

Nike – Shoe Box Packaging

The next time you buy a pair of Nike athletic shoes, take a look at the shoe box. You know, the orange and brown box with a Swoosh.

You might notice that the amount of cardboard that goes into the shoe box has been trimmed back quite dramatically. You might also notice that the wrapping paper used to protect the shoes is made from 100 percent recycled materials, and that no glues are used to hold the box together.

Why? It's part of Nike's ongoing commitment to create innovative and sustainable product—including packaging—that reduces waste and eliminates toxics.

Over the last few years, Nike has cut back the amount of cardboard used to create each shoe box by 16 percent. That translates into reducing over 5,000 tons of cardboard each year that needs to be made and then recycled or, in the worst case scenario, burned or landfilled.

Nike has also standardized the production of its shoe boxes to ensure they're printed with water-based inks and contain no glues, coatings or staples. And the percentage of recycled paper used has gradually been increased, without losing sight of the goal of getting shoes to the consumer in top condition.

With millions of shoe boxes produced each year, it all adds up. That's been one of Nike's key goals for the past decade, as it works to extend sustainability into every corner of the company's operations. Nike wants to envision the possibilities, and continually improve what already exists.

Finding an environmentally-preferred way to produce shoe boxes has been an ongoing learning process. It's been an experience of trial and error that's required staff and contractors to continually re-examine the way they do things.

Originally, the responsibility of shoe boxes fell to each individual contract factory, which, in turn, contracted out their production to local suppliers. The result was that different contractors applied different standards, and that the shoe boxes varied in quality, look and feel from factory to the next.

In search of a better solution, Nike eventually brought the production of all of its shoe boxes back to the U.S., and contracted them out to a company in Seattle. This made it possible to hold all of the shoe boxes to the same environmental production standards while ensuring a consistent look and feel. Yet with this new solution came new problems. Namely, transporting the finished shoe boxes to contract factories in



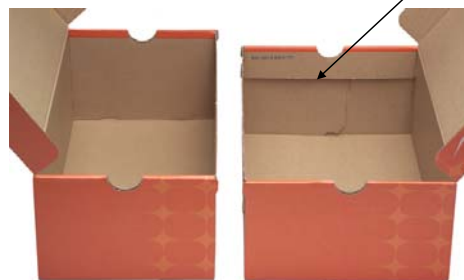
First Generation Hinged Box



Second Generation Hinged Box

Smaller lid –
8% overall fiber reduction
(approximate)

Shortened folding edge –
another 8% (approximate)
overall fiber reduction



Second Generation Hinged Box (open)

Third Generation Hinged Box (open)

Land Quality Division
Solid Waste Policy
and Program
Development Section
811 SW 6th Avenue
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: (503) 229-5913
1 (800) 452-4011
Fax: (503) 229-6977
www.oregon.gov/DEQ/

Updated: 05/01/06
David Allaway
09-LQ-025

Asia created long lead times. The long transportation distances also cost more money and contributed to unnecessary fuel use and carbon dioxide emissions.

About eight years ago, Nike came up with a new game plan – one that remains in effect today. Nike now contracts out the production of all shoe boxes to two companies in Oregon, which work with a small number of shoe box manufacturers in Asia close to where Nike’s contract shoe factories are located. This change has allowed Nike to continue to produce all of its shoe boxes to the same quality and sustainability standards. It has also saved money, reduced transportation times and lessened harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Finally, it has given Nike the control to work with only those suppliers who are committed to reducing paper usage, driving down costs and improving the environment. Nike sees it as a win for its customers, the environment, and the company.

Aside from applying tough environmental standards to its shoe boxes, Nike has also developed strict standards for the large, behind-the-scenes transportation cartons that are used to ship shoe boxes to retail stores. During the past several years, Nike has trimmed back the amount of cardboard that goes into these transportation cartons by 11 percent – another change that has reduced waste and associated fuel use and emissions. In addition, all transportation cartons use only water-based inks and glues, and are made from at least 80 percent post-consumer recycled materials.

Sustainability is an ongoing challenge – one that Nike continues to aspire to. The company is committed to think “green” as it evolves its footwear packaging, and to think out of the box so that what’s in the box – and the box itself – produces the least impact on the environment.

More information on Nike’s environmental and other sustainability initiatives can be viewed at www.nikeresponsibility.com.

Shoe Box Accomplishments

At Nike, sustainability is viewed as an ongoing process – one that requires the company to continually envision the possibilities and re-examine the way it does things. A prime focus over the past decade, environmental efforts have culminated in the following standards for Nike footwear packaging:

Shoe Boxes

- Standard boxes made from 100 percent recycled paper, 80 percent post-consumer content
- Paper usage reduced by 16 percent by decreasing the depth of the hinged lid and size of the “rollover” or folding edge at the end of the box.
- Printed with water-based inks
- Contain no glues, coatings or staples

Shoe Stuffing

- All wrapping paper and shoe stuffing made from 100 percent recycled materials
- Paper usage reduced by moving from traditional tissue paper to recycled paperboard inserts

Transportation Packaging

- Moved from a double-wall to a single-wall corrugated structure, achieving an 11 percent reduction in weight per box
- Made from at least 80 percent post-consumer recycled materials
- Contain only water-based inks and glues