

# 6 Tips to Maximize the Value of Distribution Testing

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Distribution testing is a complex process that has many variables. Often when companies are testing their products, they run into common pitfalls that prevent them from optimizing the value of the information that can be leveraged from distribution testing. Avoid common errors when distribution testing by following these guidelines:



## ESTABLISH CLEAR CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS PRIOR TO TESTING

Without establishing success criteria prior to testing, results will be subjective. Setting clear expectations of what defines a success, what defines a failure and what kind of damage is acceptable should be determined prior to testing. This creates a standard for other products to be measured against.



## BE PRESENT TO OBSERVE TESTING

This is an opportunity to see how well the packaging system performs, take photographs of results, identify the location and type of damage observed, or establish the need for design modifications to increase package performance. A substantial amount of valuable information is lost when testing is not observed.



## DON'T OVERLOOK INTERNAL HANDLING OF PRODUCT/PACKAGE

Be aware that distribution testing does not take into account how the package is handled before it enters the distribution environment. In order to avoid damage from internal handling, establish clear procedures about product/package handling. If the product ships nationally, consider the different types of distribution environments and standards being adhered to.



## DIVERSIFY VARIABLES IN THE SHIPPING ENVIRONMENT

Companies evaluate how their packaging will react to certain variables, but often do not consider how the frequency or intensity of those variables may change depending on certain circumstances. Consider how hazards may increase due to variables outside of the immediate distribution environment. For example, if the product is temperature sensitive, test data should be captured from all seasons.



## VALIDATE ALL SHIPPING LANES

Often, when packaging is being developed or tested, manufacturers only consider the most common shipping lane in the product's distribution environment. Since each shipping lane has different levels of the four common hazards (shock, vibration, compression and atmospheric conditions), each lane needs to be tested to uncover weaknesses in the package system.



## UNDERSTAND WHAT THE TEST RESULTS SHOW

Often companies select a distribution test and attribute a failure to the belief that they've selected a test that is not representative of their distribution environment. Majority of times this is not the case. Packages generally fail when, by design, the distribution test uncovers a weakness in the packaging design. Rather than selecting another test, consider addressing the weaknesses that were uncovered by the initial test.

### Schedule a Consultation

Whether designing new packaging or refreshing existing packaging, consider partnering with Adept Group. With deep expertise mitigating quality issues, designing robust packaging for new product launches and consulting on distribution environment related packaging issues, Adept Group will ensure your package aces the test.

## ABOUT ADEPT GROUP

Adept is the premier packaging consultancy for over 100 national and global food & beverage, CPG and life sciences companies. Our uniquely flexible, scalable approach and combined 850 years of experience provides organizations with everything they need to optimize their packaging function, from staffing and engineering services to business process tools and serialization expertise.

Whether launching a new product, rebranding or repackaging an existing product, or even recovering from a previous packaging problem, Adept Group applies an unmatched level of diverse experience for the most complete channel audit.