



The Challenge

Students are asked to design an influencer PR box for a new luxury confectionery brand. The package must not only contain and protect the retail product but also elevate user experience by creating an engaging and memorable unboxing moment that reflects the brand's premium positioning.

Background

Your task is to design a cohesive packaging solution for a new luxury confectionery brand that will soon launch at retail, consisting of two distinct components:

1. The Retail Package (The Foundation)

This is the core product packaging intended for mass retail and shelf display. It should be manufacturable and cost-effective. The design should focus on realistic large-scale production. It should perform well on the shelf, clearly communicate the brand, flavor, and any other necessary information.

2. The Influencer/PR Box (The Experience)

The premium outer box is designed to hold the retail package with intended use in high-impact influencer campaigns, public relation drops, and special edition sales. It should be an attractive, memorable, unboxing experience. It should be designed to be photographed, shared on social media, and drive excitement for the retail product it contains.

Note: you may use rigid box for the PR box and/or its components

We are asking students to develop innovative and creative packages that will appeal to a high-end market and deliver a unique reveal. The solution should also be widely accepted in residential recycling programs.

Package Requirements:

- 100% paper-based, and made of at least 70% paperboard (cannot be more than 30% fluted or corrugated)
- Must be widely accepted in residential recycling systems
- Include any other material that would enhance the experience of sustainability of paper and paperboard packaging
- Visually appealing and enhances brand awareness
- Include an innovative functional feature that distinguishes itself from other packaging
- Feature the renewability, recyclability, versatility and innovative qualities of paperboard
- Non-fiber components should be identified as easier to recycle, according to the [AF&PA Design Guidance for Recyclability](#)
- Also considers paperboard replacement for plastic fastening solutions

Optional Resources

[AF&PA's Design Guidance for Recyclability](#)

Designs from standard style in PPC's Ideas & Innovation Book, sections 1 - 4 (contact ppa@afandpa.org to order at no charge)

[PPC's Annual Paperboard Packaging Competition Book](#)





Submission Requirements

The judges will evaluate each entry based upon the following submission requirements:

1. Prototypes (40 points)

- A complete mock-up of retail and PR box (*note: physical prototypes are required for consideration*)
- Product protection
- Distinctive functionality
- Structurally sound
- Full graphics
- (Upon request, sponsor companies will provide paperboard for the design execution phase)

2. Structural Development and Exploration (30 points)

- Plain, unglued carton blanks
- Detailed production die drawing
- Design concept and execution (Sketches, various iteration and representative prototypes leading to final execution)
- Standard 10-point drop testing should be conducted and portrayed in your video as part of the process (no equipment needed).
- May also include graphic development

3. Student Design Brief (20 points)

A design brief is a document that defines the core details of your upcoming design project, including its goals, scope, and strategy. It needs to define what you, as a designer, need to do, and within what constraints. In many ways, it works like a roadmap or a blueprint, informing design decisions and guiding the overall workflow of your project, from conception to completion.

Successful briefs include:

- **Relevant Client Detail.** Capture the key points about what the company does, what their mission is, and how their brands go to market. Include competitor details if relevant.
- **Project Goals & Objectives.** Outline the overarching purpose of your project, as well as the methods you plan to use to achieve that purpose.
- **Target Audience.** Describe the customer/buyer, including their demographics such as age, gender, economic status, and media consumption. Also include any known pain points they may have.
- **Budget.** This can be high level, but you should demonstrate the understanding of how this impacts the whole of the project.
- *Does not exceed 5 pages (PPT Format Preferred)*

4. Final Video of Design (10 points)

The video will be considered your “voice in the room” and should relay pertinent information to the judging panel. The video content should be specific to the design and its functionality – it is not intended to be a commercial for the products themselves.

The video should be 2-3 minutes and submitted as a file on the submission form.

5. Required Forms

- Acknowledgment of Intent
- Student and School Contact Information
- Certification of Originality
- Graduate Student Advisors Form (if applicable)



Submission Deadline: June 5, 2026

All entries with supporting forms and materials must be received no later than June 5.

Mail all physical materials to our new address:

Paperboard Packaging Alliance

ATTN: Gabriell Barr

601 13th Street NW, Suite 1000 N

Washington D.C., 20005

Prizes and Judging

Winning student teams and their academic programs will receive monetary awards. If applicable, advisor(s) will receive 10 percent (equally split between advisors) of the cash award:

- 1st place:
\$10,500 to the team/\$10,000 to the school
- 2nd place:
\$8,300 to the team/\$8,000 to the school
- 3rd place:
\$6,650 to the team/\$6,500 to the school

The top three finalist teams are invited and expected to present their designs at the Paperboard Packaging Council's (PPC) Fall Meeting.

PPC's annual Fall Meeting is an association conference that brings together over 200 paperboard packaging and processing professionals, providing students with access to future potential employers, networking opportunities, and much more.

Previous student designers received internships and jobs at consumer brand companies as a direct result of their participation in the meeting.