Order Size Is Designed, Not Discovered

The CPG DTC Playbook | Prepared by Dumo Digital Strategies

For specialty CPG brands

Why the pack size selector on your product page is one of the most important pricing decisions in your store, and how to build it so the smart choice is the easy one.

You Paid for This Customer. Make the First Order Count.

Every first order costs you an ad dollar. Most brands treat order size as something that just happens, then wonder why the first order loses money. Order size is an input, not an output. The pack sizes you offer, which one is selected, and how the price is shown decide what lands in the cart.

Here is the same customer, at the same cost to acquire, with two different first orders:

	Single pack first order	**Multi-pack first order**
Cost to get the customer	$28	$28
Order value	$32	$58
Profit on the order, at a 50% margin after product and shipping	$16	$29
Result on order one	Lose $12	Break even. Every reorder is profit.

Example numbers. Run your own with the CAC Payback and Free Shipping calculators at dumodigital.com/playbook.

A bigger first order is the cheapest growth you will ever get. No new traffic, no new ad spend. Just a better decision on a page you already have.

One Unit Doesn’t Build a Habit

The whole CPG business model is the habit. A customer who buys one bar eats it in a day and forgets you. A customer who buys a 12-pack has it in the pantry for two or three weeks, long enough for it to become the snack they reach for without thinking.

Pack size is also where subscription starts. The size a customer picks on their first order is usually the size they subscribe to. Default to a pack that lasts, and the reorder and the subscription follow.

Give Every Size a Job

Three sizes is enough. Each one has a clear job, and together they steer people to the middle.

Size	**Its job**	**How to show it**
Small	Try it	The lowest total price, shown honestly. It lowers the risk for a cautious first-timer and makes the middle look like the better deal.
Middle	Most Popular	Preselected. A lower price per bar or serving than the small, with the savings shown. This is where you want most people to land.
Large	Best Value	The lowest price per bar or serving. Pair it with free shipping if your margin allows. It anchors the price and makes the middle feel safe.

The Psychology Behind the Selector

Nobody does math on a product page. They scan, compare and pick what feels right in a few seconds. These are the shortcuts the brain uses, and how to build the selector around them.

The psychology	What it means for your selector
People stick with the default	Whatever is selected when the page loads is what most people buy. Preselect the middle size, not the smallest.
A third option changes the choice	In a classic pricing study, adding a third option that made the top choice look like a deal moved the share picking it from 32% to 84%. The large size makes the middle look reasonable.
Too many options means no decision	In the famous jam study, shoppers shown 24 flavors were about 10x less likely to buy than shoppers shown 6. Three sizes, clearly labeled.
Price in the unit they think in	Nobody thinks in "units." They think in bars, servings, cans and meals. "$1.50 a protein bar" or "$2 a serving" is easy to compare across sizes, and to the coffee or gas station snack it replaces. A total price alone makes the bigger pack look expensive instead of smart.
Savings look bigger in the right number	Under $100, a percentage usually looks bigger than the dollar amount. Over $100, dollars do. Show whichever number is bigger.
Labels do the deciding for them	"Most Popular" is social proof. "Best Value" is permission to spend more. Both remove the effort of choosing.

Bundles and Variety Packs

The biggest question a first-time CPG customer has is "which one will I like?" A variety pack answers it. It removes the risk of picking the wrong flavor, gets more product in their hands, and lets them find their favorite, which becomes the reorder.

Variety pack	The best first order for most brands. It answers "which flavor?" and makes the order bigger at the same time.
Build your own box	Shoppers pick their own mix. It feels like a game, raises the order size, and tells you which flavors people really want.
Routine bundles	Group products around a moment: the morning stack, the post-workout kit, the weeknight dinner set. It sells the routine, not just the product.
Bundles instead of discounts	A bigger order at a better price per serving protects your price. A sitewide discount trains customers to wait for the next sale.

The Cart Drawer: The Last Chance to Grow the Order

The cart drawer is the highest-intent moment in your store. They have already decided to buy. A good drawer keeps selling:

Free shipping progress bar	Set the threshold just above your average order. If your average is $42, try $48 to $55. "You're $8 from free shipping" turns the threshold into a goal.
One-tap add-ons	A second flavor, a smaller item or a best seller that gets them over the threshold. One tap, no extra page.
Subscribe and save upgrade	A one-tap switch to subscription right in the drawer, with the savings shown.

What Not to Do

Sitewide discount tiers	"Buy 2, save 10%. Buy 3, save 15%" on everything trains people to wait for a sale and cheapens a premium brand.
Five sizes nobody understands	More options means fewer decisions. Three is enough.

Hiding the price per serving	Without it, the bigger pack looks expensive and people default to the smallest.
Defaulting to the single unit	It makes the smallest order the easiest one, and it is too small to build a habit.

The Numbers That Tell You It’s Working

Number	What it tells you
Average order value	The headline. Track it for first orders on their own, since that is where ad spend gets paid back.
Units per order	If it sits under about 1.3, most people are buying one unit. Make a multi-pack the default.
Sales mix by size	If most orders are the small size, the middle is not doing its job. Check the default, the labels and the price per serving.
Orders that reach free shipping	If very few reach it, the threshold is too high. If almost all do, it is too low and you are giving margin away.
First order profit after ad cost	The number that decides how fast you can afford to grow.

Want help designing your pack sizes and bundles? Book a strategy call at dumodigital.com. We will look at how your store sells today and how to make the bigger order the easy choice.

Sources: decoy pricing (Dan Ariely, Predictably Irrational), choice overload (Iyengar and Lepper, 2000), the Rule of 100 (Jonah Berger, Contagious).