

Supporting Booming New Brewery Business To Overcome Amazon Packaging Challenges

Breweries and drinks suppliers are shifting to the world of eCommerce, and this brings with it many challenges. Packaging is one of the biggest issues that manufacturers come across when it comes to selling online, and there are so many things that need to be considered. At Smurfit Kappa, we take pride in being able to help businesses grow by sharing our wealth of beer packaging experience with our customers.

We can provide value to our customers and their products and help them sell online effectively. Our Smurfit Kappa Gosport team recently worked closely with Hawkstone to produce Amazon certified beer packaging which needed to excite their customers and leave a lasting positive impression.



Who Are Hawkstone?

Hawkstone is a brand developed by Cotswold Brew Co. who have been customers of Smurfit Kappa since November 2021. Rick and Emma at Cotswold Brew Co. teamed up with broadcaster Jeremy Clarkson to create Hawkstone Lager. Clarkson committed himself to cultivating his malting barley on his Cotswolds Farm, Diddy Squat Farm, and was determined that it should be put to good use. Rick and Emma were introduced to Clarkson through the landlord of their local pub, and they soon realised they all had a commitment to supporting local agriculture.

As well as supporting the same causes, Rick and Emma are extremely talented brewers, and created Hawkstone Lager—a brew of such impressive quality that Clarkson decided to invest.

The Beer Packaging Challenge

Our team at Smurfit Kappa Gosport have been working with the Cotswold Brew Co. since their brand launch last year, and we have worked on a number of packaging projects for them. They came to us when they needed beer packaging for Hawkstone, and one of their key requirements was a supplier that could withstand the supply demands of a rapidly growing brand, without compromising on quality or service. They needed delivery boxes which could withstand the rigours of the national courier network and protect the Hawkstone lager during its journey to the customer.

We initially supplied beer packaging for Hawkstone which was fit for purpose and fit the brief they'd provided. They were selling through various channels including local breweries, direct to consumers through their own website, and Amazon. Selling through Amazon is where the problems came, as the eCommerce giant has very strict requirements for packaging of products sold through their site. Hawkstone's original packaging was an outer box with assembled dividers, and this was not suitable for Amazon sales.

Cutting Customers Cost

At Smurfit Kappa we have a dedicated team who know how to navigate Amazon's packaging guidelines, based at our new International Safe Transit Association (ISTA) certified lab, part of our eCommerce packaging facility in Northampton. The ISTA lab brings with it an expansion of our network of packaging testing labs that provide retailers and producers with invaluable support for developing, testing and launching packaging solutions for e-commerce.

We redesigned their beer packaging to meet the strict requirements of Amazon, and tested it at our ISTA lab, ensuring it was fit for purpose and meets the challenges of the eCommerce supply chain. The new solution was made up of two inserts which suspended the beer bottles away from each other and the outer packaging while in transit. Following testing in our ISTA lab, this new beer packaging solution sailed through the strict testing requirements and could be used for shipping products via Amazon without any additional costs. Not only that, but this new packaging was also Frustration Free Packaging compliant, which means the packaging is recyclable and comes without excess packaging materials, providing customers a better unboxing experience and leaving them more likely to reorder.

Previously many boxes were being damaged in transit which meant that customers weren't receiving their orders in a timely fashion and replacement orders and repeat courier fees were costing the brewery in excess of £20,000 a month. After testing at our ISTA lab, and creating packs that were now Amazon ISTA 6 Compliant. Smurfit Kappa not only helps customers to reduce costs, but to reduce their environmental impact by choosing to use less packaging material, which means less raw materials used and less waste.

Amazon Approved Packaging

As specialists in eCommerce packaging, we have access to a range of tools which help us find the perfect solution for our customers. We focus hugely on supporting our customers to deliver packaging that meets their every requirement. Our purpose built ISTA Testing Lab means we can ensure packaging will be approved by Amazon and meet all their requirements, opening up your business to customers around the world.

Ultimately, Smurfit Kappa Gosport was able to produce beer packaging which The Cotswold Brew Co. are extremely satisfied with. By offering our expert support and using our specialised tools, we were able to deliver packaging which reduced their costs, improved their supply chain, and supported their growing demand. Off the back of this successful project, we have secured a two-year supply agreement for Hawkstone lager courier boxes for Amazon and can't wait to continue working with this booming brewery, backed by people as passionate about what they produce as we are.

For more information visit [smurfitkappa.com](https://www.smurfitkappa.com).