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Pandora's Box

Why can't I throw my iPhone packaging away?



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The iPhone, a revolutionary mobile device in itself, yet have you ever stopped to think that the packaging might just be that too—revolutionary? Apple takes detail orientated to another level that extends further than just the product but to the packaging itself. Why you might ask? Is it countless hours of experimentation, a great marketing strategy, human nature or something else that makes the iPhone box somewhat of a collectable? This article will explore what makes the iPhone box so special and why we simply can't throw it away.

Apples attention to detail extends further than the device but to the whole experience of the iPhone. For many device companies software design or hardware manufacturing are primary concern, with the packaging more of an after thought. However, Apple spends just as much time on the packaging of their products as they do on the product itself. In fact, they have a secure room in Apple's main marketing building dedicated just to packaging. For month's someones job is to test the experience of opening boxes. Steve Jobs, Jonathan Ive and the many designers who create and test

the iPhone packaging will tweak things like placement of the sticker, colour, box material to ensure the right experience is created for the customer. Walter Isaacson writes in his biography of Steve Jobs "Steve and I spend a lot of time on the packaging," said Ive. "I love the process of unpacking something. You design a ritual of unpacking to make the product feel special. Packaging can be theatre, it can create a story." This reflects the importance Jobs placed on the little things, the iPhone and all Apple products are not simply gadgets, they are works of art. Adam Lashinsky writes in his novel, *Inside Apple*, "Evoking a feeling is an extraordinary act for a device maker, let alone a packaging designer working for a device maker." Apple anticipates how the customer will feel when holding the iPhone box, is this why we can't throw them away or is there something more?

The European Journal of Scientific Research conducted experiments on the relation between packaging and customers buying behaviour. Their experiments tested the effects of packaging colour, quality and design. The results revealed that packaging



is a vital part of the product and is an important marketing tool. Packaging has a greater influence than advertising and has the power to set a brand apart from its competitors. Their tests showed that better packaging instilled trust in the customer and made them believe they were choosing the better product. Psychologically, the Journal of Consumer Psychology, found that customers experience aesthetic packaging as a reward. The neural mechanisms in the brain (such as the orbitofrontal cortex) that associate with reward are activated when purchasing a product that is aesthetically pleasing. Their tests also revealed that products purchased “just to be used” will lose their appeal quickly and be thrown away. However, products with aesthetic qualities would be cherished long after their functionality has left. Interestingly, the more this “reward system” of our brain is active, the higher price we are willing to pay to buy a product. This perhaps then suggests the reason we keep our beloved iPhone boxes and

are willing to pay a higher price for them than the average mobile phone. They are aesthetically pleasing; therefore our brain gives us the experience of reward, which then creates the nostalgia needed to keep them past their functional use.

Apple’s attention to detail not only makes us want to purchase their product – we cannot throw them away! The countless hours of experimentation and time spent perfecting the iPhone packaging experience (let alone the actual product) makes the iPhone stand out above the rest. It is safe to conclude that we won’t be throwing our iPhone boxes away anytime soon.

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iPhone 6 Box Diagram

Each element is made to fit together perfectly. Note the 1cm difference between the centre piece and the edging it sits on. The lid and the bottom are exactly 4mm different to allow for smooth open and closure.

