

Boxes And Packaging

As a board member in an international shipping company, I can tell you that boxes and packaging are more complicated than you might at first think. When many people think about boxes and packaging, they think first about the type of containers that are most common.

I do not know off hand how high a percentage of the goods sent by mail are sent in plain cardboard boxes, but I know it is in the 80s or 90s. Things like books, clothing, and even comparatively fragile items like dishes are often sent with standard packaging and boxes. They are simply wrapped in bubble wrap and put into a box filled with Styrofoam peanuts. Then whoever has sent them sits back and simply hopes for the best.

There are, however, much more expensive and high-tech choices for boxes and packaging that are sometimes used for special orders. From my experience, I would say that something like 95 percent of the stuff that is put into sturdy cardboard boxes, wrapped up in the correct way makes it there safe and sound, but for some rare and precious items, 95 percent is simply not enough. For example, if you are sending an antique vase by freight, you will probably want to be completely, 100 percent sure that nothing at all bad can happen to it, no matter what. If that is the case, you will ask for more than cardboard and air bubbles.

Advanced boxes and packaging are often actually not much more complicated than the simple ones. Hard plastic cases, with the proper padding built in, decrease the danger to most shipments to almost nothing. Unless the case is forcibly beaten repeatedly against the wall or run over by a truck several times, it is quite unlikely that anything at all could even possibly happen to what is inside. Usually, when we are asked to box and package an antique, or something else equally valuable, we build a custom case for it out of plastic before we send it out. In 23 years, we have only had one failure with this approach.

Then again, there are certain items that need even more sophisticated boxes and packaging. For example, if something is extremely temperature sensitive, the boxes and packaging must include a means to regulate the temperature, which is extremely costly and difficult to make. Only a few companies handle orders of this kind, but we have stayed away from them.

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About the Author

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