A MindfulGuide: To Sustainable Packaging & Shipping

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Contents:

Well hello there!

When it comes to sustainability within the world of ecommerce, our thoughts at MindfulCommerce often default to the impact of packaging and shipping. Something of a "necessary evil" within the industry. The very nature of our businesses means that products will always need to be safely and securely delivered to our customers, using up natural resources and putting extra traffic on the roads.

As responsible online retailers, it's up to us to do everything in our power to minimise and mitigate the impact of this process.

At MindfulCommerce, we empower ecommerce merchants and tech solutions to work together to find more efficient and effective workflows to reduce the impact of our industry. With so many of our expert partners working within the packaging and shipping space, we wanted to collect and collate some of their wisdom, to give a really deep dive into the difference we can all be making when it comes to ecommerce fulfilment choices.

Whether it's small tweaks to your packaging design, or AI-powered delivery network optimisation, there's something for everyone within this guide.

We know that becoming a fully sustainable brand doesn't happen overnight, but taking the time to get better informed and educated around the issues (and solutions!) is a great first step to success.

Thanks for being here with us, and doing your bit.

Packhelp

Chapter 1

Protective Packaging: Saving the Planet

Chapter #1:

Whether you're a small business or an international company, your operations are going to have an impact on the environment. It's up to you how big of an impact, and whether it's positive or negative.

It's important for us to educate Packhelp clients so they can make informed, better decisions while purchasing packaging and know exactly what qualities make them sustainable.

You can read more about eco properties here.

So, what does sustainability mean? At Packhelp we define sustainability as doing something in such a way as to not deplete natural resources and to support a long-term, global ecological balance. In our packaging, we look to alternative materials, vegan glues and to rebuild the natural resources we use.

Chapter #1 - Packhelp
Protective Packaging: Saving the Planet

The most popular type of packaging on the market today are boxes made of cardboard and it's not surprising to see why. Cardboard is light, it protects products well and it's recyclable.

However, cardboard is made from wood and as we know, trees are an integral part of our ecosystem. They absorb carbon dioxide and what's more, they're beautiful.

Chapter #1 - <u>Packhelp</u>
Protective Packaging: Saving the Planet

So what can merchants do to lower their impact on the environment when using cardboard?

#1 Support reforestation - if you use natural resources you should take care of them, especially when it comes to trees. At **Packhelp** we plant trees, together with our customers and One Tree Planted. This is a super-easy way for our customers to give back to nature. It's just one click box and One Tree Planted takes care of the rest.

#2 Use certified materials - order FSC® certified packaging. It's the most trusted certificate of sustainable forest management.

#3 Use similar recyclable materials to cardboard when it comes to sealing up boxes. Like Kraft tape - which minimizes the effort needed to dispose of the box and makes it easier to recycle.

#4 Remind your customers to flatten the cardboard before disposal - it doesn't take much effort, but it can have a great impact.

#5 As a consumer, be wary of returning too many goods. Which results in increased CO2 levels from unnecessary van deliveries. As well as extra packaging materials.

Chapter #1 - Packhelp
One Small Step Towards Better, Greener Packaging

As they say: 'We don't need one person committing to zero waste perfectly, we need millions of people committing to it imperfectly.

Of course, cardboard isn't the only sustainable packaging solution and there is still much to be invented in this field. We know from our own experience as customers, that we pay attention to every detail of the packaging. We crave great design, but we also hate overpacking and plastic covering everything we buy.

So, what's the secret sauce that can combine both a great unpacking experience and sustainability? We think it might be something as simple as a customized cardboard box with your logo, slogan and a nice pattern printed on it.

Beautiful, yet sustainable.

Chapter #1:

There's More!

Learn more about Packhelp and use code "**MindfulCommerce10**" at checkout for a 10% discount (new customers) - valid until the 31st of August.

noissue.

Chapter 2

Sending a Message With Sustainable Packaging

Chapter #2:

Ecommerce packaging is no longer solely just a way to get your item from A to B. First impressions count, so consider your brand's packaging an opportunity to communicate your values to customers from the moment they first lay eyes on their parcel.

Have you shared your ambitions to become a more sustainable ecommerce business with your customers? Then they won't be impressed by cellophane wrapping or a plastic poly mailer showing up on their doorstep. Packaging is a key step in your sustainability journey, as each one of your business processes should be thoughtfully refined to stay true to your word.

Chapter #2 - noissue
Sending a Clear Message

Choosing sustainable packaging materials, cutting down on excess layers and using mindful designs signals careful consideration of your brand's impacts on the environment, which enhances the overall customer experience for conscious shoppers.

Packaging providers like noissue make this process a whole lot easier by communicating the sustainability value of the packaging on the exterior. The noissue recycled and compostable mailer bags are clearly labelled as such (Hey! I'm a 100% compostable/recycled mailer). This is a detail that won't be missed by the customer from the first interaction.

Mindful Commerce

Chapter #2 - noissue
Sending a Clear Message

This is an excellent sustainable marketing play for a brand to use, as it provides full transparency to the customer about what the packaging is made from and the value it holds. It's also a great way to encourage user-generated content being posted on social media, as shoppers often like to show appreciation for greener packaging methods. And don't forget transparent communications about your sustainability efforts builds awareness and encourages other brands to do the same.

Chapter #2 - noissue
Sending a Clear Message

All of noissue's packaging products have the option to display an **Eco-Alliance badge**. The Eco-Alliance represents a community of like-minded, eco-conscious brands who have opted to use sustainable packaging. The badge is a way for businesses to show that they're committed to forging a more responsible path through their practices, including their packaging.

Packaging can be a high-waste industry, so communicating your ecommerce brand's choice to use sustainable packaging features helps customers build a relationship with it, as they see the time and consideration that's gone into this important and unmissable step.

Noissue are offering a free **sample pack** for the first 25 readers/downloaders of this e-book! Use code "IE-SustainablePackaging".

Chapter 3

3 Ways to Make Your Ecommerce Fulfilment More Sustainable

Chapter #3:

Ecommerce is <u>growing at a crazy rate and shows no signs of slowing down</u>.

But as our industry grows, so does its environmental impact.

Consequently, finding ways to steer the supply chain and fulfilment industry towards a greener route is all the rage and Byrd are here to help you make your fulfilment process more sustainable with these 3 actionable tips.

Chapter #3 - Byrd
Inventory, Shipping & Packaging

So what can merchants do to make their ecommerce fulfilment more sustainable?

#1 DECENTRALISE YOUR INVENTORY

By splitting up your inventory into several warehouses, you can reduce the proximity to your customers and reduce CO2 emissions successfully. In addition, this fulfilment manoeuvre will also cut down your delivery costs and times significantly, which is a great competitive advantage to have in your repertoire.

#2 OFFER CLIMATE-NEUTRAL SHIPPING OPTIONS

When it comes to sustainable shipping, you need to consult the science for the correct strategy. For example, 86% of online shoppers from Germany would opt for environmentally friendly shipping, however, for two-thirds of the respondents, shipping price is an important factor. Bear in mind that cost-conscious consumers see additional charges for environmentally friendly shipping unfavourable. In contrast, roughly 20% of German respondents are willing to pay more if it helps to protect the environment, however, the surcharge should not exceed 5%. To get started, check out these climate-neutral shipping solutions: DHL GoGreen, DPD Total Zero, and GLS ThinkGreen.
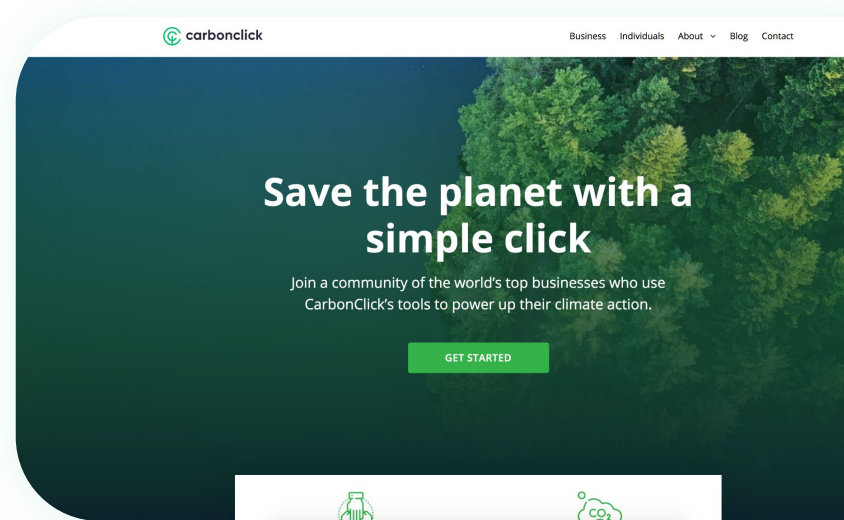
#3 AVOID PACKAGING WASTE

Due to the shift of consumer's attitudes towards sustainability, many retailers increased their sustainability efforts to cut back on wasteful packaging by using renewable materials and reducing packaging waste to a minimum; and you should do the same. Data shows that German shoppers already pay close attention to packaging and are waste-cautious. Besides using sustainable and recyclable materials for the packaging and opting for climate-neutral shipping options, you can also optimise your waste management by completely eliminating packaging waste. A simple way to get started is to opt for fitted, customised boxes for your orders; that way you will avoid using excessive packaging and protective box fillings.

Chapter #3 - Byrd
The Future Of Ecommerce Is Sustainable

The future of ecommerce lies in sustainable fulfilment. Carbon-neutral shipping options, sustainable packaging material, optimising order fulfilment, decentralising inventory and reducing carbon footprint are all attestations to the industry's gradual shift towards greener practices in ecommerce more generally.

Last but not least, you can also offset your carbon footprint with carbon-offsetting projects such as CarbonClick, or those offered by your fulfilment partner.

carbonclick

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Save the planet with a simple click

Join a community of the world's top businesses who use CarbonClick's tools to power up their climate action.

GET STARTED

Chapter #3:

Going Forward

Outsource your fulfilment to a <u>fulfilment partner with a clear commitment to sustainability and carbon-neutrality</u>, to further reduce your carbon footprint, while optimising your fulfilment setup and accelerating your growth.

Chapter 4

Sustainable Ecommerce Through Last-Mile Delivery

Chapter #4:

It's no secret that ecommerce and shopping has an inevitable impact on the environment. From emitting pollution during the shipping process through to supply chains and using plastic in packaging, ecommerce affects our planet in more ways than we think.

According to the World Health Organization, air pollution levels are dangerously high in many parts of the world. The report highlights that 9 out of 10 people breathe air containing high levels of pollutants and that around "7 million people die every year from exposure to polluted air."

Increasingly, brands are becoming more aware of the environmental problems that exist within ecommerce and are searching for alternative solutions. One of those solutions aims to help reduce CO2 emissions and put the customer experience first. That solution is last-mile delivery.

Chapter #4 - Zapiet
What is Last Mile Delivery?

From the moment you click "checkout," the magic of getting a product into your hands begins. The journey from a brick-and-mortar store or warehouse to your doorstep goes through a series of steps from delivery logistics to various checkpoints. Last-mile delivery is the final stretch in this process of how an order arrives at a household. The goal is to make it seamless, fast, and simple (especially since the demand for fast shipping and delivery has now become a standard.)

How can last-mile delivery be an opportunity for better sustainability? Long gone are the days where delivery was solely associated with drivers, vehicles, or long-haul trailers. Thanks to technology, software, and green-focused innovations, there are many more ways products can be delivered to someone and with these new methods, comes a reduction in impact.

Chapter #4 - Zapiet
What is Last Mile Delivery?

Using electric vehicles, robots, drones and trucks working efficiently with software technologies can all help to bring down impact and emissions. It's not all about high-tech novelty – we're also seeing a return to older, more traditional methods of delivery. Bicycle couriers, for example, are increasing in popularity across Europe and in Asia, helping to enable fast deliveries from local restaurants and more. Alternative delivery methods such as these, reduce the carbon footprint and associated emissions for businesses.

There are startup last-mile delivery companies, creating "on-the-way" deliveries, having drivers pick up items on their way to a destination. By optimising last-mile delivery routes businesses also save on fuel and create less wear and tear on vehicles by reducing the amount of time that they are on the road.

Mindful Commerce

Chapter #4 - Zapiet
A Sustainable Future

The demand for last-mile deliveries will only keep increasing. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), last-mile deliveries in urban areas are likely to rise by as much as 78% by 2030. The study also notes that "without serious, effective change, delivery-related carbon emissions could increase more than 30% in the world's top 100 cities in the next 10 years."

As brands decide to become eco-conscious and think of their supply chain becoming greener, last-mile delivery supports different industries that are making a change. Coffee shops and cafes are a great example, with last mile delivery being a core component of how they operate their businesses - by embracing delivery methods from bikes to electric vehicles in delivering food to their customers. We, at Zapiet, have created the Last Mile Delivery API so that last mile couriers and technology partners can implement with merchants already in the Shopify ecommerce space.

Chapter #4 - Zapiet
A Sustainable Future

As fast shipping and delivery become a standard in ecommerce, brands should note that there are more environmentally friendly ways to achieve these standards. From the moment a customer clicks "checkout," business owners can find ways to be more environmentally conscious through last-mile delivery, providing a seamless, fast experience for their customers while still reducing their carbon footprint and making the world a greener place.

BEZOS

Chapter 5

A Changing World For Sustainable Ecommerce

Chapter #5:

On the brink of a transport revolution, major cities within Europe and beyond have plans to reduce or remove cars from the streets. By rethinking their accessibility, there is a focus on building pedestrian friendly zones, miles of cycle lanes and focusing on micro-mobility in the form of electric scooters and bikes. Could this prove a great opportunity for the future of ecommerce logistics?

In this chapter, we'll explore how modern evolutions - of both of our cities and our technology - are opening up new options when it comes more sustainable fulfilment.

Chapter #5 - Bezos
Leveraging Public Transport

Could we be making better use of existing public transport systems to bring down the impact of our deliveries? In Mumbai, India, the Dabbawala provide a great model. It's a delivery network that has been operating for more than 125 years, without technology, to deliver homemade meals from people's houses to their offices every lunchtime. The commuter train network is used, after the morning rush hour has subsided, to transport approximately 200,000 deliveries per day. Couriers use bikes to collect the meals from people's homes and transport them to the station where they make their way across the city. At the destination station, workers take the meals by bike to each customer's office in time for lunch. What makes this even more impressive is that they make fewer than 3.4 mistakes per million transactions.

Chapter #5 - Bezos
Leveraging Public Transport

Outside of peak hours, public transport networks like the London Underground keep moving but the space on carriages, no longer taken up by commuters, is typically underutilised. As a remedy, in New York, Amazon has started encouraging delivery drivers to make use of public transport.

Companies

Amazon trolleys take a ride on New York subway

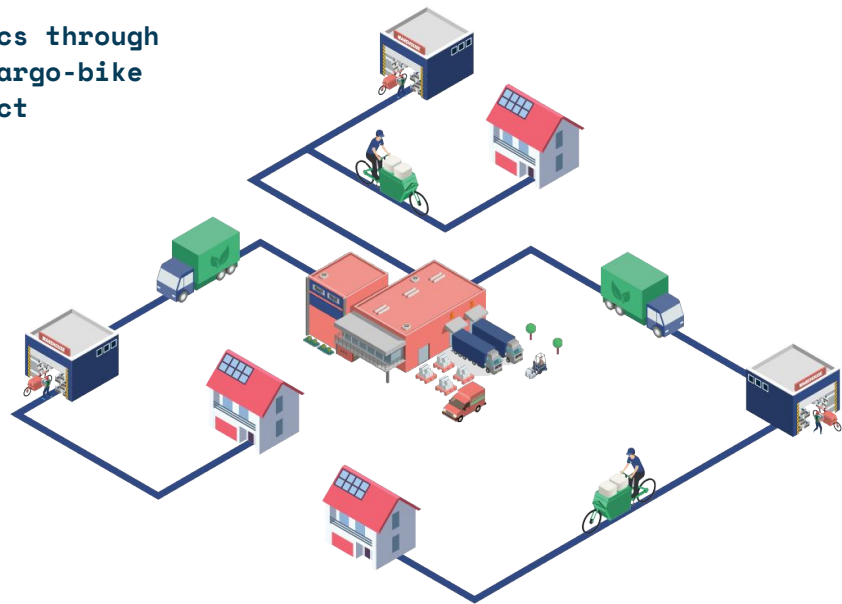Online retail group delivers parcels to Manhattan customers using underground train network

Chapter #5 - Bezos
Integrate Green Delivery Directly From Your Shopify Store

At **Bezos**, we are working to decarbonise ecommerce logistics through sustainable last-mile solutions. Launching in June, our cargo-bike **green delivery service** will allow sellers to provide select postcodes in central London with this additional delivery option. Directly integrated with Shopify, customers will be able to opt for green delivery at checkout.

We chose to use cargo bikes instead of traditional and electric delivery vehicles as they:

- Produce up to 94% less emissions than electric vans
- Complete jobs up to 50% faster than small vans during peak weekday times

Chapter #5 - Bezos
Micro-Fulfilment Centres

Located in densely populated areas, micro-fulfilment centres are allowing companies to get products closer to their customers where sustainable delivery methods like cargo bikes can carry the products for the last-mile, also enabling same-day delivery.
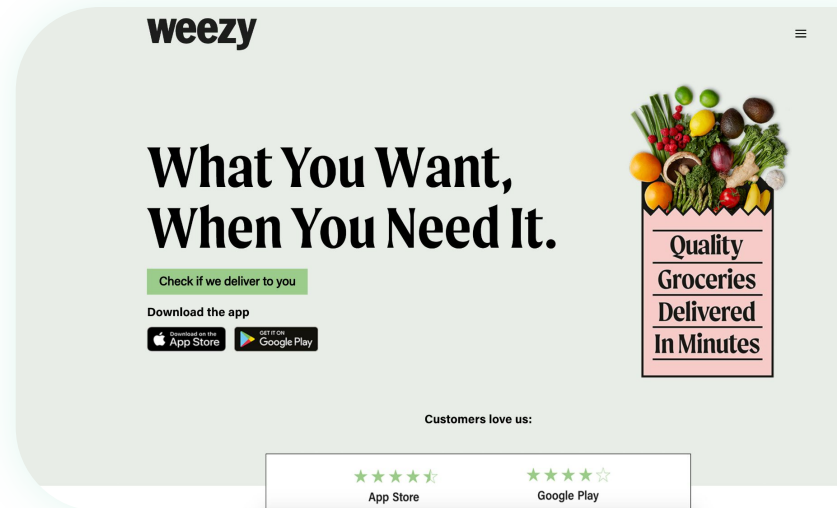
Large warehousing hubs are networked to smaller nodes located closer to consumers in city centres. These nodes can be dedicated micro-fulfilment centres, retail stores or even crowdsourced spaces using a similar model to AirBnB, whereby excess space in personal garages or offices can be rented out. Workers with the appropriate means of transport can then pick up and deliver the orders.

Chapter #5 - Bezos
Micro-Fulfilment Centres

A recent successful implementation of micro-fulfillment centers comes in the form of e-grocery services. Companies like Weezy, the first to launch in the UK, use a network of localised micro-fulfilment centres to promise to have your groceries delivered within 15 minutes of you ordering on the app. Deliveries are made by employees using pedal bikes, electric mopeds or any other form of sustainable transport.

Chapter #5 - Bezos
Big Data, AI & WMS

By predicting the demand for products, you can ensure that they are correctly allocated to the micro warehouses. Route optimisation is then used to reduce excess mileage and maximise the use of space. Micro-warehousing really depends on quality inventory management. While traditional warehouse management systems (WMS) are almost entirely limited to what happens within the four walls of a warehouse, the future of WMS extends far beyond that scope, to cover a product's journey from the assembly line, to the vehicle it is transported in, and storage in a network of warehouses. To make use of distributed warehouse networks, it is essential to ensure that you always have the products your customers want "on hand".

Chapter #5 - Bezos
Big Data, AI & WMS

Customers want products delivered yesterday, and Amazon are already working on plans to ship orders before they are ordered. Yes, you read that right. Amazon's current patent for "anticipatory shipping" aims to send products to partial street addresses before they are ordered in order to get products as close as physically possible to the consumer. The shipping address will then be updated while the product is already in-transit as soon as someone places an order. While this may seem far-fetched it is not unrealistic for products that are in high demand, and Amazon's huge quantity of data on each consumer's buying habits allows this reality. Currently, Amazon's distribution centres are predicting demand with an 80% accuracy based on the previous day's retail algorithms.

Looking Ahead To
The Future Of Sustainable
Packaging and Shipping

We hope that the content of this guide has got you feeling hopeful and inspired. Technology and inner city infrastructure is advancing at a really rapid pace. The options that we have as online retailers are ever-expanding when it comes to making more sustainable choices around or packaging and shipping decisions.

It's important to acknowledge that this area of our business will always carry some degree of impact – but it's great to know that there are so many opportunities to reduce this.

If you'd like to learn more about the practical, actionable steps you can take to start making a real difference to this area of your own business - download the MindfulCommerce Sustainability Framework.

It offers a professionally researched "step by step" pathway to building a more sustainable ecommerce business, based on six pillars - one of which is focused upon Mindful Deliveries, and making the very best choices possible in this area of your operation.

Suggesting both "quick wins" and bigger, more systemic changes to your business that can be implemented over time, the MindfulCommerce Sustainability Framework has something for businesses of all sizes and stages.

Huge thank you to our amazing contributors!

Packhelp

byrd

BEZOS

noissue.

zapiet

And of course, thank YOU for reading our ebook!

We cover this topic (and more), in our Sustainability Framework - check it out!

If you have any questions or comments, please let us know at info@mindfulcommerce.io & Join The MindfulCommerce Community to meet and network with like-minded people :)

Mindful Commerce