



2026 Student Packaging Design Competition

AICC, the Independent Packaging Association
www.aiccbox.org

PREPARE YOUR WINNING DESIGNS TODAY

DEADLINE: Friday, June 19, 2026

Don't miss your chance to compete, get recognized, meet the right people in the corrugated industry, and win cash prizes! This competition only happens once a year.

COMPETITION DETAILS

PRIZES AND MORE

AICC is offering students two categories to enter – STRUCTURAL DESIGN and GRAPHIC DESIGN.

AICC will award three levels in both categories:

FIRST PLACE *

\$500 cash prize (to be split between team members) & a distinctive plaque for permanent display

PLUS an all-expense paid trip FOR THE WHOLE TEAM to attend the AICC/TAPPI 2026 Corrugated Week event taking place September 28-30, 2026, in Fort Worth, Texas. The all-expensive paid trip is co-sponsored by ICPF (see page 11).

SECOND PLACE

\$250 cash prize (to be split between team members) & a distinctive plaque for permanent display

THIRD PLACE

\$150 cash prize (to be split between team members) & a distinctive plaque for permanent display

The winning entries (first – third places) will be displayed during AICC/TAPPI 2026 Corrugated Week event and the winners will be announced during a General Session, asking those in attendance to be honored on stage.

This year, ICPF will donate \$500 to each school that enters into the 2026 Student Design Competition. An ICPF representative will contact the advisor or professor listed on the entry form to coordinate the donation details.

COMPETITION

ONE CHALLENGE THAT FOCUSES ON BOTH STRUCTURE & GRAPHICS

STRUCTURAL & GRAPHIC DESIGN CHALLENGE

This challenge incorporates both the STRUCTURE and GRAPHICS of the floor display, but the judges will evaluate the Structure and Graphics separately.

This year, we are offering students a real-world challenge. Gibs Grooming needs a compact, retail-ready countertop display that holds their travel-size (3.25 oz) products. This would be used in retail stores that cater to the beauty industry.

Students can enter to be judged on either the Structure or Graphics of the display, or they can enter to be judged on both. Please indicate which category or categories you are entering on your entry forms.

All submissions must include:

- Entry Sample – we require a physical sample to be shipped for judgement.
 - Shipping information can be found on page 9.
- Video essay – see more information below.
 - The more information, images, and details you provide, the better for the judges.

Video Essay

The point of the video essay is to:

- Sell your design! Explain why the customer, Gibs Grooming, should choose YOUR design.
- Discuss your entry and why you designed it the way you did (if you can use/show images of your entry while discussing it, that would be helpful for the judges) – **how did you meet the customer's needs/challenges?**
- **Videos should be no more than 5 minutes in length**
- Videos do not need to be professionally recorded. You can use a smart phone or similar device.
- Please try to have a steady hand record the video and make sure the sound is audible.
- Video files should be submitted to Chelsea May via email (cmay@aiccbox.org), dropbox, or the like.
- If you do not have access to a recording device, please contact Chelsea May.

About the Customer: Gibs Grooming



Gibs Grooming has become the go to brand in barbering culture today! Established in Colorado as a mom-and-pop business, with products made in the USA, Gibs has brought life and excitement back to men's grooming.

They create innovative products for the everyday guy using quality ingredients. Their products are easy to use, smell amazing, and deliver a great hair or beard style, while also keeping hair, scalp and skin healthy.

Structural Objective:

Objective: Create a compact, retail-ready countertop display for Gibs Grooming designed specifically for placement at checkout counters. This display will focus on Gibs Grooming travel-size products.



Product & Package Specs:

- **16" tall x 12" wide x 12" deep. Choose 4 of the below travel sized items to be used in the display. You choose the 4 items, but the display should hold 5 of each selected item for a total of 20 products.**
 - Tea Tree Shampoo
 - Tea Tree Conditioner
 - Top Down Hair & Body Hydrator
 - Con Man Hair & Beard Pudding
 - El Rey Styling Jam Shorty
 - Original Man Wash Beard, Hair & Body
 - Biofuel Conditioner
 - Silver Toning Shampoo
- Special consideration will be given to designs using innovative use of corrugated, folding carton material, and/or sustainable products.
- **NO PRODUCTS** will be shipped in the display. The display can ship pre-assembled (without products) or flat, where it will be assembled and filled with products by the retail store employees.
- Features **an interchangeable header card(s)**, allowing retailers to swap messaging seasonally or promotionally.
- You should include assembly instructions for the display, if necessary.

Things to consider with your design:

- Is your design one that can be manufactured easily and cost effectively?
- Will the display survive rigorous handling at distribution centers, through transport, and retail wear-and-tear?
- What innovations did you achieve in your design?
- Is your display “fully” sustainable and/or does it eliminate/minimize products or materials that are not sustainable?

Materials that can be used in your design:

Only paper-based materials, such as:

- Corrugated
- Folding Carton
- A combination of both

Materials that CANNOT be used in your design:

- Bubble wrap
- Foam wrap
- Styrofoam

Structural Judging Criteria:

While designing your display, consider these points. This criterion is what the judges will be looking at when judging your entry. **These would be good points to discuss in your video essay.**

Structure Criteria

- Creativity
- Versatility
- Ease of assembly
- Design Attributes
- Manufacturability (consider how easy/cost effective would it be to manufacture 250+ of your design)

Graphics Objective:

Design the graphics for the Gibs Grooming countertop display. While designing the graphics, consider the following:

- **It should feature 3 interchangeable header cards**, allowing retailers to swap messaging seasonally or promotionally:
 - **Gibs Grooming (Core Brand Header)**
 - **Father’s Day Theme**
 - **Back to School Theme**
- Consider the brand, its audience, and its objectives.
 - Remember, these countertop displays will be in retail stores that cater to people who work in the beauty industry.
 - There are images, fonts, and some past flyer/brochure examples from Gibs Grooming in the Dropbox folder for review.
- Show off your creativity & marketing ability.

- The appearance & the graphics of the display are to withstand the rigors of courier delivery.
- Please choose one of the following subcategories:
- Please choose one of the following subcategories:
 - **Line and/or Screen Art.** Any colors can be used including process colors (i.e., line art using screen tints to add or create new colors)
 - **Screened Image.** Any colors can be used including process colors. Emphasis will be placed on the use of images from transparencies or reflective copy (i.e., photographs or slides). Image examples can include: duotones, posterizations, halftones, tritons, mezzotints, stochastic, halftones with spot color.
 - **Process Color / Modified Process Color.** Emphasis will be on color separations from transparencies or reflective copy. Images should be of real items that have been photographed conventionally or digitally (i.e., photos, slides, art reproductions that have been photographed).
 - **Digital Printing**

Graphics Judging Criteria:

While designing the graphics for your display, consider these points. This criterion is what the judges will be looking at when judging your entry.

Graphics Criteria:

- Die line
- Communication message
- Project graphics with emphasis on full coverage quality, line quality, screen reproduction quality, and/or process color quality of halftones
- Design to converting equipment (i.e. registration tolerance fits the equipment tolerance)
- Color-to-color registration
- Print-to-cut registration (fit to die line)
- Litho, Direct Print, limitation to colors to keep cost down
- Appearance & graphics of package are to withstand the rigors of courier delivery

COMPETITION ENTRY GUIDELINES

PLEASE REVIEW BEFORE ENTERING THE COMPETITION

ELIGIBILITY

1. The AICC Student Packaging Design Competition is open to individual students enrolled in one or more packaging courses at colleges, universities, and/or technical schools and who are at the freshmen, sophomore, junior, or senior level (or teams consisting of freshmen, sophomores, junior, and senior combination) at the time of entry. **Graduate students are not eligible to enter the AICC Design Competition.**
2. For an entry to be eligible, it must fit the criteria as described in each category description. AICC reserves the right to disqualify an entry that does not meet the criteria of the category.
3. Students may submit as many entries into the competition as desired; there are no limits.
4. Entry samples, video, and entry forms must be sent to AICC liaison Chelsea May by **Friday, June 19, 2026**. Please email videos and entry forms to cmay@aiccbox.org. If files are larger than 10MB, please send via WeTransfer, Dropbox, or other. Shipping information is below.

INFORMATION REQUIRED TO ENTER THE COMPETITION

For an entry to be eligible, the following must be completed in full and submitted by the deadline:

- Entry Sample
- Entry Forms
- Video Essay

JUDGING

1. Student entries will be judged in July by a panel of industry experts who make up the AICC Package Design Competition Committee along with team member(s) of Gibs Grooming.
2. Entries will be judged in accordance with the judging criteria listed on each category information form.
3. Heavy emphasis will be placed on the students' video essays selling the project.
4. AICC will notify student winners and their student advisors via email after the judging has taken place. For the first-place winners, an invitation will be extended to the entire team to attend the AICC Annual Meeting event in Chicago, Illinois.

AWARDS & PRIZES

1. Within the two categories of Structure and Graphics, AICC will award three levels of cash prizes – first place (\$500), second place (\$250), and third place (\$150) – as well as plaques commemorating the student's participation in the competition.
 - a. If an entry is submitted by a team, the prize money will be split equally among the team members. For example, if an entry submitted by a team of four students wins first place, the students will share equally in the \$500 prize, with \$125 awarded to each student.

- b. If an entry is submitted by a team, the students will each receive their own awards plaque commemorating their participation in the competition.
2. The cash prizes are not considered to be scholarships and as such, use of the cash prize is at the discretion of the student winner.
3. With the support of ICPF, the first-place winning teams will be invited to attend the AICC/TAPPI 2026 Corrugated Week event, all-expenses paid, scheduled for September 28-30, 2026, in Fort Worth, Texas.
 - a. AICC will make the hotel and airline travel arrangements for the winners after consulting with the student about schedules and airline preferences. AICC will provide student winners with a per diem (daily allowance) for meals and other incidentals that can be used at their discretion.
4. A donation of \$500 to each school who enters into the competition provided by ICPF.

STUDENT TEAM ENTRIES

1. Entries submitted by a team of students must designate a team leader to represent the group and its entry. This decision is to be made by the team members, not AICC. The team leader will:
 - Represent the team and its entry and answer any follow up questions needed by the committee to judge their entry.
2. All team members MUST be identified on the entry form in order to be considered part of the team. If a team member is NOT identified on the entry forms and the team wins, they will not receive a portion of the winning prize money or a plaque.

ENTRY SAMPLES

1. An entry sample is required to be eligible for the competition.
2. Winning entry samples will be on display at the AICC/TAPPI 2026 Corrugated Week event.
3. Entries will be returned to the schools of origin only if **requested** on the entry form. If the return shipping costs exceed \$50, it is the student or schools' responsibility to pay for the return shipping costs.

SHIPPING YOUR ENTRIES

1. Send your completed entry sample to the following address:

**AICC Student Design Competition
113 South West St, 3rd Floor
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 836-2422
Attn: Chelsea May**

2. Entry samples and all completed entry forms must be received at AICC Headquarters by **Friday, June 19, 2026**

QUESTIONS

1. Any questions about the student competition can be directed to Chelsea May at AICC Headquarters. Call toll-free (877) 836-2422 or contact by email at cmay@aiccbox.org.

International Corrugated Packaging Foundation

Rewarding jobs. Lifelong careers. Choose a future in corrugated.



Co-sponsored by AICC, The Independent Packaging Association, and the Fibre Box Association (FBA), the International Corrugated Packaging Foundation (ICPF) is an independent, non-profit 501(c)3 corporation dedicated to growing the labor force of the corrugated packaging industry now and into the future.

For the past 40 years, ICPF has partnered with students, universities, and industry companies to bring a talented workforce of motivated, qualified graduates to the corrugated packaging industry. We've donated over \$14 million in corrugated and manufacturing equipment and other resources to advance college and university curricula in the fields of packaging design, graphic communications, flexography, supply chain management, marketing and more.

Through ICPF, students can find job openings in their area and apply directly via LinkedIn or Indeed, learn about industry career paths, hear testimonials from current industry employees, network with industry contacts and hiring managers in their area, and experience hands-on learning opportunities through sponsorships at industry events and box plant tours. ICPF also offers a myriad of educational resources to communicate the industry's current role as a cost-effective, high-performance, renewable, and sustainable packaging choice.

If you are interested in pursuing or learning more about a career in the corrugated packaging industry, visit our website at www.careersincorrugated.com or scan the QR to connect with us on social media. ICPF is here to help you find a rewarding job and lifelong career in corrugated.



ENTRY FORM

ENTRY INFORMATION

Entry Name: _____

Entry Footprint (L x W x H): _____ x _____ x _____

I would like to submit this entry into:

- The Structure Category
- The Graphics Category (please complete the Graphics options below)
- The Structure AND Graphics Categories (please complete the Graphics options below)

If entering the Graphics Category, please select a subcategory:

- Line and/or Screen Art
- Screened Images
- Process Color / Modified Process Color
- Digital Printing

Student(s) Name(s): _____

School: _____

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Advisor/Professor Name: _____

Advisor Email Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____

STUDENT INFORMATION

If submitting on behalf of a team, a team leader must be chosen to represent the team / group. Please list the designated person as Student Participant #1.

STUDENT PARTICIPANT #1 (TEAM LEADER)

Name: _____

Email*: _____ Phone (cell or landline): _____

**please list an email address that you will still be accessing in the summer of 2026*

What is your class year? Please check one of the following:

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior (4th year) Senior (5th year)

What is your major?: _____

STUDENT PARTICIPANT #2

Name: _____

Email*: _____ Phone (cell or landline): _____

**please list an email address that you will still be accessing in the summer of 2026*

What is your class year? Please check one of the following:

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior (4th year) Senior (5th year)

What is your major?: _____

STUDENT PARTICIPANT #3

Name: _____

Email*: _____ Phone (cell or landline): _____

**please list an email address that you will still be accessing in the summer of 2026*

What is your class year? Please check one of the following:

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior (4th year) Senior (5th year)

What is your major?: _____

STUDENT PARTICIPANT #4

Name: _____

Email*: _____ Phone (cell or landline): _____

**please list an email address that you will still be accessing in the summer of 2026*

What is your class year? Please check one of the following:

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior (4th year) Senior (5th year)

What is your major?: _____

STUDENT PARTICIPANT #5

Name: _____

Email*: _____ Phone (cell or landline): _____

**please list an email address that you will still be accessing in the summer of 2026*

What is your class year? Please check one of the following:

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior (4th year) Senior (5th year)

What is your major?: _____

STUDENT PARTICIPANT #6

Name: _____

Email*: _____ Phone (cell or landline): _____

**please list an email address that you will still be accessing in the summer of 2026*

What is your class year? Please check one of the following:

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior (4th year) Senior (5th year)

What is your major?: _____

Send completed entry form, submission images, and video to
Chelsea May at cmay@aiccbox.org.