



A GUIDE TO PACKAGING: SOCKS

CONTEMPO



Introduction

So, you are launching a new line of socks and want to figure out the perfect packaging for them.

Or, there is just something about your current packaging that leaves you less than satisfied -- you know you can do better, but aren't quite sure what to do or where to turn.

Well, we know how hard that decision can be, and because of that, we put this all together for you! By the time you are done reading this guide, you will have a comprehensive understanding of what's out there, and therefore, what is best for you.

The goal of this guide is to give you everything you could possibly need to make your decision on what sock packaging is right for you.

Let us know if you have any questions!

How We Set Up This Guide

We brought together some of the best minds at Contempo to figure out the best way to layout this content. Our goal was to make this as user-friendly and easy to follow as possible.

Here is the way we broke it down:

- 1st we want to show you the different options that are most common in the marketplace today. We organized them by how the socks hang, because the great majority of socks in the marketplace are hung ... obviously, this doesn't apply to e-commerce sales.
- 2nd we cover different embellishments that are commonly found on sock packaging.
- 3rd we explain fasteners and why they are used.
- 4th we cover a very important fact you need to know when picking adhesives with sock packaging. This is arguably the most important part of this guide.
- 5th we talk about material callouts.

Then, we close ... that's a wrap :)

1

Most Common Sock Packaging Options

Injection Molded Pieces

Injection molded hangers are extremely common at retail, particularly with dress socks. There are two main types of injection molded options: hooks and hangers.

Hook

A **hook** is a simple injection molded piece that requires a fastener to hold the socks. These are found on all types of socks.



As you can see here, this hanger is used to hold six pairs of socks, 2-up. This means three on one side, three on the other side. This hanger has a large frame and socks are fastened to it. More on this later.

Hanger

A **hanger**, a more functional piece to hold the socks versus the hook, is used to simply “peg” the socks on your display. This is more than likely the first thing that will come to mind when thinking about a molded piece as it is the more popular option.

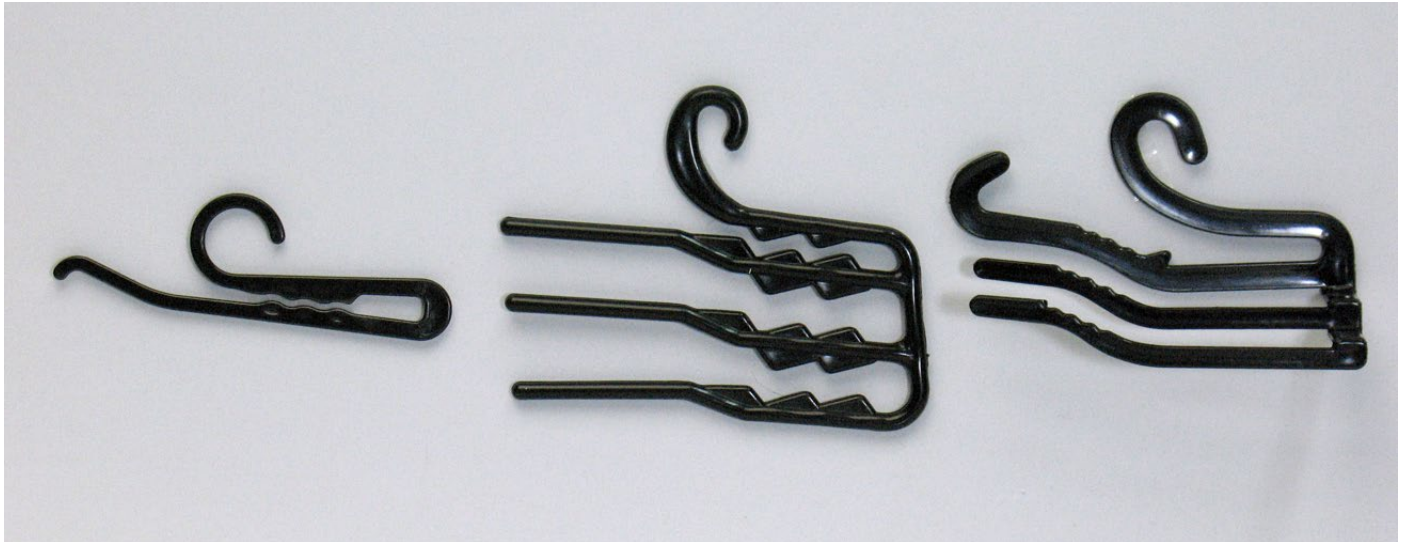
There are many types of molded hangers. Molded refers to the way that the goods are made and is done using injection molding equipment. Many of the plastic items you buy at retail are injection molded, and hangers are no different.

A Unique Hanger

For starters, let's look at a unique example of an injection molded hanger -- then we can move to some more common options.

More Common Hanger

Within the family of common hangers, you have 3 options: single, 3-tier and waterfall. These are all seen in the photo below:



This is a product shot of the 3-tier option.

The difference between 3-tier and waterfall is that 3-tier tends to stack on top of itself, whereas waterfall tends to stack sideways. The path you choose is purely aesthetic, there is no advantage to choosing one versus the other.



Variations

Hangers alone, are not enough to merchandise socks! They always have different components to make them functional. Let's take a look at the different variations you will find.



Injection molded with joker tag

The joker tag is the board piece shown on the bottom right of the photo below. It folds in the half and is fastened to the top of the socks. This is a great place for a logo or other brand identity graphics.

Injection molded with wrap

We've all seen these before!
These wraps either come in board or in a paper stock. These wraps contain branding, sizing and other information. The most basic option in the world of sock outfitting.



Injection molded with header

Header cards are board cards that are used in conjunction with a hook to grab the consumer's attention. Given the nature of the wide header card, it's almost like a billboard, which stands out in the store. However, this limits the number of pairs of socks you can fit horizontally on the rack.



Injection molded with tag

Socks can also be branded with just a hook and a tag. This is the simplest way, and is most commonly done with packaging children and kids footwear.



Combo (ie. with joker & wrap)

You will see that many times, a combination of the above are used on the same package. For instance, in the example below, the customer uses a molded hanger, wrap, and joker tag.



Carding

Now that we've covered the major types of hangers, let's cover the second most common way to hang socks. Carding for socks comes in two variations of board: full coverage and partial coverage.

Full

Full coverage means the packaging goes all the way around the socks. This is done with one and two piece solutions.

1 Piece

Here are some examples of one piece solutions. There are pro's and con's of course; they save the hassle of ordering and assembling two separate pieces, but have complicated dielines and can be challenging to assemble.



2 Piece

Here we have the two piece. This means we have two separate pieces, joined together using fasteners -- whereas with the one piece solution, this is achieved through a single dieline.



Partial

Partial coverage means the packaging does not go around the socks completely. Instead, it stops at some point; usually on the side. Since this is not very common, it can help your socks stand out from others on the rack!



Bags

Bags, while not common, can be useful for packaging large quantities of athletic socks. Keep in mind that most bags require special equipment to be sealed, so they may not be the best option for some of you!



There are also resealable sock bags. These can be a nice touch, but it's important to be mindful of cost, as this is an option that will be a bit more expensive.

Considering these bags are likely to be torn and thrown away, we tend to avoid these.

Boxed

(Not Hanging)

Boxes can be great for packaging multiple pairs of high end socks. Investing in a box can be a wise move, as it justifies a significantly higher retail price point. We all know that packaging can and will determine the perceived value of a product -- and there is no greater case for this point than with socks.

Look at this box below to see what I'm talking about. The right textured paper with the right hotstamp can make an irresistible combination for consumers!



A note on e-commerce boxes

Needless to say, e-commerce sock sales are boxed (not hanging), so the same rules apply. For e-commerce packaging, you should:

1. Include branding on the outside of your box, either printed or with a sticker
2. Include tissue paper to make your unboxing feel like opening a gift
3. Include a printed card inside prompting your customers to engage with your social media accounts

For more suggestions on unboxing, we have a division dedicated to unboxing strategies. You can email wow@contempocard.com to setup a call with our team!

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Embellishments

Think of embellishments as things you can choose include, but certainly don't need. None of these are mandatory, but given your previous choices (how they your socks will be hanging), you may need one or more embellishments to provide necessary information to your customers. Likewise, you may also want to add embellishments based on personal style -- this is where you can be different and memorable, if you put your creative cap on!

Sticker

The most basic use for stickers is for price or size.

However, your options are endless, think of all of the other things you could use stickers for...



Label Stock Band

You may have seen these before -- thin paper bands that go around the dress socks.
This can contain information regarding where the socks are made -- or anything else, really.

For instance, what if you prompted customers to post to twitter using a certain hashtag, for a chance to win a pair of socks? Get creative!



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Fasteners

How They Work and Why You Need Them

Fasteners hold all of the different components together -- and in the case where you are packaging multiple pairs of socks, they are used to hold the socks together as well! We've covered so many different pieces that go into sock packaging, alone, the pieces would fall apart. This is why you need fasteners.

In the photo below, you will see the most common and simple use case for a fastener: connecting a hook to your socks.



Your manufacturer will be very familiar with fasteners, and will have a “gun” that attaches these together.

Let's take a look. Here are the fastener so you know what we're talking about:



This is commonly referred to as a swiftach. The main purposes of these is to attach tags to product, but in the case of socks, they play a more “functional” role.

If you are an e-commerce sock company, you don't really have a need for fasteners, unless you:

- a. Want to use them to attach a tag to your socks (which may be unique and worth considering)
- b. Want to sell both retail and etail, and it's easiest to package all socks the same way.

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Choosing the Right Adhesive

Choosing the right adhesive is extremely important with socks, because the adhesive is often in direct contact with your product. As a result, the wrong adhesive can severely damage the product when the consumer removes the packaging.

The key consideration is whether the adhesive is touching the product or not.

There are two main types of adhesive: **permanent** and **removable**. If the adhesive is touching the product, we strongly advise using removable adhesive. This is necessary for full-coverage adhesive portions, meaning the whole inside of the wrap contains adhesive. In these examples, you should absolutely use removable adhesive, which is designed to be less aggressive and will be far less likely to damage socks and remove fibers upon removing the packaging.

If the adhesive is not touching the socks, as is the case with partial coverage, you may want to use a permanent adhesive. This can work in cases where the adhesive is just on the end of the wrap, and will only touch the wrap itself -- not the socks.

There are also options that are self-locking, which means they require no adhesive. However, there is the risk that if the dieline is not done properly, these packages could burst open. For this reason, we don't recommend this.

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Materials

Lastly, let's talk about materials. As is the case with most custom packaging, you have all materials at your disposal. We like to think that anything is possible, and you don't need to do things the way they've been done before. If you see a printing technique that you really like from electronics packaging and want to try it on your sock packaging, most likely it can be done!

The majority of sock packaging in the market contains:

- Molded plastic for hangers, as discussed
- Board, for wraps, as discussed
- Label stock, for brand identity, as discussed

Keep in mind what you've learned in this guide, but never limit yourself to what's been done before. Who knows -- maybe a leather wrap on a pair of luxury socks is exactly what you need to demand a \$100 price point and get influencers talking about your product and company!



Conclusion

(i.e. Wrap Up)

It's time for us to leave you for now.
We hope this gave you a solid outline of what your options are.
If nothing more, you'll without question,
be the leading sock packaging expert in your office.
:)

As a final note, we do manufacture sock packaging for
major brands in the world of fashion -- and startups too.
So, if you do need a hand in development or manufacturing,
you know where to find us!

Until we meet again,

The Contempo Team
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