

The Hidden Packaging Cost Checklist

Seven places cost quietly leaks out of a packaging operation, and what to do about each. Every one is a spot where I have found real money on real lines.

☐ 1. Material overspecification

Check Gauges, grades, and basis weights that were set years ago and never revisited.

Fix Right-size the spec and requalify with drop and compression tests. A lighter structure often ships just as safely.

☐ 2. Line downtime and changeover

Check Your top three causes of stops, and how long a changeover actually takes.

Fix Track OEE, attack the top stop causes, and run SMED-style changeovers to buy back hours.

☐ 3. Product giveaway and scrap

Check Average fill weight versus target, plus film and board scrap by SKU.

Fix Tighten fill control and set scrap targets per line. Small giveaway percentages add up fast at volume.

☐ 4. Freight and pallet cube

Check Cases per pallet, cube utilization, and how much empty space you ship.

Fix Optimize case count and pallet patterns. Better cube cuts freight cost on every single load.

☐ 5. SKU and spec proliferation

Check How many components do the same job, and how many duplicate specs exist.

Fix Rationalize components and standardize across lines. Fewer specs means less cost and fewer errors.

☐ 6. Unchallenged supplier pricing

Check When each packaging contract was last benchmarked, and how much is single-sourced.

Fix Build a should-cost view, dual-source the risky items, and renegotiate from data, not habit.

☐ 7. Damage and returns

Check Damage and chargeback rates broken out by lane, product, and transport mode.

Fix Test to ISTA, right-size protective packaging, and fix the root cause instead of over-packing everything.

Want help finding this money on your line? Let's talk.

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