

Package InSight  
**INDEPENDENT STUDY**



On the Value of

## **DECORATIVE TISSUE ECOMMERCE PACKAGING**

Creating a Premium Brand Identity and  
Memorable Consumer Experience

## The Study

As the eCommerce marketplace continues to grow and a world of choices are literally a click away, brands need new ways to distinguish themselves and create brand loyalty. With the relatively new concept of “unboxing” videos gaining popularity, the way brands approach their inner packaging can be as valuable as the products they are selling.

Package InSight, in partnership with Seaman Paper, set out to study this eCommerce unboxing experience and the effect of interior packaging on consumer perception and appreciation. While many brands prescribe to a utilitarian “void fill” method of interior packaging, more companies (especially luxury brands, cosmetics, and subscription boxes) are choosing to enhance their eCommerce packaging with decorative additions like stickers and branded tissue. Our study would determine if these interior augmentations improved the participant’s overall brand impression, possibly leading to more brand loyalty, more sharing on social media, and a feeling that they received a more expensive, premium product.

## Overall Findings

Via non-conscious biometric data gathered during usability activities, we found that the addition of tissue-wrapped interior packaging led to a more positive emotional experience at the moment participants opened their products. Post-study interviews corroborated this idea, with 84% of participants self-reporting that the tissue improved their experience, leading them to be much more likely to share a photo or video of the package through social media. They considered the brand quality to be better than that of the void-fill participants, and were more apt to reorder from the same company and recommend the company to friends and family.

Probably most significant, however, was the increase in monetary value by participants. For a small increase in packaging cost, the resulting perceived value for the tissue-clad products was considerably higher than the products packaged with utilitarian void-fill. Overall, we found that incorporating tissue and decorative additions into eCommerce packaging was beneficial on all fronts, improving experiences for the consumer and inspiring allegiance for brands and products.

**Participants who encountered branded tissue packages valued their item 24% higher than the other participants.**

## Study Methodology

In an effort to understand the lasting impression of eCommerce interiors, Package InSight's study was multi-phased, starting with the primary package interaction to gather data via emotion-tracking and immediate follow-up quantitative surveys. The second phase took place over the next three months, with each participant engaging in a phone interview with a member of the PI team. These responses were used to gauge how participants' feelings about their experience changed over time. For the study, ~120 participants were recruited and randomly assigned to one of four groups of approximately 30 people each. Participants were recruited from the community surrounding Clemson University, so the test "purchase" was specially curated to appeal to Clemson enthusiasts.



Group A: Air Pillow Void-Fill



Group B: Kraft Paper Void Fill



Group C: Branded Tissue



Group C: Branded Tissue  
(item exposed)



Group D: White Tissue Group



D: White Tissue  
(item exposed)

Each participant would receive an identical item– A handmade corrugated tiger paw (the Clemson Logo) enclosed in a plain brown corrugated box. Aside from the interior packaging, all of the items were identical; Group A was packaged with Air Pillow void-fill, Group B with crumpled Kraft paper void-fill, Group C with tiger-paw branded tissue and a tiger paw sticker closure, and Group D with white tissue and the same tiger paw sticker as Group C.

After completing a quick survey to capture demographics, participants were brought individually into a kitchen to open a plain brown box that had been placed on the kitchen counter. They were filmed throughout this interaction, with recording halted when they finished opening the box, regarded the contents, and looked back to the moderator for further instructions. Afterward each participant filled out a short survey about their online shopping history and their perception of the eCommerce packaging they normally received.

The participant recordings were processed through emotion mapping software that used their facial expressions to calculate the likelihood of certain emotions. The data for each group's participants was averaged together to assign a likelihood of emotional impact for the four different types of interior packaging.

For Phase Two of the study, each participant was contacted once and lead through a 10 minute survey. They were asked a series of questions about the package they received, their thoughts about the package-opening activity, and their opinions on the packaging quality and value. Participants were contacted at either 30, 60, or 90 days past their box opening so that we might determine if feelings about the activity and product might vary over time.

After completing both Phases, Package InSight analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data to draw the following conclusions about the multi-faceted value tissue can add to eCommerce interior packaging.

**64% responded that they would be most likely to share a product packaged in branded tissue on social media.**

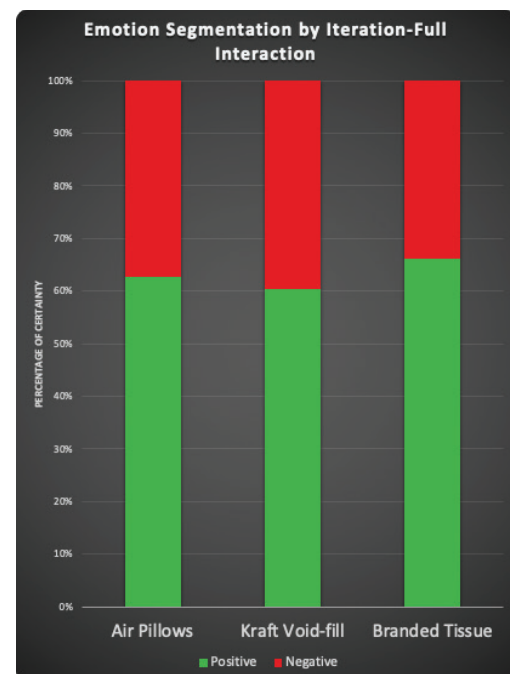
Emotion		Increase Likelihood	Decrease Likelihood
Joy	😊	Smile	Brow raise, brow furrow
Surprise	😮	Inner brow raise brow, brow raise, eye widen, jaw drop	Brow furrow
Fear	😨	Inner brow raise, brow furrow, eye widen, lip stretch	Brow raise, lip corner depressor, jaw drop, smile
Disgust	😬	Nose wrinkle, upper lip raise	Lip suck, smile
Contempt	😏	Brow furrow, smirk	Smile
Anger	😡	Brow furrow, lid tighten, eye widen, chin raise, mouth open, lip suck	Inner brow raise, brow raise, smile
Sadness	😞	Inner brow raise, brow furrow, lip corner depressor	Brow raise, eye widen, lip press, mouths open, lip suck, smile

Emotion mapping software uses observed facial expressions to calculate the likelihood of an emotion. Facial expressions have either a positive or negative effect on the likelihood of an emotion, as the table above illustrates.

## The Value of Emotion

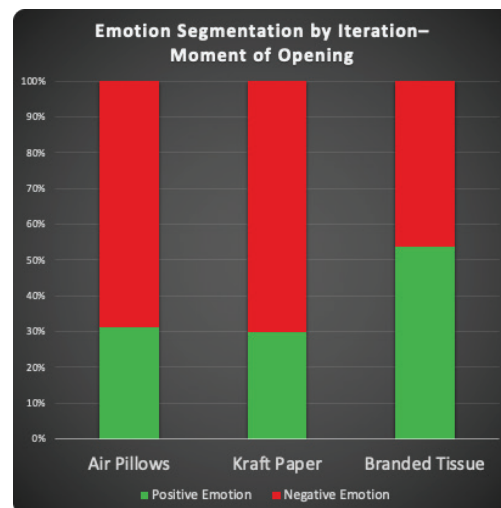
For the full-length of the package interaction, our Emotion-map testing revealed that the participants who interacted with tissue packaging felt positive emotions (joy and surprise) in the highest amount— **66% of their interaction time**. Kraft Void-fill elicited the highest percentage of negative emotion at 40%.

When the videos were clipped down to the “Moment of Opening” for each participant, the differences were more dramatic. In those first five seconds when a consumer is making their initial impression of a brand, tissue paper packaging elicited **positive emotional reactions 54% of the time**, compared to Air pillows at 31% and Kraft void-fill at 30%.



While these emotional descriptions may seem over-simplified, this non-conscious behavior was confirmed and corroborated by the qualitative data gathered in other parts of the study.

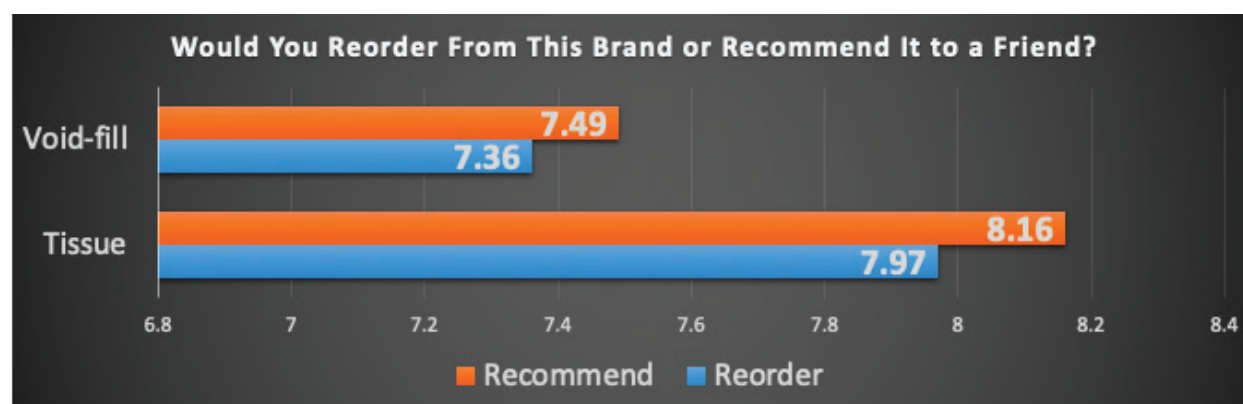
For instance, when participants were asked in the Phase Two interviews if the packaging added anything to their overall experience, **84% of the tissue participants reported that the packaging improved their experience**, while 55% of the “Void-Fill” participants said the packaging either had no impact on their experience, or that it made their experience slightly worse.



## The Value of Retention

How can packaging convert a one-time consumer into a brand loyalist? **48% of our respondents reported participating in eCommerce subscription services**, with the largest majority of those—47%—subscribing to health and beauty boxes like Ipsy and FabFitFun. In an effort to present a premium image from the onset, many of these subscription services (especially in the case of beauty or soft-goods) already package their shipments gift-box style, with a branded tissue wrap.

As savvy 21st century inventions, most subscription companies know that their business lives and dies in social media, and they package as such. **When participants were asked what general type of packaging they'd be most likely to share on social media, a large majority— 64%— responded that they would be most likely to share a product packaged in branded tissue.** In our Phase Two interviews, the Tissue group was much more enthusiastic about sharing a photo or video of their item, with many specifically mentioning the interior packaging as a catalyst for sharing. In the Void-fill group, not one participant indicated that their desire to share their product on social media was driven by the interior packaging of their product.

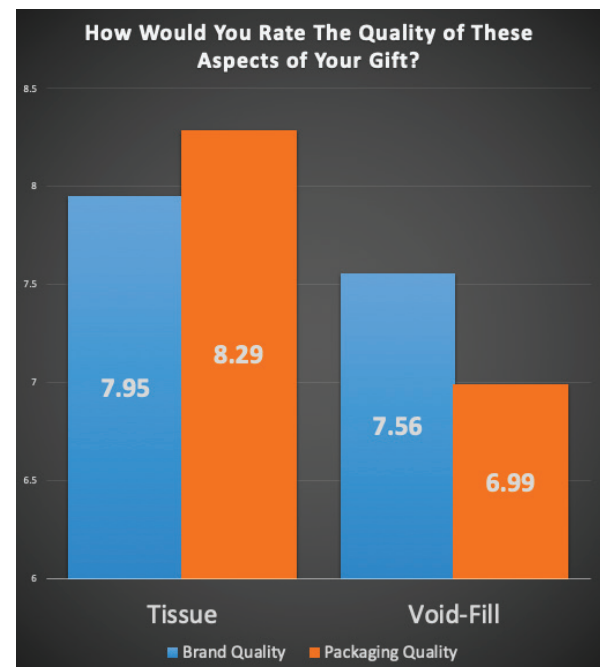


All the aforementioned findings build to create a picture of brand loyalists. Specifically, when asked to rate (from 1-10) the likelihood that they would reorder or recommend the brand to another person, our participants who interacted with the Tissue-clad packages offered much higher ratings than the Void-fill groups.

## The Value of Quality

One of the quickest ways to win a return customer is by offering them a premium quality experience for a reasonable price. As the data has illustrated, the tissue packaging elicited more joy for our participants, which in turn made them more likely to share their item via social media, reorder from the same brand, and recommend the brand to someone else.

But does tissue elevate the quality of the entire item? **Only 14% of our participants reported that their impression of a brand was not improved when their eCommerce purchases arrived wrapped in tissue.** So Package InSight asked participants to rate the Brand Quality and Package Quality of their study items on a scale from 1-10.



While we could have expected that the tissue group would rate their packaging quality much higher, we were pleased to see that they also rated their brand quality higher.

And when averaged together, the Tissue-clad products had a quality score of 8.12, while the Void-fill packages only averaged 7.28. Since all other variables are the same (box type and quality and enclosed product) we can surmise that the interior tissue packaging plays a significant role in improving the impression of the brand quality.

## Overall Value

Ultimately, how does all of this affect a customer's price expectation? Package InSight specifically chose to use a unique handmade product for this study so participants would have no prior experience with a "like" product. With no retail

history to draw upon, they would only be able to assess a price by their experience during and after the study. So, as a wrap up to the Phase Two phone interviews, we asked participants the following question:

**“If you were to order this product for a friend, and have it shipped to them exactly as you received it, what you would you expect it to cost?”**

The idea being that participants would assign an honest value to their product- not only what they thought it would cost, but what they would realistically be willing to pay to recreate the same experience for a friend. The participants who encountered Tissue-wrapped packages valued their item much higher than the Void-Fill subjects. The **Tissue-clad packages showed an increased value 24% higher than their competitors.**

In conclusion, Package InSight’s comprehensive study confirms that, not only do consumers prefer the unboxing experience when tissue is used as the interior packaging, but the use of tissue also bestows products with a more premium identity, lifting impressions of the brand quality and creating an overall more valuable experience for the customer.

