



Ernest  Packaging Solutions™

WHITE PAPER

Ernest to the Rescue:

So, a major retailer walks into a bar?



**Ernest
To The
Rescue**

Brewing up new retail opportunities

When you have the opportunity to help a company whose motto is “Good food and good beer bring good cheer,” you hops to it! Pizza Port has been a crowd favorite in the Southern California craft brew market for almost 30 years. What started as a single pizza restaurant in Solana Beach has grown to five brew pub locations and a canning line to serve increasing consumer demand.

When Pizza Port got the opportunity to expand its reach through Costco, the company realized that the skills that make them amazing brewers are very different than those needed to package and distribute their products. That’s when Ernest came to the rescue with a more efficient packing solution, improved packaging quality, and better pallet design.

“

Ernest Packaging Solutions’ expertise and innovative thinking has helped us be able to focus on what we’re at experts at— good food and good beer. They’ve been an amazing partner, right from the beginning.

Gina Marsaglia

CEO/President
Pizza Port



Packing real potential

Pizza Port was doing just fine providing its retail customers with cans and six-packs. But when Costco bellied up to the bar, the company had the opportunity to put together an 18-pack of its leading beers and create pallets for local warehouses. Without a packing line in its facility, however, Pizza Port was forced to reallocate team members and bring in temporary staff to hand-pack the product by the delivery deadline. Packing 3,500 cases for that first order was a scramble that left the Pizza Port team crying in their beer.

“

Our work with Ernest has helped us take advantage of business opportunities. When we started with them, we were at a critical stage in our growth. They've delivered on tight timelines and with smart solutions that save us time and money, help us stand out, and keep us profitable.

Jesse Cardella

Director of Finance and Sales
Pizza Port

Pizza Port Director of Finance and Sales Jesse Cardella knew they had to find another solution to make this great opportunity actually work. With a warehouse just a few miles from the Pizza Port canning facility and experience in pack-out and fulfillment (not to mention an appreciation for the fine amber fluid), Ernest was ideally situated to help. In addition to packing and palletizing their orders for Costco every quarter, Ernest also packs 12-can cases for Pizza Port's other grocery customers on a bi-weekly basis. As the program has grown, Ernest has developed new processes, including just-in-time fulfillment that allows Pizza Port to stage pallet delivery throughout the quarter.

Cold brews need better glue

Before Ernest could take over the packing operation, there was another issue brewing that needed to be solved. Pizza Port's original box design (sourced elsewhere) used a pre-adhered glue strip. During assembly it worked fine, but in a cold-room environment with condensation, the stock hot-melt glue was coming undone and boxes were popping open before they got to Costco's warehouses. Pizza Port needed a fast solution.

The Ernest team worked closely with its adhesive partners and evaluated 20 different options to find the right glue for the situation. Today, Ernest provides all of the packaging used in the process, including the boxes, adhesive, and stretch wrap for the pallets.



Pallet power

The Ernest team has been able to provide ongoing strategic support to Pizza Port when it comes to Costco's unique pallet requirements. For Costco, ensuring a great visual experience for its members is key to moving product through its warehouses. Pizza Port's Costco offering has evolved to seven different configurations including rotating seasonal products. To make offering options more cost-effective for Pizza Port, the Ernest team found a single box size that could be printed with different artwork for greater economies of scale. Ernest design engineers also created an innovative pallet configuration that features a mosaic of the artwork to increase on-the-floor visual impact. This effort also required structural engineering expertise to ensure stability.

“

Early in our relationship, Ernest proved how great a partner they were going to be by optimizing our pallet configuration, which was great for us and for our customer.

Jesse Cardella

Director of Finance and Sales
Pizza Port





“

Ernest is in tune with what we need. The pack-outs are the easy part. Now they spend more time finding creative solutions for all the demands that a very big player like Costco asks of us.

Jesse Cardella

Director of Finance and Sales
Pizza Port

Crafting new packaging concepts

The craft brewing industry is highly competitive with more and more players entering the market every year. When it comes to staying ahead, Pizza Port starts with outstanding product, but the company also recognizes that its packaging and presentation at retail have an impact. That's why they recently came to Ernest to explore new ideas like pull-apart boxes, windows to showcase hero products, and other ways to look outside the literal box and help them stand out. According to Cardella, "Having Ernest so close is great because we can huddle up and brainstorm in person. And if we're talking about something creative or conceptual, that's probably best over a couple of beers. That's the benefit of our industry."



A partnership as great as pizza and beer

The relationship with Pizza Port is an outstanding example of the Ernest CURE philosophy at work for a client. CURE stands for: Commit all resources toward the customers' success; Understand the customers' needs and objectives; Respond quickly with effective solutions at managed cost; and Establish true partnerships along the way. From streamlining their pack-out, to improving their packaging, to bringing forward innovative ideas that set their products apart in a crowded retail environment, CURE has been an underlying theme as the partnership has quickly deepened. You'll even find the Ernest team pitching in at Pizza Port beach cleanups and other charity events. As two family-owned businesses, these companies understand what it means to support one another like family. And that's worth raising a glass to.



To learn how the Ernest CURE can be a tonic for your business, contact us today.

800.233.7788
inquiry@ernestpkg.com