



# ATHLETA



## Problem Statement

Athleta wants a **low-impact e-commerce packaging solution** that aligns with its broader commitment to sustainable operations and communicates that commitment to customers. Their current packaging solution (a heavy, difficult to recycle plastic mailer) does not align with Athleta's commitment to sustainability.

## Why?



**Improve sustainability scores & metrics**



**Increase market share** among sustainably minded consumers



**Reduce cost** for shipping and materials

## Current Packaging



**External Polymailer**  
Used for ecommerce shipments  
Applied at the DC



**Internal Polybag**  
Used to protect individual products  
Applied at manufacturing stage

## Methodology

1. Interviews of stakeholders at Athleta and Gap Inc. to understand the current state and implementation challenges
2. Analysis of innovative packaging solutions used by others and methods of messaging packaging choices to consumers
3. Interviews of packaging vendors to understand cost and sustainability implications of different packaging solutions
4. Analysis of relative benefits of different solutions to develop final recommendation for packaging and implementation

### SCORECARD ANALYSIS

	OPERATIONAL FACTORS		SUSTAINABILITY FACTORS			OVERALL SCORE
	MATURITY	COST	MATERIAL SUSTAINABILITY	END OF LIFE SUSTAINABILITY	TRANSPORT SUSTAINABILITY	
2.5 Mil Poly Mailer (Baseline)	5	3	3	1	3	3
2 Mil Poly Mailer	4	5	4	1	4	3.6
2.5 Mil 35% Recycled Content Poly Mailer	4	2	4	1	3	2.8
Bleached Paper Mailer	5	1	2	5	2	3.0
Kraft Paper Mailer	5	1	4	5	2	3.4
100% Recycled-Content Paper Mailer	3	1	5	5	2	3.2
Cardboard Box	5	1	1	5	1	2.6
Recycled-Content Cardboard Box	4	1	3	5	1	2.8
2.5 Mil Compostable Poly Mailer	1	1	3	2	3	2.0

### CASE STUDIES IN INNOVATIVE PACKAGING



**patagonia**

Messaging



**REFORMATION**

Customer Collaboration



**PRANA**

Internal Packaging



**DELL**

Packaging Material



**allbirds**

Packaging Design

## Recommendation

- Based on the scorecard analysis, we recommend a **thinner polymailer**.
- Adopting a thinner polymailer allows Gap Inc. to **reduce plastic use by 20%**, **increase shipping efficiency**, and **reduce costs**. We also suggest instructing manufacturers to pack internal polybags more efficiently to further reduce plastic.
- We also recommended **adding sustainability messaging on the polymailer** to educate consumers about the change.
- Operationally, we recommend Gap Inc. rolls out this new packaging solution for all orders fulfilled from the **one distribution center** that fulfills all Athleta orders in addition to some other Gap Inc. brands, and then potentially **roll out across all Gap Inc. ecommerce shipments**.

