

Co Packing Express

May 18, 2026

General Guidelines for Contract Packaging

We do not ask what is in your product until we have a signed NDA (non-disclosure agreement) in place. If you have your own nondisclosures please forward it to us for review.

We cannot really give you a price to start with until we understand more about how your product is made and what ingredients are used, along with the container used.

Recipe formulation, ingredient search, packaging development, and general business consulting are all available through Co Packing Express at \$300 per hour rate or an agreed upon price.

The advantage of using a contract packer is that we are able to buy most of the ingredients and packaging in more efficient quantities than the client could purchase on his own. Generally, the co-packer pays for everything and charges you a finished case cost in most cases, we may want you to provide ingredients or packaging (glass/lids) that we do not have in our existing inventory - particularly your labels and any proprietary ingredients. We also offer "private labeled" products if you want to add to your existing line without several of the start-up fees. Contact us for details.

Many of our co-packing clients are well known, but what is not well known is we make it in our facility with their label. Do not ask us to list who they are, as we are also very good at keeping secrets. References are available upon request. Facility visits must be scheduled as we have several clients that request no outside visitors be present during their production runs. Would you want an outsider to see your ingredients and see how your product is produced?

Recipe / Formula

Customers often ask, "All I have is a home recipe in cups and teaspoons, is that good enough?"

Answer: Yes but we do not recommend it. You really need to measure all of your ingredients extremely carefully. Keep in mind that when your recipe is scaled up from a full kitchen sized pot to a 200 gallon tank batch, the most minor error is multiplied by 200. The first step in converting your recipe to a formula is to have a very accurate way to measure the ingredients. A good place to start is to go to a retail store and get a digital or analog scale that measures in grams or ounces. Using this scale, make a batch as you normally would, but weigh **EVERY** component. Grams are the most accurate for small amounts. The liquids, such as water, should be measured in fluid ounces. Remember... **weighed ounces and fluid ounces are not the same**. Keep your recipe in the "most basic commodity form" possible ... salt, sugar, canola oil, black pepper and so on... If you are using specific brands, let us know. Do not forget to accurately record the steps of your recipe. For example, measure the correct temperatures and cooking times, if the item is cooked.

We will take it from that point and scale your formula up to the agreed batch size. Formulas in teaspoons, pinches, and dashes are not looked upon favorably. We do require a sample along with your recipe.

Test batches and in-house testing are required for all products produced at Co Packing Express Sauces. The cost per product varies depending on the ingredients and the process required to manufacture your product. Contact us for more details and pricing.

If you have a “proofed” production formula we still require a small test batch to be completed before a production run. A test batch allows us get a “feel” for your product and acquires the necessary information to provide you with a quote. If you have a process approval for your product, please send us a copy for review as it must be in compliance with our existing GMPs.

Once the test batch is completed and you sign off on the product we can provide you with a quote for your product. We generally provide you with a 100- and 200-gallon quote for liquid products. If you need a quote for a batch larger than 200 gallons just let us know.

Minimum initial order is \$11,000.00 for production. Co Packing Express abides by the industry standard of + or – 10% on production runs; keep this in mind when placing orders.

The container size will determine the amount of units per batch. For example, a 100-gallon batch of hot sauce packaged into 5 ounce “woozy” bottle will yield 200 cases (2400 bottles). Split batches (different size packaging during the same run) are available with an additional fee. Contact us for details.

Products that contain any meat, poultry, fish or potable alcohol are NOT permitted. Some products with alcoholic ingredients are permitted as long as the product is heated to a level the alcohol is removed. Contact us for details. We currently are not equipped to produce any refrigerated products.

What is required to sell my product?

All acid, low acid and acidified products manufactured at Co Packing Express are required to have a process approval on file here. Depending on your product it may require us filing a scheduled process with the FDA at an additional cost. We can provide a process approval for your product using our existing GMPs at a reasonable cost. Consult with us as to the process approval and FDA scheduled process filing fees as each product is different. Spice blends and or seasoning blends do not require a process approval but must be produced under our GMPs.

A nutritional panel is required on your label if the label size permits. If *your* packaging requires a label that is too small for nutritional information the ingredients still must be listed within the FDA guidelines. You are still required to have nutritional information for your product available to your customers as a data sheet when requested. If you do not have nutritional information for your product we can provide it for you to supply to your graphic designer at a reasonable cost. Sauceology does offer limited basic graphic services if needed. Contact us for details.

Depending on which state you reside in you may be required to have a “food permit”. **The state of Florida requires all food distributors/re-sellers to be registered with the Department of Agriculture.** All finished product must be stored in compliance. Finished food products cannot be stored at your home. Liability insurance is required to sell your products to major retailers and most of the smaller retailers. If you will be selling your products at “markets” and or “festivals” you may be required to have a “mobile food permit” also. **Co Packing Express requires a current copy of your annual food permit and your company “certificate of liability insurance” to be on file here. If you are performing business in the state of Florida we must also have a copy of your current Sunbiz Annual Report on file.** These records must be available for our FDA and State inspectors during our inspections.

How much will it cost to get started?

Of all of the questions posed to us over the years, this is the most difficult to answer. Is it true that the "Little Guy" is at a disadvantage in the grocery business? Many products on the shelf today, started in someone's household kitchen. To get a product ready for market, is a considerable expense and in no way guarantees any success. Does the world really need another BBQ sauce, salad dressing or hot sauce? Our answer is that there always seems to be room for one more. Much of your success will be determined by two critical factors: Your determination and finances. Many good products have fallen along the wayside because of a lack of proper financing or a lack of time commitment. Launching a new food product is very costly, and if you do not have adequate financial resources in place and the ability to commit the proper time to your project the odds are against you. **On average you must be able to invest \$2,500.00 to \$7,500.00 for a test batch, nutritional information, basic label design, labels and process approval.** For example, a basic 200-gallon batch of barbeque sauce packaged in a 12-ounce bottle labeled and ready for the retail market will require close to a \$16,000.00 investment.

Terms / Payment:

Co Packing Express will require all companies to provide a 75% deposit for production runs, which will be applied to your order. The remaining 25% is due on completion and or before shipping. Private labeled products also require the same terms. Deposits are due at least 7 to 10 business days before the scheduled production run. Once your deposit has been received your production date will be scheduled and confirmed. The deposit allows us to purchase the required materials for your run. Some materials take several days to be delivered or may need to be combined with our existing volume order to hold your pricing. Since deposit funds are used to acquire the required materials for your production run, they are non-refundable.

The terms for test batch fees, recipe development, nutritional information, graphic services and process approvals are all prepaid. We do offer payments via credit cards with an added convenience fee. Bank transfers are accepted with no additional fees. **All Production runs must be paid in full at pick-up or before shipping unless other arrangements have been made.**

Lead time:

There is a 4-to-8-week lead-time on all new co-pack products depending on our current workload. Test batches are scheduled on a weekly basis and are generally done afterhours or on weekends. Nutritional information usually has a 1-to-3-day turnaround. Process approvals have a 3 to 4 week lead time. Any orders, after your initial product run, must have at least 20 business day lead-time once your deposit has been received (weekends and holidays are not included). Depending on our production schedule it may be as much as a 6 week lead-time. This allows us to procure the necessary ingredients and or packaging materials. Due to the current condition of our market our lead-times are longer as it is now taking much longer to receive packaging materials and ingredients.

We recommend that you keep us informed as to the status of your inventory and keep in mind the required lead time. If you are planning on additional holiday orders and or shows don't wait till the last minute to place a production order. We recommend you place your holiday orders at least 60 days before your events start for the season. Last minute or emergency orders require us to pay overtime wages to our staff, and these costs must be passed onto the client if incurred. Standing re-orders on a weekly or monthly basis can be arranged if needed with a deposit. We do ask that if you are in negotiations with a large retailer and or distributor please check with us as to our current schedule and keep us informed on your progress so we can fulfill your obligations and delivery dates.

What kind of package do I use?

If your product is something like a barbeque or hot sauce it is often best to ask us what packages we are currently using. The price of packaging is all about the quantities purchased. Certainly, the bottle can greatly differentiate an item on the shelf, but the economies often lead to the necessity of using an "in-house bottle". Co Packing Express uses several different types of packaging. Many opportunities still exist to enhance and differentiate a product by way of the label, and/or shrink band. Glass is normally used for any product that must be packed hot, such as, salsas and hot sauces. We do offer plastic packaging for some hot filled products. Packaging manufacturers often require that we purchase in truckload quantities. It is often necessary for us to work through a local distributor. Distributors stock hundreds of different jars, bottles, caps, and related packaging materials. The most important aspect of package selection, during early stages of the evolution of your product, is to make sure you select a bottle or jar that is readily available from us and/or our distributors, and that the price does not skew your cost. In some cases the package can comprise as much as 60% of the total finished cost.

How do I get my labels designed and printed?

A graphic artist designs your label on a computer using one of the more popular software packages. Co Packing Express does offer limited graphic services if needed. We also have relationships with several printers and can give you a quote on the printing of your labels. We also may be able to combine your labels with one of existing label orders for reduced pricing. We also offer "short run" in house printing for "trial" products if needed. Contact us for details.

We use pressure sensitive (peel & stick, on rolls) labels. The matrix must be removed from the printed label so our labeling machine can index properly. 1/8" spacing between labels is required. Our labeling machine requires a #4 wind, on a 3" core, with a maximum outside diameter of 11.5 inches. It is advisable to consult with us to determine the die sizes our printers currently have in stock that are suitable for your bottle. This can save several hundred dollars in custom die charges.

Once you have chosen a size, say 3" x 5", you then convey that information to your artist so they know to design your label within those parameters. The label printer takes the computer artwork and converts each color to printing plates. The set up cost of any label is determined by the number of plates, one plate per color. Several printers offer digital printing for low volume runs that do not require plate charges. About 95% of our clients use digital printing services until they reach a level when large runs are needed.

There are two basic forms of artwork, process and line art. Process is usually used to recreate a photograph, while line art is used for drawn artwork. It is also advisable to use an artist that designs food labels, so that he or she is knowledgeable in the FDA rules such as, type size requirements, NELA (nutrition facts) panel rules, UPC bar codes, and allergen disclosures. Co Packing Express does help with label designs & printing. Contact us for details.

Remember, when ordering labels ask the printer to quote the job in several quantity brackets. Very often, the cost of 3,000 labels is only a few dollars more than 2,000 labels. Co Packing Express does work with a few local printers, and we may be able to combine your label order with one of our orders. This will allow you to receive the same pricing we receive as we generally

order 10K or larger amounts on a bimonthly basis.

We will be glad to assist with your layout and be glad to give you our opinion on your design. **Co Packing Express must approve all label designs before you have them printed as there are FDA requirements that must be on the label. Our FDA and State inspectors check labels for compliance during our inspections.**

How do I sell my product?

There are many marketing gurus who will take your money, so be careful! If your desire is to target the grocery trade, you will really need a food broker and or a distributor. Food brokers charge a percentage of sales, usually starting at 5%. Consult your local phone directory, and call some brokers. If they cannot offer any assistance, they may be able to direct you to a smaller broker who can. Another approach is to ask the buyer at the retail outlet how to approach them, and they will often offer advice on the best way to present your product. They may insist on a broker, or they may offer a very different approach. Each grocery chain is different and operates a little bit differently. If your desire is to target the specialty food trade, you can do it yourself, as long as you have the ability (and finances) to market your product. Otherwise, you may want to use a distributor or a product representative.

Do you offer storage or warehousing of my product?

As we currently have very limited warehouse space available, we can only offer limited storage of your finished product. Our current rate is \$60 per pallet per month for climate-controlled storage. We do ask that all orders are picked up or shipped within 72 hours of completion to avoid storage fees. We do work with several of the major freight carriers and have some good discounts in place with them. If you need a shipping quote contact us for details. We do also offer drop shipments to your larger customers.

Thanks for contacting us here at Co Packing Express for your contract packaging needs and we are looking forward to working with you.