



Ernest  Packaging Solutions™

WHITE PAPER

# Ernest and Leatherman:

*Premium Packaging for  
a Premium Product*



**Ernest  
To The  
Rescue**



*Leatherman Tools has been making personal and professional use multi-tools for everything from outdoor survival to construction for over 30 years.*

When the company designed a unique wearable multi-tool with a high-quality Swiss watch face, they needed a partner that could help them design premium packaging with a superior unboxing experience befitting this stylish product. Ernest rose to the challenge—and helped Leatherman overcome a few obstacles along the way.





Wear it.  
Use it.  
Love it.

Professional builders and handyfolk around the country know and love Leatherman for their high-quality knives, pocket tools and signature multi-tools, which many of them use for everyday carry (EDC). A few years ago, the company's CEO took his family to Disneyland and was stopped by security for carrying his own EDC multi-tool. That got him thinking—what if the company designed a tool people could safely travel with? And the idea for the Tread wearable multi-tool was born.

Leatherman developed and launched the stainless steel bracelet featuring 29 tools contained within 12 links, and customers soon began asking if they could put a watch face on it, too.

The company spent several more years developing a high-quality, highly engineered watch with housing capable of withstanding the same pressures and torques as the original Tread. When they were ready to launch the world's first multi-tool watch, the Tread Tempo, Leatherman wanted to design a packaging solution that would look and feel like a traditional watch box while also being sturdy enough to support this weighty product.

They wanted packaging that would stand out from all the other boxes on the shelves. And because the Tread Tempo is a high-value product, the design needed to look and feel premium and deliver a superior unboxing experience, too.

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*“This project was really pushing the boundaries of what we’re used to working on in terms of complexity. We had to rise to the occasion, and Ernest rose to the occasion, too. That’s the kind of quality service we need to get the job done.”*

**Callie Schneider**

Packaging Product Manager  
Leatherman





## Ernest to the rescue

Leatherman discovered Ernest through the company's website and was impressed by their bold social media presence and "outside the box" messaging style. Leatherman was looking for a company that would help them do something dramatically different, and Ernest fit the bill perfectly. They reached out to Ernest and Ryan Harris, Director of Client Relations in Portland, set up an initial meeting to discuss what they had in mind for this project, as well as timeline and budget.

Leatherman had come up with the initial concept and was looking for a stock watch-box supplier, but Ernest had another idea. Ernest's senior design specialists in Los Angeles connected the team with an import partner with experience and expertise in the watch-box area that they knew would be perfect for this project.

*"For this product's packaging we're looking for something new, something exciting, something outside the norm. We were impressed by Ernest's unique approach to marketing and packaging, so we decided to give them a call."*

**- Callie Schneider, Packaging Product Manager at Leatherman**

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The design team headed up by Stephen Simich got to work refining Leatherman's initial design, using Ernest's signature CURE™ approach which focuses on attention to detail, driving innovation and always putting the customer first. They redesigned the original specs to precisely fit the Tread Tempo for optimal protection and a sleek aesthetic. The team also opted for a larger box to support the pound-and-a-half watch and make it stand out on the shelf. The carefully designed outer box features sleek, clean graphics for maximum visual impact, and mirrors the inner watch box design.

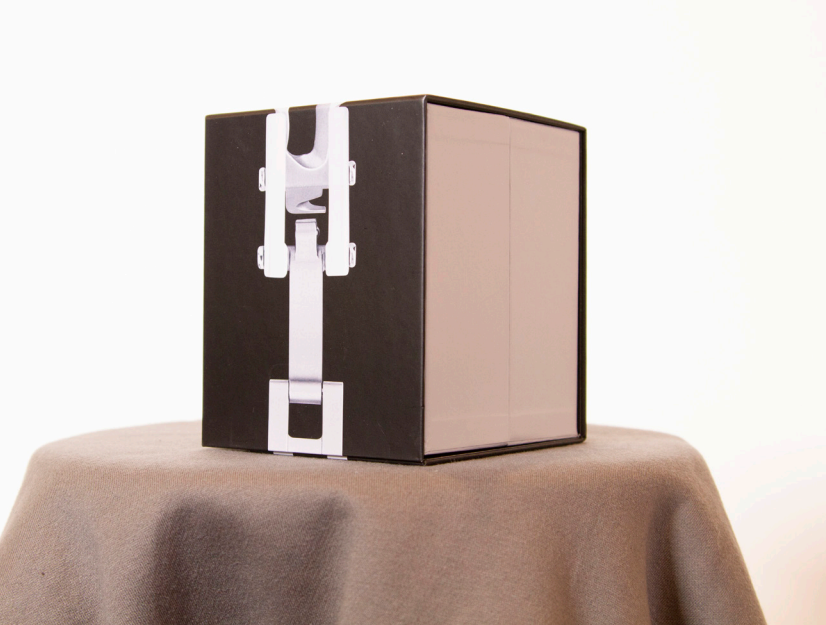


Next the team worked on engineering a premium unboxing experience. A heavy matte wrap encases the inner watch box, wrapping around the box the same way the watch wraps around the wearer's wrist, and is held in place by carefully positioned, hidden magnets for smooth, easy opening. The Ernest team knows that small things make a big difference, which is why they paid close attention to every detail from where to place the magnets to how the wrap would connect and open—a simple thumb catch. The whole thing slides easily out of the outer box, building excitement layer by layer.



The heavy matte black inner watch box features the same minimal graphics as the outer box but in reverse—white on black with a splash of red—and opens with a ribbon lift. The entire opening process is simple with a rich, cool feel. In addition to the watch packaging, Ernest designed packaging for the accessory kit that comes with each watch, paying the same close attention to detail to create a visually impactful design and a premium unboxing experience.





Ernest worked closely with Leatherman and the overseas manufacturer throughout the design, prototyping and production process, making sure every box was checked, every concern addressed and every deadline met. When Leatherman was 100% satisfied with the packaging design, it went to production.

Problem?

Solved.

Leatherman ordered an initial run of 7,500 units for retail and sent their salespeople out to start pounding the pavement with early prototypes. The packaging was already en route from the manufacturer when one of Leatherman's sales reps accidentally dropped a sample and discovered a problem. Because the Tread Tempo was still in production itself when the initial packaging design was created, the team had used the Tread bracelet in its place. But the Tempo is heavier than the Tread, so the box insert was not strong enough to support the watch during impact. To ensure that the interior packaging was strong enough to support the weight of the watch in all scenarios, the team immediately improved the design.

Ernest jumped in and solved the problem on the fly, contacting a local foam supplier and engineering an insert that would beef up the box and take the weight of the watch. After performing multiple crush tests the team landed on a solution that could be added to the box after arrival, solving the support problem without delaying the launch.

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*“You’re not going to get everything right the first time or every time, but figuring out how to make it right and move forward is key. Ernest did a great job of keeping track of lots of moving parts and what we needed to happen.”*

- Callie Schneider, Packaging Product Manager at Leatherman

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## Tools for Success

The groundbreaking Tread Tempo is now available in stores. In some retailers it lives with tools, in others it's near GPS systems. And in some stores it's sold near wearables, helping Leatherman position itself in this growing category of merchandise.

Ernest combined standout design, engineering expertise and customer-centric problem solving skills to create exemplary, premium packaging for this one-of-a-kind product that delivers the adaptability and elegance Leatherman is known for.



To find out how Ernest can help you create a  
standout packaging solution that combines visual  
design excellence and engineering expertise for your  
unique product or needs, contact us today.

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