

# 11 inspiring packaging design trends for 2020

*by 99designs Team*

2020 is set to be an excellent year for packaging design trends. Designers are pushing the boundaries of the design form—from function to aesthetics. Exciting trends in color, illustration, form and other design elements are coming together to create unexpected product packaging that helps brands break through the clutter of competition.

The upcoming year is poised to surprise us with the most unique and innovative packaging trends in recent memory—and if brands and designers want to succeed, they will need to understand those trends and how to bring them to life. Here are some of the top packaging design trends 2020!

## The biggest packaging design trends for 2020 are:

1. Packaging that tells a story
2. Metamorphoses
3. Retro-futurism
4. Blurry color splotches and blurred images
5. Maximalism and heavily detailed packaging
6. Ecologically aware packaging
7. Natural & earthy pastels
8. Neatly structured layouts
9. New constructive forms for traditional products
10. Holographic effects on black background
11. Transparent packaging that lets color shine through

# 1. Packaging that tells a story

In 2020, brands will need more than well-designed packaging to make an impact. If they really want to connect with their customers, they'll need to take their packaging to the next level, using it to tell their brand story.

Packaging should tell a story as you unbox. Online, packaging has to carry more weight due to the lack of a store-front experience.

- Will Krispin, Director of Strategic Development at 99designs

While it's important for all brands to leverage the storytelling packaging trend, it's particularly important for products that are sold primarily online. Because ecommerce products don't have the luxury of being seen, and touched, in real life, they need to leverage everything they have available to tell their brand story and build a connection with their audience—and that starts with their packaging.



Causebox: each box has a custom design that tells the brand's story and also connects to what's inside. Via [Causebox](#).



by [b.eci](#)



by [cynemes](#)

“In recent conversations with our partners we’ve learned that packaging should tell a story as you unbox,” says Will Krispin, Director of Strategic

Development at 99designs. “They also mentioned the importance of packaging in the world of e-commerce. Online, packaging has to carry more weight due to the lack of a store-front experience.”

The continuing rise of subscription boxes will also play into the storytelling packaging trend in 2020. Branded packaging is especially important for subscription boxes, where the box itself becomes the only representation of the brand since the contents feature other brands and products.

In 2020, expect brands to take a more comprehensive approach to their packaging design—and to use their packaging as an opportunity to tell their brand story, communicate their key messaging and build a deeper connection with their ideal customers.



Lull Mattress is only sold online so branding relies on website and packaging only. Box tells a story with its variations of lion/tiger illustrations: “it’s a jungle out there – get some sleep.” By [Andrewzz](#).

## 2. Metamorphoses

Consumers in 2020 will be overwhelmed with options—and with so many brands and products out there, it will be even more challenging for brands to create something unique and meaningful that resonates with their customers. That’s why artful designs that show fascinating ideas like “metamorphoses” are poised to be one of the biggest packaging trends in 2020.

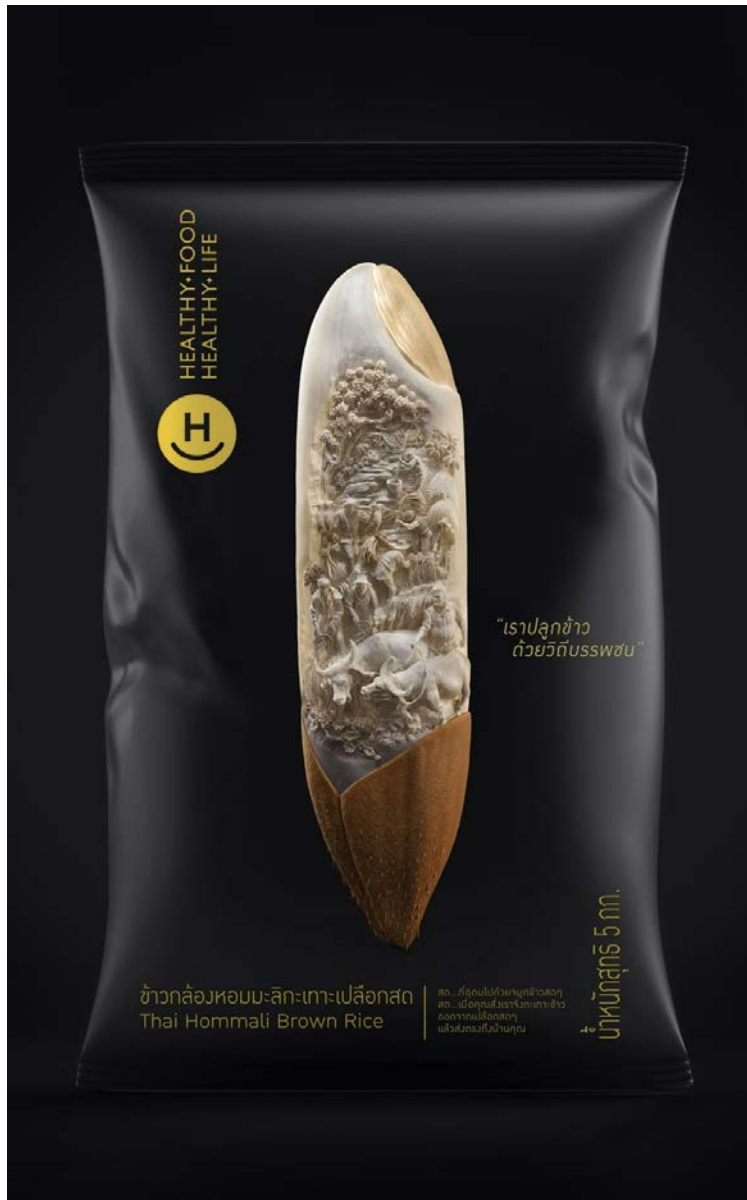
Detailed illustrations that show different types of transformations can help brands to be memorable — birds become fruits, landscape become a part of animal, etc. These types of packaging not only tell the story of brands or products—they become an art object themselves.

- 99designs designer [Mila Katagarova](#)



Think of metamorphoses as design where there’s more than meets the eye. It’s where one design element goes through a transformation (or, more accurately, a metamorphosis) into another.

by [Mila Katagarova](#)



via [World Brand Design Society](#)

This optical illusion not only adds visual interest to packaging, but it also draws in consumers who want to see the intricate details of the full picture—which can help brands differentiate themselves from the competition, jump off the shelf and grab their customers' attention with a deeper meaning.

In 2020, expect brands to embrace this more artistic, avant garde packaging trend as a way to stand out from the crowd and create something new and different.



via [Behance](#)



via [Behance](#)

idling



via [Behance](#)



via [Dieline](#)

### 3. Retro-futurism

Retro-futurism might seem like an oxymoron. But the truth is, retro and futuristic design can work well together, invoking both feelings of nostalgia (retro) and anticipation (futurism). 2020 will see package designers using the current gradient trend as a jumping-off point for creating packaging that pairs both futuristic and retro design elements to create remarkable designs that will appeal to a wide variety of consumers.

Bright neon colors and gradients will shift more to the packaging territory to add a retro-futurism vibe to brands.

- 99designs designer [goopanic](#)

Expect plenty of neon colors, bold gradients, and retro design touches (like minimalist logos and retro-inspired typography) to come together in unique, unexpected, and on-trend ways.

“Bright neon colors and gradients have been around for a good couple of years now and are still trending,” says 99designs designer [goopanic](#). “They will shift more to the packaging territory to add a retro-futurism vibe to brands.”



by [goopanic](#)

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## 4. Blurry color splotches and blurred images

Retro-futurism isn't the only 2020 packaging design trend to emerge from the still-popular gradient trend. "A great trend in gradients is the use of spotted gradients, multi gradients and blurs," says 99designs designer Obacht.

The use of blurry color splotches gives packaging a cool and edgy feel. This trend will take gradients to the next level, blurring the edges to create a more abstract look that will feel cutting-edge and design-forward in 2020. Also, expect designers to apply a blur to images, creating an abstract gradient effect that goes beyond color—and will draw consumers in as they try to make out the image behind the blur.



via viamic



by Monoglyceride



by Oyeah



via [Kin Euphorics](#)



via [Butcha Kombucha](#)

## 5. Maximalism and heavily detailed packaging

Minimalism will always have a place in package design. But as many experts are predicting an economic downturn in 2020, more consumers will be looking towards a sense of opulence, luxury and extravagance in their products—which is why maximalism in packaging design is poised to be all the rage in the upcoming year.

One of the trends I see emerging is more luxurious, more attention-grabbing, with more intense, richer colors. 'Heavier' designs, full of details and beautiful graphics that mark the quality of the product.

- 99designs designer Agi Amri

“As the world economy enters a slower pace, one of the trends in packaging design I see emerging is more luxurious, more attention-grabbing, with more intense, richer colors. ‘Heavier’ designs, full of details and beautiful graphics that mark the quality of the product. People have always wanted a piece of luxury and beauty in their lives, and this notion gets even stronger as the times get harder,” says 99designs designer Agi Amri.

2020 is not going to be the year to keep it simple with package design. As consumers look for more of a high-end experience with their products (which is especially important when the economy may prevent other sorts of high-end experiences, like luxury vacations), more brands will start experimenting with a package design style that communicates a luxury experience—and focusses on beautiful details. Expect more intricate and detailed designs; richer, deeper color palettes; and a more prominent use of pattern.



by [Agi Amri](#)



via [Behance](#)



via [Behance](#)



via [Dribbble](#)



via [Behance](#)

## 6. Ecologically aware packaging

Climate change has officially become a crisis. So, one of the most important packaging design trends of 2020, without a doubt, sees brands taking a more eco-friendly approach to packaging.

One of the biggest challenges for designers and clients in the next years will be to find ecological, plastic-free packaging alternatives to current materials. It will test us to come up with new ideas.

- 99designs designer [Obacht](#)

“As we dive deeper into the climate crisis, one of the biggest challenges for designers and clients in the next years—even decades—will be to find ecological, plastic-free packaging alternatives to current materials,” says 99designs designer [Obacht](#).

Expect more brands to start exploring using more eco-friendly materials in their packaging, moving towards packaging that's easily recyclable, minimizing the amount of materials necessary for their packaging design, or even forgoing packaging altogether (like Lush's Shampoo Bars, which allow consumers to get the hair cleansing they need—minus the plastic bottle packaging).

Obacht predicts this will push designers to think outside of the box and adjust their design style to suit this new packaging trend. “It will test us to come up with new ideas to design on rather flat colored surfaces, like a typical cardboard package, and make us find out how to create a striking design on biodegradable packaging,” says Obacht.



by Mila Katagarova



This perfume bottle is made of reused ocean plastic. Via [Dieline](#).



via [EC30](#)



by [identity pulse](#)

## 7. Natural & earthy pastels

As mentioned, taking a more ecological approach to packaging is going to be one of the biggest packaging trends in 2020. But expect the earth-inspired trend to extend past just materials—and directly into the colors brands choose to incorporate into their brand color palettes.

In 2020, brands are looking for more subtle and earthy tones for their products.

- 99designs designer [Obacht](#)

“The past few years were dominated by bright pastel colors and shiny glossy, even pastel metallic gradients. In 2020, however, brands are looking for more subtle and earthy tones for their products,” says Obacht. “This is found especially in the organic food and beauty industry; all sorts of low saturated greens, blues and browns are trendy in this sector.”

While more natural tones have been a go-to for organic companies for years, the increased consumer focus on buying products from eco-friendly brands should see a flood of companies outside the more traditional, organic space start to embrace earth-inspired color palettes in 2020.



by monostudio



by monostudio



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by [gianni88](#)

## 8. Neatly structured layouts

There's something inherently satisfying about structure in design. Not only is it visually appealing, but it also lends a sense of balance and order to design—which is why more neatly structured, ordered layouts are becoming a major trend in the packaging world.

This packaging trend is all about the typography—or, more accurately, about how typography is used in the design.

Text, which is typically comprised of a variety of unique and interesting font combinations, is separated by clear lines that divide the space into neat and balanced spaces, making for easy readability and a sense of structure that appeals to consumers—and allows designers to take a more minimalistic approach to the rest of the design.

While these typography-heavy packaging designs are already all over shelves, expect this trend to really hit its stride in 2020.



by Obacht



via [Instagram](#)



via [Instagram](#)



by [Eva Hilla](#)

## 9. New constructive forms for traditional products

In 2020, expect brands to forgo more traditional constructive forms (like your standard box or bottle) for more unique and out-of-the-box packaging ideas. The most effective use of this packaging trend will see brands using constructive form as a way to strengthen their branding and tell their brand story (so, for example, a paint brand that transforms their packaging into the shape of a palette or a fresh produce delivery service that packages their fruits and veggies in a bag constructed to look like a farmer).

Designers are always searching for new forms.

- 99designs designer [Mila Katagarova](#)

“Designers are always searching for new forms—each year we can see a lot of concepts that play with different forms of packages,” says 99designs designer [Mila Katagarova](#). “But this year there are a lot of real projects that are already on shelves and show us new constructive forms for traditional products. I think we’ll see more in 2020.”



via [Behance](#)



via [Behance](#)



via [Behance](#)

Baskin-Branding



via [World Brand Design Society](#)

## 10. Holographic effects on black background

We might sound like a broken record, but another one of 2020's biggest packaging design trends is a payoff of gradients—and that's holographic or iridescent packaging. This trend is all about the mesmerizing effect of shiny, multi-colored metallics that designers are combining with cool graphics and black or white backgrounds for an edgy vibe.

What I saw in the past year is the upcoming rise of the holographic packaging trend.

- 99designs designer [Daria V.](#)

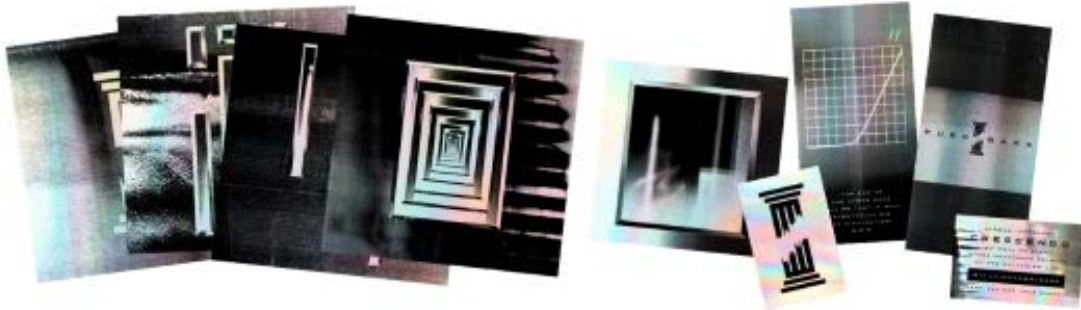
This trend is already in play in the packaging world. “What I saw in the past year is the upcoming rise of the holographic packaging trend,” says 99designs designer Daria V., and we can expect to see more iridescent pastels and holographic effects in 2020. While this packaging trend has a distinctly feminine, Lisa Frank-inspired appeal, mixing in neutrals, like white or black, and opting for more muted, dark hues in the background can lend an edgier feel to these otherwise happy, youthful designs.



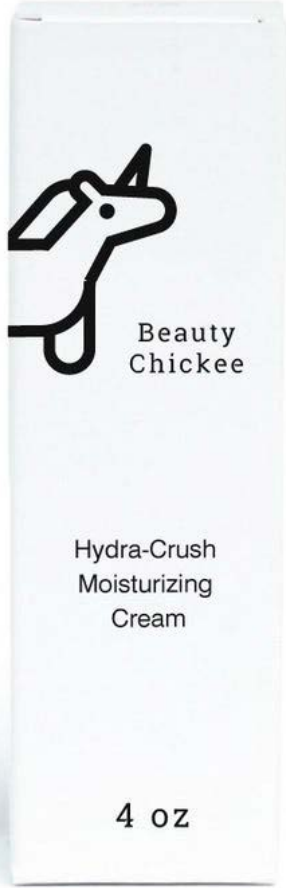
An iridescent packaging design for a cosmetics brand by Huntress™



by Monoglyceride



via [Dribbble](#)



by Lenor



via [Dribbble](#)

# 11. Transparent packaging that allows color to shine through

Many products, like beverages or skincare products, have a color all of their own—and in 2020, expect brands to play off their product's color and incorporate it into their packaging design.

This design trend is especially found with beverages, as the print can be done directly onto glass or with the use of a transparent sticker. Brands mostly use the color white in contrast to the product's actual color as a background color.

- 99designs designer [Obacht](#)

Using transparent packaging, like a glass bottle, that showcases a product's color is a win-win; it allows brands to take a more minimal approach to the design process and let their product take center stage, without sacrificing visual interest or impact with the final packaging design.

In the upcoming year, more brands will experiment with transparency, layering design elements of transparent materials and using the product's color as a design feature to add contrast and make those elements pop once the brand's product is poured into it.



by freedom+n



via [Instagram](#)



by [DagDigi](#)



by [Nick-TheVisualSmith](#)

## Are you ready for the biggest 2020 packaging design trends?

A new decade is right around the corner—and so are 2020's biggest packaging design trends. Now that you know the trends that are set to dominate the packaging world in the upcoming year, all that's left to do is embrace those trends—and use them to take your packaging design to the next level in 2020.