



WHITE PAPER

Ernest to the Rescue:

Carolina Coops: Collaborating on packaging that rules the roost



**Ernest
To The
Rescue**



Carolina Coops takes chicken coops to the next level. By offering countless design options ranging from Gothic-style to farmhouse, this family-owned business creates premium chicken coops made for anyone who wants to pamper their brood.

Steady growth led the team at Carolina Coops to realize they needed a packaging partner whose commitment to relationships matched their own. As a company with a passion for craftsmanship and quality construction, they wanted a partner who was built on the same foundation of providing an outstanding customer experience. The Ernest team was thrilled for the opportunity to step in. No matter the challenge, whether they asked us to make their shippers more efficient or find eco-friendly packing alternatives, we were committed to making sure that the supplier of the “Ferrari” of chicken coops got the results they deserved.

A partnership to crow about

Based in North Carolina, with an additional location in upstate New York, Carolina Coops needed a resource who would go beyond simply providing products. They needed a partner who would show up face-to-face, in person, to solve any challenges that they had. That's why their Ernest Client Relationship Manager has been focused on building a solid relationship with the team through weekly site check-ins right from the get-go. Carolina Coops' owner Matt Duboise was thrilled by this high-touch approach. According to Duboise, "Our CRM is in here regularly, talking to my team and asking the people in charge of our departments what they're working on to see if Ernest can help. They take the time to listen. Our previous provider would never do that."

Ernest's first projects with Carolina Coops involved sourcing materials for a roost bar that chickens could easily grip and engineering a new box for the product. Developing an efficient box format that would effectively protect the product without increasing the dimensional weight was key. Ernest's regular presence and constant collaboration at the Carolina Coops' headquarters enabled them to create a more efficient solution. From finding twine for the bar during times of severe supply chain shortages to redesigning the box itself, Ernest came through on their first foray into the birdhouse business, and that set the stage for the relationship to grow.

In every challenge, the Ernest team went the extra mile to get it right. First, by creating custom-fit boxes for the roost bars, then by designing the company's industrial hemp packaging. In each case, the Ernest team tested multiple prototypes for durability to protect the products throughout the shipping cycle. They also experimented with different formats, structures, and materials to find the combination that most effectively reduced the dimensional weight. By owning all tasks relating to packaging, Ernest freed up DuBoise to work on the most important aspects of his business—growing sales. "I didn't have to worry about it," Duboise said. "They're helping me do something I never dreamed of."

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I'm a tough person to please and I'm a dreamer. That didn't faze Ernest one bit. When they came in with prototypes, I was quite often saying, 'Damn, that's a good idea.'

Matt Duboise

Owner
Carolina Coops



Laying the foundation for better packaging

Just like Ernest, Carolina Coops prides itself on being responsive to clients. When Duboise explained that his eco-conscious customers find packing peanuts to be environmentally irresponsible, Ernest brought a new idea to the table: ExpandOS™. The recycled paper cubes combined function and value to meet Duboise's unique specifications and exceed the expectations of his customers.

Ernest tapped into the same creative thinking to help Carolina Coops increase its packing efficiency. The Carolina Coops packing team was using flat sheet boxes that they taped by hand to make them three-dimensional. The extra plastic material added by the tape seemed excessive and the Ernest team saw an opportunity to streamline the look of the package by using a glue gun for the assembly instead. It worked beautifully. "When we put that hot glue gun to the test," Duboise said, "I was in awe."

In addition to streamlining the packaging, Duboise wanted the branding on the boxes to do double duty by being suitable for e-commerce as well as retail. Ernest's Retail Senior Design Specialist was enlisted and came through with a design that effectively highlighted the Carolina Coops branding on a store shelf and was an effective direct shipment solution, as well.



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The people I do business with need to be there when I need them. That's easy when things are predictable, but I'm not in a predictable business. Ernest Packaging has proven to me that when I need them most, they've got solutions.

Matt Duboise

Owner
Carolina Coops

The future: flying the coop

Carolina Coops' next challenge? Shipping their chicken coops all around the world. Recently, Duboise has been eyeing the European market in hopes of being able to affordably distribute his products overseas. The main considerations are protecting the product from damage, branding the packaging, and managing the shipping expenses.

"We have to take a \$5000 product, put it in a cardboard box and make sure it can get anywhere on this planet," Duboise explained. Ernest President Tim Wilson personally brought some global shipping ideas to the Carolina Coops team and was blown away by the company's innovative approach. Kindred spirits to be sure, the Ernest team is ready and eager to explore these ideas and help this chicken coop business take flight

Looking forward, Carolina Coops knows it has to be ready for continuing disruptions in the global supply chain due to the far-reaching impacts of COVID-19. In an already unpredictable business, the pandemic has brought additional uncertainty due to shortages of labor and materials. Fortunately, Carolina Coops has found a trusted partner in Ernest Packaging Solutions, and Duboise is confident that the future will be bright.

"I'm so happy to be surrounded by people like Ernest," said Duboise. "Whatever happens, I know we'll figure it out!" After all, that is the Ernest way.





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