

THE ETHICAL
PACKAGING CHARTER



The **Foundation** takes its name from the **Ethical Packaging Charter**, born in 2015, from a shared reflection between *Edizioni Dativo* and *Politecnico di Milano* *, which gave life to a document of 10 Values useful to accompany packaging towards a more conscious future.

The Italian Packaging Institute, a reference associative network for the packaging supply chain, had shared its values since its inception, so much so that it subsequently acquired the **Ethical Packaging Charter** as a tool for the development of a new “system culture” .

*The recognition of the profound importance of the values enunciated together with the desire to give the supply chain a super partes institutional voice capable of stimulating authoritative visions and reflections on ethical packaging design, laid the foundations for the establishment of the **Ethical Packaging Charter Foundation**.*

* The Ethical Packaging Charter was drawn up by Giovanni Baule and Valeria Bucchetti. Original project by Giovanni Baule and Valeria Bucchetti (Polytechnic of Milan), Luciana Guidotti and Stefano Lavorini (Edizioni Dativo). Original project promoted by Edizioni Dativo in collaboration with the Design Department of the Milan Polytechnic.

Why a charter

Packaging, an essential and at times contradictory object, is going through a phase of full maturity; as such, it demands that we all embark on **a process of shared reflection** to enable an evolution respecting **the needs of the consumer, the user, the environment, and society as a whole**.

The ethical Packaging Charter wishes to be a tool of reflection and commitment, around which to converge. A document of principles to be shared to accompany packaging towards a future of greater awareness. **The Ethical Packaging Charter** wishes to be a **tool promoting a “system-culture”**: it wishes to connect rights and obligations binding together the production, the use and consumption, featuring individuals who bear obligations and individuals who enjoy rights and expectations.

The ethical Packaging Charter connects the rights, the principles and the values in order to establish an ideal contract between the stakeholders: so that they are committed to sharing principles, without over-lapping the regulations, and making their choice public.

The commitment of its supporters

The ethical Packaging Charter reaffirms that **we are all individuals implicated** in a system of design, production, use, consumption and reuse of packaging. The Ethical Packaging Charter reminds us that it is essential **to place at the center the consumer’s needs**, always respecting the role of each and every stakeholder. We are aware that the consumer is the user of packaging as a tool, the user of the information offered, the user of the service supplied by the product contained, and also interpreter of the packaging as a cultural and social object.

The Charter sees the involvement of designers, manufacturers, converters, users, sector experts and **all those who choose to join** and support this project. Its supporters are committed to operating in accordance with the ten values of the Charter, to duly disseminating them, to proposing initiatives that promote its contents.

10 VALUES

We, designers, manufacturers, converters, users and sector experts intend devising, designing, producing, demanding, using packaging that is:

01. responsible

This is packaging seen as responsibility shared by everyone towards everyone else: in its design, manufacturing and application.

Responsible packaging is the bearer of quality, that combines environmental protection with respect for all users' needs.

—

For the very reason that it affects an entire community, we also talk about the social responsibility of packaging.

All of us, to varying degrees and in different ways, are and feel part of this common responsibility (every action has an impact on the individuals that comprise our society).

This is reflected in the principle of ethical responsibility that concerns the designer choices, who has to put the user and his or her needs and requirements at the heart of their design. Designing packaging involves the analysis of its instrumental functions, which are closely related to the communicative functions of medium and interface with the user.

02. balanced

Where packaging is in its right balance: optimised for what is needed.

Packaging is balanced when it is intended and designed with the right balance with the content and it is the result of what it is necessary for its correct dissemination.

—

Each product's characteristics should steer and define the packaging according to the qualities, weaknesses and functions of the content, whether they are practical or symbolic.

Balanced packaging means avoiding overpackaging, if it exclusively

aims at guaranteeing product visibility.

Balanced packaging does not over-promise, but it is able to balance what it says with what it contains and communicates. Balanced packaging avoids information overload which confuses the receiver: it finds the right communication to meet the information needs. Balanced packaging takes on the natural role of content provider. Thus, it is perceived as a necessary and essential device.

03 safe

It is the healthy and safe packaging that protects people and communities throughout its whole lifecycle.

Safe packaging fully accounts for its traceability, throughout the supply chain; it is safe in terms of protection of its content and the non-contamination of the same; it is safe during transport and use throughout its entire lifecycle.

—
When it is time to choose a product and its packaging, consumers rely on it and entrust their own safety to it. As consumers we must be informed, but we definitely have the right to believe in what the packaging tells us: packaging sets off that “implicit agreement” proposed by the brand.

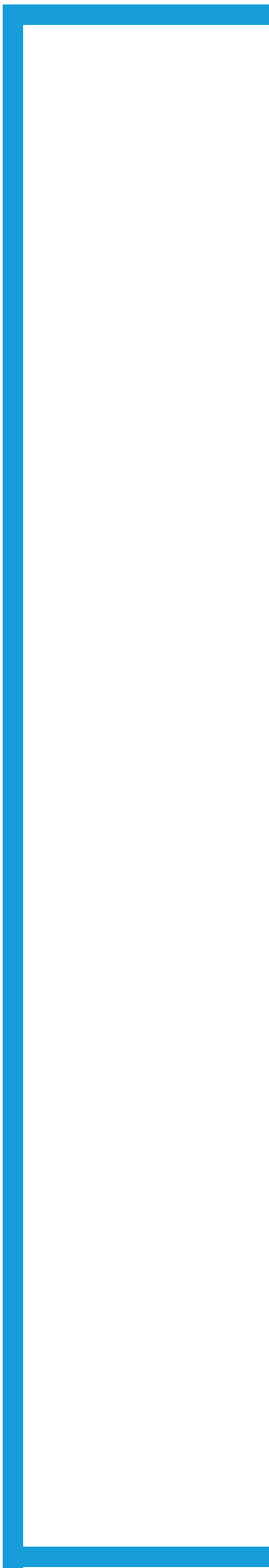
Safe packaging becomes the essence and the realization of the guarantee of product conformity: it implies a supervised production process and controls that ensure the product adequacy. Packaging is safe if all the individuals along the supply chain respect the legal standards, but it is even safer if the consumer is made aware of it.

04 accessible

It is the user-friendly packaging: where packaging is capable of “easily” explaining itself to the user.

Packaging is accessible when it is user-friendly and intuitive, and thus takes into account every customer’s right to be able to approach, understand and use a product.

—
Packaging is accessible when it is easy to understand even beyond the user’s experience, knowledge or skills of the users and their level of attentiveness and regardless of the set conditions and the context. When it guarantees a flexible use, including left-handed and ri-



ght-handed people; when it communicates effectively even with physically or mentally impaired users. Accessible packaging guarantees access to the product; packaging seen as a whole, via all the elements that comprise it, favours the use/consumption of the product. Its sensorial and tactile aspects, and their quality, actively contribute to making packaging accessible in all its aspects: accessible thanks to the graphic design of the texts which ensures its readability; accessible because the space organization and the layout allow the information to be quickly available; accessible because the contents are expressed through a vocabulary that does not raise barriers and uses an easy-to-read language; it is accessible because it offers an immediate interaction that enables its use.

05 transparent

It is the packaging that builds an immediate relationship with its recipient.

Packaging is transparent when it is sincere, when it tells the truth in full compliance with the legal standards, and it does so plainly. Through its transparent quality it manages to build up a relationship of trust with the recipient.

—

Packaging must talk about its content without any alteration, and must communicate in a direct, immediately comprehensible and unequivocal way. It should not create any form of communication that might deceive or appear ambiguous, though in compliance with the principle of error tolerance. It must use a common language to ensure effective communication.

A transparent communication minimizes the risks of erroneous interpretation, the occurrence of accidental or unintentional actions with not always foreseeable consequences. Packaging that speaks plainly to its recipients is unambiguously identified within the sales or promotional context or within the context of its use. Transparent packaging is the packaging with a low error risk: it helps the recipient in its use, both in the daily contexts, as well as in any particular emergency context in which the distribution and use of the goods may occur.

>>>

06 informative

It is the packaging that ensures the best information, both useful and necessary.

Informative packaging respects legal standards, bears all information useful to know about the contents and its packaging, their use and disposal.

—
Packaging becomes our information interface because it allows us to relate with the product. It allows us to acquire knowledge on the content and its container. It informs us on the product composition, the origin of the materials, the preservation methods, the nutritional value and the food chain: from the information for the preparation and administration of the contents to those of an environmental nature, indicating how to dispose of it and attesting to its sustainability.

It should inform in a forthright manner, with the awareness that product information is a right and priority of the discerning consumer.

The information must be proposed in order to facilitate the perception of its importance, i.e., through a clear organization of the contents and clearly showing the information needed to respect the environment.

Similarly, it must ensure maximum readability of essential information, to allow the recipient to gain a good knowledge and understanding of the product.

07 up-to-date

Where packaging is constantly in tune with the society of which it represents the values.

Packaging mirrors the culture of our society and in turn contributes to creating the same. It does so through messages, that are transmitted via its shape, its graphics, its symbols: it thus transfers values and messages and takes part in the evolution of contemporary social life.

—
This is why packaging has to be aware of its own potential as a vehicle of communication, of the power that arises from its dissemination.

Packaging must be sensitive to the values and messages that it transmits, avoiding participating in the spread of offensive or stereotyped messages which might somehow offend people's sensitivity.

Packaging conveys dietary habits, luxury and models social life models: that is why it must avoid spreading stereotypes that may in any form represent obstacles to a fair society, it must avoid gender stereotypes which might inhibit the development of a fair and equal society, especially when children are concerned.

08 forward-looking

It is the packaging that stands in a fair relationship with its own future.

Packaging is capable of intervening today in terms of possible future effects. The choices that define the today's packaging cannot develop starting from an immediate advantage but must consider the consequences that derive from the initial choices.

—
Forward-looking packaging is capable of grasping impending changes, favouring new consumption and behaviour models capable of evolving over time.

Thus, packaging is aware that it has to change over time: it has to experiment on itself to be able to favour its own future transformations. Packaging should be able to embrace all necessary changes: being the subject of research and forms of experimentation that make it evolve; it must be capable of foreseeing the changes that will affect it.

Packaging should imply a constant commitment in terms of research and innovation. As consumers, we are thus aware that we are facing an object capable of reinvent itself for the users of tomorrow.

09 educative

It is the packaging that, as a widespread object, knows how to take charge of its educational function.

Packaging is a tool that is fully part of everyone's daily lives, integrated in a constant dialogue with its recipient. Hence, it has an extensive educational potential: its dissemination makes it a powerful tool also in this regard.

—
Packaging participates in formulating and spreading our everyday aesthetics and as such should perform an exemplary function. It must put quality at its core, and indeed become a messenger of aesthetic quality, capable of educating our visual perception; it must speak with a model language, without turning to distorted languages. It should have an educative function, inducing virtuous behaviour with its messages, increasing the user's knowledge and awareness on issues recognised as priority or emergencies true and proper as the case may have it.

It should indicate the way how to dispose of, recycle or reuse packaging and how to reduce waste. Every packaging, regardless of the

economic value of its contents and the product field represented, is a bearer of values: quality communication does not cost more than bad communication, but it makes the difference in the eyes and the mind of the recipient user.

10 sustainable

It is the packaging which respects the environment.

Packaging is sustainable if designed in a holistic manner, fully balanced with the product and its use, so as to optimize its overall environmental performance.

Sustainable packaging is designed, manufactured, transported and recycled by using, where possible, renewable and clean energy. Sustainable packaging protects the product throughout its journey to the end user with the least environmental impact and the lowest production of waste resulting from the product and the packaging used, causing the lowest production of waste in general and the least environmental emissions.

Sustainable packaging is obtained from responsible sources and renewable raw materials; it is effectively recovered after use.

It is environmentally responsible because it is manufactured with the least consumption of resources and energy. The choice of the material which it is made of is consistent with the product scope and its distribution. Sustainable packaging is designed and manufactured with a prospect of reducing the number of materials used and the number of components, making it easily separable. It must be designed and manufactured according to a principle of recyclability and should be primarily based on recycled materials.

Sustainable packaging aims to extend its own lifecycle and that of the product, it includes reusability among its guiding principles, as well as other possible uses before the end of its lifecycle.

Finally, sustainable packaging should prevent waste production and be designed to optimise its storage and transportation. All of us, stakeholders of this industry, should feel constantly committed to reducing the impact in each step of the production cycle, from reducing weight to saving energy and raw materials.

Data

Signature

* The Ethical Packaging Charter was drawn up by Giovanni Baule and Valeria Bucchetti. Original project by Giovanni Baule and Valeria Bucchetti (Polytechnic of Milan), Luciana Guidotti and Stefano Lavorini (Edizioni Dativo). Original project promoted by Edizioni Dativo in collaboration with the Design Department of the Milan Polytechnic.



Via Cosimo Del Fante 10

20122 Milan (Italy)

Phone. +39(2)58319624

C.F: 97870780158

segreteria@fondazionepackaging.org

www.fondazionecartaeticapackaging.org