional support or when presentation plays an important role in the customer experience.

Common structural additions include:

- Custom trays and inserts to hold products securely
- Die cut windows that allow customers to see the product before opening the package
- Specialty closures such as magnetic flaps or ribbon pulls

Need Help Choosing the Right Custom Box for Your Product?

Have questions or want guidance selecting the best custom packaging option? Our team at United GMG is here to help. Contact us to discuss your project and get recommendations based on your product, goals, and timeline.

