

2025 Unpacked:

UK Pet Packaging Trends and Key Insights 2025

As we look ahead to the rest of 2025, the UK pet sector is set to experience more growth, with consumer trends and packaging playing a pivotal role in shaping its future.

The pet care industry is booming, with the market reaching nearly **£10 billion** in 2024 and an expected growth rate of **5.7%** annually from 2025 to 2033, as reported by imarc.

This expansion is fuelled by technological advancements and the growing premiumisation and humanisation of pet care, as owners increasingly treat their pets as family members.

The demand for tailored, innovative and more sustainable solutions is on the rise, and businesses must adapt to stay ahead of these shifting trends, particularly regarding packaging.

Meeting consumer expectations

According to Mintel, the UK pet industry's growth is underscored by a **30%** increase in demand for natural and organic pet foods.

As pet owners continue to seek healthier and more sustainable options, including a growing interest in pet supplements, with over a third of UK pet food buyers agreeing that supplements are an effective way of delivering functional benefits to pets, it is no longer just the product consumers are researching; it's a brand's ethical practice, how they are reviewed on social platforms and how circular their business operations are.

As the market for premium pet food increases, insulated packaging solutions are becoming crucial to maintaining the freshness of high-quality products during delivery.

Much like human food deliveries, pet owners now expect the same care and freshness for their furry friends' meals.

With this increasing demand for premium pet products comes the growing need for more packaging, and this surge also contributes to increased waste.

The introduction of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) means businesses must create packaging that meets these new standards while aligning with consumer demands for sustainability and reducing environmental impact.



Sustainability continues to be a key factor influencing the pet market. According to Johnsons, **6 out of 10** pet owners view pet product packaging materials as important, and **over half of pet owners (52%)** are actively reducing their use of plastics.

The push for more planet-friendly packaging solutions is now essential for brands to stand out and encourage repeat consumer purchasing, especially as consumers become more conscientious about the environmental impact of their purchases.

Whether it's pet treats, pet toy packaging, or packaging for pet health products, sustainability plays a pivotal role in capturing consumers' attention.

It is often the first physical interaction a consumer has with a brand, making it a key opportunity for creating a strong, ethical connection.

Influencing buying decisions

Social media's role in purchasing behaviour continues to grow, with platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok shaping consumer choices.

Discovering products and engaging with brands through social media has become a crucial part of the buying process.

Packaging is no longer just about function but also about visual appeal and shareability, influencing customers to post unboxing videos and share their experiences online. This has increased the demand for packaging that stands out and reflects a brand's personality.

Pet brands leverage cost-effective packaging solutions that optimise shipping, reduce expenses, and improve product visibility in the highly competitive online marketplace.

For example, the pet food brand Naturediet reduced its packaging costs while maintaining product integrity. By adopting more streamlined and efficient packaging solutions, Naturediet delivered high-quality products to consumers while lowering shipping expenses - a vital factor in the competitive world of eCommerce.

Similarly, Closer Pets, a brand catering to the growing demand for high-quality cat and dog products, has embraced Amazon-certified eCommerce packaging, ensuring the company meets online retailers' stringent packaging requirements.

Automated machinery is also becoming a game changer, rapidly streamlining the packing process, improving accuracy and speeding up fulfilment times. Furthermore, automation supports sustainability goals by reducing material waste, allowing businesses to use packaging materials more efficiently. For pet brands, this provides the ability to scale operations and meet consumer expectations.

Balancing sustainability and practicality

As the demand for sustainable pet product packaging rises, brands must remain mindful of their packaging choices. More pet owners are seeking brands that align with their sustainable values.

This is especially true with pet food packaging, where less environmentally harmful materials are becoming a priority.

The shift toward sustainable pet packaging allows brands to differentiate themselves and appeal to the growing base of eco-conscious consumers.

With dog food and cat food packaging making up a large portion of the market, pet brands are increasingly adopting materials like biodegradable plastics, compostable pouches, and recyclable containers.

This reflects a broader trend in the packaging industry, where sustainability is no longer just a nice-to-have feature but an essential part of the consumer experience.



What this means for pet brands in 2025

To stay ahead of the competition in 2025, pet brands must consider how they can adapt their packaging strategies to meet these evolving consumer demands.

They must find ways to combine sustainability with functionality, creating packaging solutions that stand out while reducing their environmental footprint. This also means staying on top of trends like the move toward natural, organic and fresh products and the increasing interest in pet health supplements.

Social media's influence is set to grow even further in 2025, with consumers increasingly making purchasing decisions based on online recommendations and visual appeal. Shareable packaging that aligns with a brand's values can significantly increase customer loyalty and drive sales.

With packaging playing a key role in both consumer decision-making and sustainability efforts, 2025 offers a significant opportunity for pet brands to refine their packaging strategies. Those who successfully navigate these changes will satisfy the growing demand for eco-conscious solutions and position themselves as leaders of the pack in the pet care market.

Create the purrfect packaging for your brand

The pet care market is booming and now is the time to ensure your pet toy, pet treat, and pet food packaging meet consumer expectations. Whether you need recyclable materials, custom branding, or eCommerce-ready designs, Smurfit Westrock can help you create standout packaging that attracts pet owners and enhances your brand.

To find out more visit smurfitkappa.com.