

A group of people are gathered outdoors at sunset, holding beer bottles. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light from the setting sun, creating a bokeh effect in the background. The people are smiling and appear to be in a social setting. The overall mood is relaxed and festive.

Beer Packaging Trends

A look at the trends influencing beer packaging design and innovation.

berlin[®]
PACKAGING



Introduction

The crowded beer market has a lot of competition from small breweries and big brands alike. Packaging plays a critical role in establishing a brand identity, standing out on shelf, and earning a place in the hands and hearts of consumers. Understanding the latest consumer insights, product trends, and packaging innovation is essential in crafting the perfect package for your beer brand. Here are some key trends influencing the beer category and beer packaging in 2023.

**The brands mentioned in this report are trademarks of their respective owners. Inclusion of these brands in this report is not meant to imply an association with or endorsement from the respective trademark owners.*

Moderation

From Dry January to Sober October, the moderation movement has been brewing for several years, and consumers' journey toward more mindful drinking is here to stay. The shift toward healthier lifestyles and changing attitudes about alcohol (especially among younger consumers) is cementing no/low alcohol beer and other beverages as a lasting trend rather than a passing fad. The old notions of what non-alcoholic beer looks and tastes like are changing with product innovation, improved taste credentials, and rising consumer engagement.

While consumers are interested in no/low alcohol beer, they don't want to sacrifice the beer-drinking experience. Package design should maintain a brand's visual equity elements and personality and look like traditional beer. These are still beers, they just happen to have no/low alcohol content. The packaging needs to differentiate with clear communication about the benefits and attributes of these products, but it still needs to live up to expectations for an enjoyable beer occasion. Emphasizing quality ingredients, brewing methods, and taste credentials can reassure consumers that these products are just as satisfying as their ABV counterparts.

AB InBev has pledged one-fifth of its total production to go towards the no/low alcohol segment by 2025.



Beyond Beer

Consumer drinking patterns changed during COVID-19, and the at-home occasion continues to remain popular, driving demand for ready-to-drink alcoholic beverages. Consumers are also looking for more interesting and unique experiences following the stress and monotony of the pandemic, including flavored drinks. RTD spirits and hard seltzers have taken a bite out of beer sales in part because they appeal to consumers with flavor. The lines are blurring between RTDs and traditional beer, and today's consumers understand that breweries are producing a wider variety of products with flavored beer, beer seltzers, and other products entering the market.

According to IWSR, 50% of consumers are influenced to purchase RTDs made by a well-known spirits, beer, or soft-drink brand, with those produced by local craft breweries also rating highly.

When it comes to packaging, playful graphics, colorful hues, bright bursts of color, retro design, and mascots are trending. Upbeat designs reflect the enjoyable experiences consumers are looking for these days.

The ready-to-drink category grew by a volume CAGR of 17%, 2017-2021 - IWSR.





Sustainability

Today's consumers demand sustainability, and brands can show their commitment to the environment through responsible ingredient sourcing, efficient production methods, and eco-friendly packaging solutions. In the beer category, cans are gaining share from glass bottles in part due to their sustainability credentials. Aluminum has a high recyclability rate and is lighter weight than glass.

The craft beer movement helped end the perception that glass is more premium, making cans even more appealing for brands. Beyond the growth of cans, innovations are happening in the category, such as biodegradable and post-consumer recycled six-pack rings, paper bottles, and cardboard containers.

Berlin Packaging repurposed 4,594,504 recycled containers by choosing PakTech handles in 2022.





Alternative Formats

The economic impact of the pandemic, inflationary pressures, and ongoing uncertainty has led to consumers favoring alternative packaging formats in beer and cider. This includes smaller sizes with a lower price point as well as 18-packs and variety packs that can add value. Variety packs also allow breweries to introduce new brands (even while distributors and retailers press them to reduce SKUs), trial new concepts, and encourage consumers to experience new products. These packs benefit both businesses and consumers, providing value while driving sales.

“After accelerating during the pandemic, variety packs have continued pressing forward as craft’s largest growth category (in \$), up 10% in the last 52 weeks.”

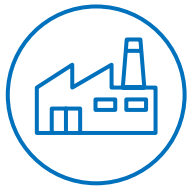
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Revolution Brewing’s Doug Veliky

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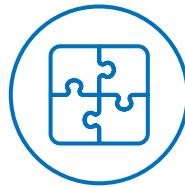
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