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The Grocer Guide to...

The
Grocer

Packaging



Analysis

Sustainable progress

Growing environmental awareness, government legislation on plastics and increasing e-commerce are all driving change in packaging sustainability, as brands compete to win the hearts and minds of increasingly tech-savvy consumers



While consumers are still focused largely on price, selection and sugar reduction during their shopping excursions, growing recognition of the need to protect the planet, coupled with government commitment to environmental change, is driving food and drinks brands to ensure they are moving consistently towards sustainable packaging solutions.

E-commerce has also altered the playing field, while advances in technology are enabling brands to achieve greater personal interaction with the end-consumer – to the point where this has become key to achieving a competitive edge.

As such, packaging suppliers are at the cutting edge of innovation to drive down plastics usage, improve recyclability and work towards a circular economy – and there is plenty

of commitment within the industry to achieving this goal.

Meeting consumer demands

“New research from YouGov and Hearts & Science found 52% of shoppers base their purchase decisions on brands’ eco-credentials¹,” says Stephanie Harding, head of RDQ for the UK & Ireland at Birds Eye. “With the number of shoppers becoming more aware of brands’ sustainability credentials rising, it’s important that brands like ours are increasing recyclable packaging across our ranges.

“Where possible, we will minimise plastic packaging, ensuring it is used responsibly and used for products that require it from a health and safety, convenience, and shelf-life perspective. We will always weigh the pros and cons of packaging and, when needed,

we can use a specially developed Life Cycle Analysis tool, which helps to assess the environmental impacts of any considered packaging changes. Insight from the tool, for example, showed how Birds Eye’s eight-pack of chicken burgers could be moved from a plastic bag into a cardboard carton. This change was made without compromising the shelf-life of the product and with the added benefit of moving to recyclable packaging.”

In the last year, Parkside Flexibles has seen a real drive to convert all flexible packaging to either compostable, recyclable, recycle-ready or containing recycled content, in line with increasing consumer awareness of the environment and the need to buy from brands that clearly demonstrate their sustainability credentials, says Paula Birch, global sales director. “As such, we launched



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our Recoflex range of monopolymer recyclable flexible packaging ideal for supermarket soft plastic collections and boosted our range of recyclable paper designs to support brands seeking new recyclable alternatives to traditional multilayer packaging.”

Meanwhile, SIG head of marketing Europe Norman Gierow says minimising the amount of paper, plastic and aluminium, without sacrificing safety or quality, makes carton packaging a smart and responsible choice. “SIG’s carton packaging is designed to use minimal materials, most of which are renewable and all of them fully recyclable,” he says. “The main component of our carton packaging is made of raw paperboard from renewable and sustainable Forest Stewardship Council™-certified and other controlled wood sources.”

Helping to close the loop

Achieving a circular economy requires a collaborative effort from manufacturers, suppliers, retailers and consumers.

“Working with others to make our industry more sustainable is critical,” says Sally Molyneux, UK & Ireland sales director, food packaging at Klöckner Pentaplast (kp). “Thanks to our kp Tray2Tray initiative, our plastic trays and rigid films can come back time and again as safe, protective, fully recyclable food packaging. To make our trays easily recyclable we introduced kp Zapora, our padless tray technology, designed to remove the need for absorbent pads for fresh cuts of protein. It’s easy to rinse and recycle without any mess.” The easier suppliers make the recycling of products, the more consumers will recycle, she adds.

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PakTech made the transition to using 100% recycled plastic back in 2021 and considers itself a pioneer in circular packaging solutions. As a result, it says, it has kept more than 45 million kilograms of plastic out of landfills and waterways and this number continues to grow each day. “Transitioning towards the circular economy is key to bringing a sustainable future,” says the company. “This is why we use 100% recycled HDPE plastic sourced from waste to produce all our packaging solutions that are also recyclable. Last year, we launched our Pak-to-Pak handles, which are produced from discarded PakTech handles, making them third-life products.

“We’ve also introduced recycling programs across North America and Australia to ensure that PakTech handles are being recycled – a program

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that we wish to introduce to the UK and EU markets as well.”

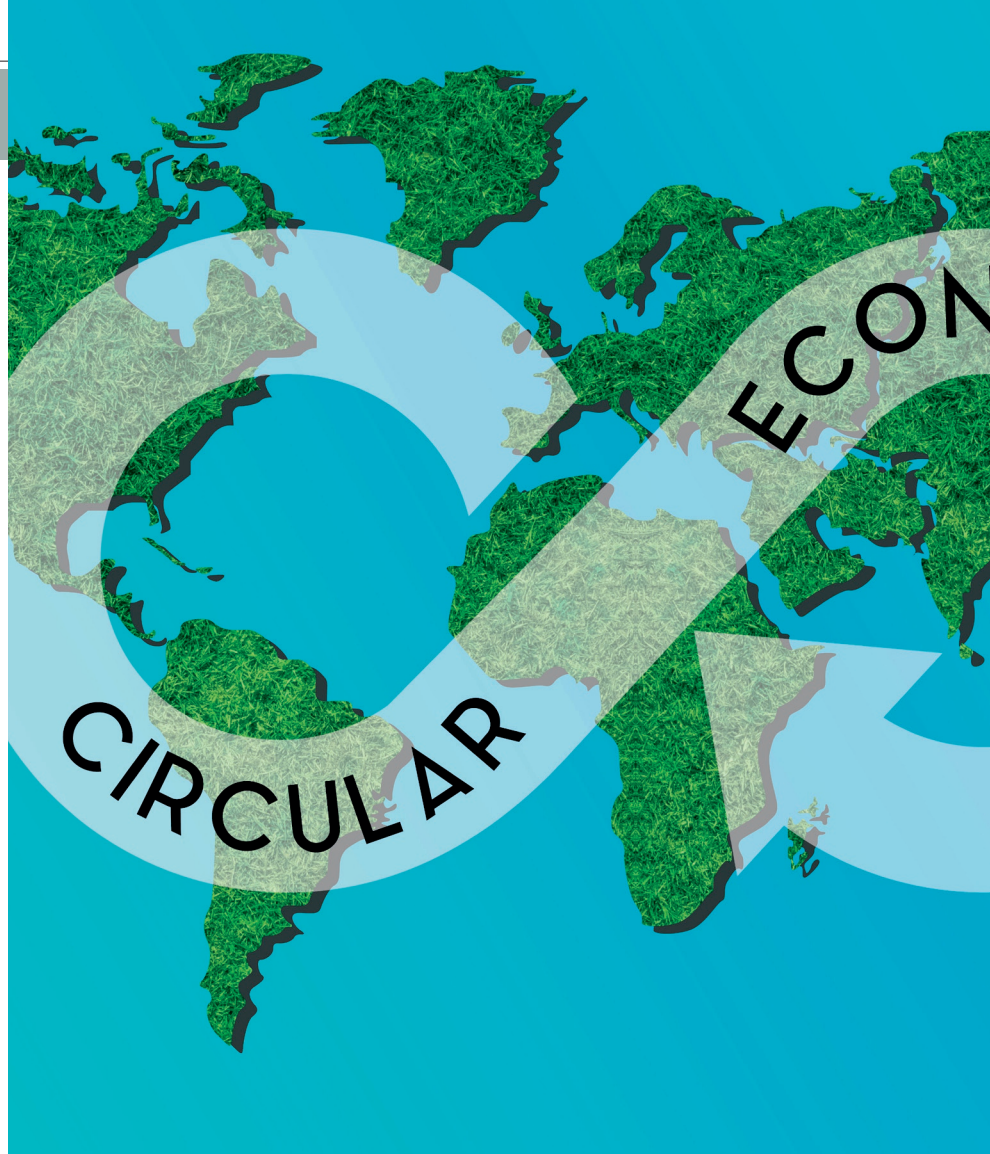
Birds Eye's Harding says the company is on track with its pledge to introduce 99% OPRL recyclable packaging by the end of 2022, having ended 2021 with 91.4% of packaging meeting these guidelines. “Investment in technology has allowed us to ensure packaging is still the right size for our products, with advancements enabling us to reduce packaging while maintaining product weight,” she says. “For example, we’ve trialled and approved thinner bags for our Aunt Bessie’s Potato products, removing 60 tonnes (t) of plastic packaging a year as a direct result.”

Since the BBC's Blue Planet II series, it's clear that consumers want to see a reduction in plastic use in packaging, often without understanding the many advantages plastics bring in terms of shelf-life, hygiene and safety, particularly for highly perishable goods, notes Parkside's Birch. “At Parkside we’ve made significant strides in lightweighting many products (reducing the initial amount of plastic material used in line with the UK waste hierarchy) and have boosted our paper flexible packaging solutions to support brands that seek to switch completely out of plastic.

“Innovations in water-based coatings applied to paper, for example, are also enabling many new applications for paper flexible packaging – for example, produce – that were previously unthinkable without the integration of plastic for moisture and gas barrier functionality.”

Highland Spring, meanwhile, says it introduced the first 100% recycled PET bottle (cap and label excluded) to be released by a major water brand. Its Eco Bottle, launched in 2019 is available in a variety of sizes from kids’ format up to 1.5L. In recent years, the company has reduced the weight of its smaller bottles by 20% and is taking steps to reduce the weight of its larger formats, too. Last year, Highland Spring also introduced its flavoured sparkling water in a new recyclable canned product.

Among a number of measures, SIG's Gierow says the company is committed to accelerating innovation on circularity, progressively using fewer polymers and prioritising renewable or bio-based sources. Measures taken last year include sourcing 100% paperboard



as FSC™-certified. It also remains “the only aseptic carton provider to offer aluminium-free packs, packs linked to 100% renewable materials and packs with all three main materials certified as responsibly sourced”, he adds.

Facing the Plastics Packaging Tax

With the Plastics Packaging Tax due to come into force on 1 April, suppliers have been gearing up for the challenges it will bring.

“Our customers are aware of the impending UK Plastics Tax and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), which can add significant costs associated with products that do not contain 30% recycled material and are easily recyclable,” says kp’s Molyneux. To mitigate this, the company is offering kp SmartCycle, a core range of sustainable rigid films for form, fill and seal applications, which it can customise to contain 35% to 100% post-consumer recycled PET. It is also offering a new high barrier lidding film that contains 30% recycled content.

“The plastic tax will have little

impact on what customers currently buy from us,” she adds. “We have been transitioning customers to trays and rigid and flexible films that have the required level of 30% recycled material, over the past two years if not already being used, mainly driven by retailers.”

Birds Eye's Harding says around 60% of Birds Eye's packaging is paper-based, with the remaining majority being plastic films. “We remain in close discussion with recycling facilities and plastic manufacturers to develop better and more realistic solutions to incorporate more recycled materials into plastic films,” she notes.

While the new tax will affect the standard plastic flexible packaging produced by Parkside, that only forms a small part of the company's offering, says Birch. “It will also potentially affect our compostable packaging solutions, but we are closely monitoring this situation as to trap compostable materials into the tax requirement seems an unfair application of the tax, when compostable materials cannot contain recycled content.



The e-commerce impact

Growing e-commerce fulfilment has put increased pressure on the packaging industry in the past two years.

“The pandemic has accelerated the push to e-commerce and we are seeing the nature of packaging demand change accordingly,” says The Box Factory managing director Neil Price. “There is a much greater focus on the unboxing experience and customers are looking for innovation from their suppliers. We have a new machine due for installation in Q3 2022 that will

allow us to print both inside and outside the box, in one pass. This is something that are doing for some customers but this will make that much more efficient and allow us to offer this to a wider audience.”

E-commerce saw significant increases across all channels during the pandemic, with the government’s ‘Stay at Home’ guidance helping to boost the channel, says Birds Eye head of RDQ for UK & Ireland Stephanie Harding. “Retailers have since doubled their online capacity to meet the rise of online shoppers,

with a record 59%ⁱ of consumers purchasing grocery products online.

“As restrictions eased and were eventually lifted, online shopper numbers have since slowed, with around 53% of consumers ordering groceries online by the end of 2021ⁱⁱ. While the trend slid, it did generate new subchannels, such as quick commerce (qCom) that are driving penetration in the online shopping space as the channel is able to cater to new shopper missions. For example, the food-to-go shopper

mission is driving growth in total online shopping trips at 9% in 2021 compared with 5% in 2019ⁱⁱⁱ.

“Demand for this shopper mission online has continued to grow due to shifting sociodemographic changes driven by the pandemic, like a rise in flexible working and hybrid working. We have seen the impact of qCom within our business and remain focused on how we can optimise this subchannel across our brands, catering to multiple meal solutions for the ‘food to go’ & ‘meal for tonight’ shoppers.

To combat this, Parkside has created a new sustainable range of packaging, including its Parkscribe reclose lidding films, manufactured from >30% recycled polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and enabling brands and its customers to be compliant with the new tax.

“Do we think this is the best way to reduce plastics?” she adds. “It is one strategy, but the plastic waste issue is more extensive than simply encouraging the use of recycled materials, which in fact is the bottom of the UK waste hierarchy. Creating packaging that has a low carbon footprint and is either reusable or refillable is a more impactful strategy.

“Importantly, plastic is a perfectly sustainable form of packaging if disposed of correctly, which means the story is far more complex than first appearances. Plastics contribute to environmental sustainability through their energy-saving potential, intrinsic recyclability, food waste reduction and energy recovery options.”

The understanding at SIG is that beverage cartons will currently be

affected in only a few markets, says Gierow. “Our advocacy position is cartons should be exempted as they are mainly made of paperboard, and renewable content should be considered recycled content. Whatever happens, our cartons contain significantly less plastic than PET bottles.”

All of Highland Spring’s bottles contain a minimum of 30% recycled materials and the company has an ambition to reach 100% rPET across its range by 2025, it says. “Over the next three years, we will also be adopting new design standards to make our packaging easier to recycle and working with industry to achieve a 90% recycling rate for bottled water and soft drinks packaging.”

While all of its solutions are produced from 100% recycled material, PakTech says: “The introduction of regulations such as the Plastics Packaging Tax are vital to create more demand for recycled material and help to accelerate the transition towards the circular economy. That said, more governmental effort in the UK and

everywhere else in the world is needed in parallel to increasing recycling capabilities through investments and to create uniform and effective waste management systems to ensure that nothing goes to waste.”

“The new tax is incentivising people to look for alternatives and has certainly increased the level of enquiries we are having to look for ways to design plastic out of a pack,” says The Box Factory managing director Neil Price. “FSC-certified packaging is also something we are talking to our customers more about. It is key to ensure that any alternatives to plastic are as sustainable as possible.”

Technology

In today’s on-demand and digitalised world, consumers are more connected and informed than ever, says SIG’s Gierow. “They can access information about businesses and their products in an instant. Businesses need packaging solutions that can easily provide valuable product data in real time to assist in supply chain quality and

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control. In this highly competitive market, connected packaging has emerged as an effective way for food and beverage producers to connect with consumers. Solutions like scannable QR codes are being utilised more and more on consumer products, turning physical packs into interactive tools all of this so consumers can access the information they want, while brands can build trust and recognition.” SIG offers a range of market-ready solutions as part of its Connected Pack platform, such as digital coding technologies and track & trace capabilities to ensure connectivity and drive greater digital interaction and engagement, he adds.

“Advanced technology in packaging already exists today in the form of hidden coding, and we have been monitoring this for several years,” says Parkside’s Birch. “This new tech replaces conventional barcodes with invisible watermark grids and enables packaging designers to let their creativity roam free without having to consider black and white barcodes. The demand is not there yet to make it truly scalable, but this point is nearing, and we are ready to supply as and when the market catches up.

“This allows consumers to simply scan the packaging using their smartphone. They are then directed to a dedicated website or microsite to drive brand awareness, increased sales, consumer satisfaction and more. It enables information like how to recycle, local recycling facilities, food provenance and supply chain transparency to be provided at a granular level, alongside product security and anti-counterfeiting. This is all achievable via printing technology that already exists.”

Birds Eye has become the first frozen food brand to sign up to use the RNIB’s NaviLens technology on its Aunt Bessie’s packaging to help the near 2m people who suffer from sight loss in the UK, reveals Harding. “NaviLens use printed codes, similar to QR codes, on packaging. They can be read by smartphones from up to three metres away, eliminating the need for a shopper to know the exact location of the code on pack either in store or in their freezer. Within the code is information ranging from ingredients and preparation instructions to recycling, which can be read aloud



through the device. Ultimately, this helps give independence to shoppers with sight loss.”

In addition, in 2021, Birds Eye launched an on-pack traceability tool as part of its multi-channel campaign ‘Get On Board’. “Through printing a QR code unique to the fish species on our fish fingers and coated fish packs, we have been able to give shoppers the ability to trace the origin of their fish and learn more about our sustainable fishing practices. It has proven to be an excellent way of providing shoppers with information on their fish, while also driving extended engagement by overcoming the limited space available to communicate on-pack.”

Future vision

Packaging industry suppliers and FMCG brands will continue to face ongoing challenges from legislation across 2022, but are also committed to working towards the goal of a circular economy.

Customers will be looking at ways to reduce exposure to the upcoming Extended Producer Responsibility

in January 2023, says kp’s Molyneux. “So, rPET will be in more demand than ever, increasing raw material costs even further. kp Tray2Tray material will become vitally important in offering a sustainable, contingent supply of rPET for the future and we have a target to include at least 30% kp Tray2Tray content in all of our packaging by 2025.”

Despite the fact that 2021 was a tough year for inflation in the corrugated packaging industry, with no fewer than seven significant paper and board price increases, The Box Factory’s Price says demand levels have now stabilised and he does not believe raw material costs will increase through 2022 like they did last year. “The corrugated packaging industry is well placed to offer a viable alternative to plastics. The challenges we face are that plastic is often cheap and easy with no assembly required. We can design alternatives, but collaboration with the customer is key as there is often a need to change the packing process – something the customer needs to be committed to, in order to make it work.”



Mitigating growing cost challenges

“As with all packaging businesses currently, we will be subject to cost increases across the board due to increasing freight prices, shortages of materials and general inflationary pressures,” says Parkside Flexibles global sales director Paula Birch. “In terms of mitigation, we have a number of long-term supply contracts in place with our partners, which are protecting us short term, and we are working closely with our customers to redesign packaging, if necessary, to support their needs or indeed

increasing prices if the situation demands it. It’s an unfortunate situation but one that is inevitable with the materials and logistics situation currently.

“Some material substrates and raw materials are still in short supply and are likely to be for the foreseeable future, while prices for materials remain volatile. Raw material indexes also remain high with further challenges from energy, packaging, and transport costs all having an impact.”

With the whole end-to-end supply model changing

“irrevocably” over the past two years, cost pressures are being faced by businesses up and down the country across all resources, notes Highland Spring. “There will be more volatility and uncertainty in 2022 and a lot of the pressures will be systemic. We expect to see a large number of these stay for years to come, as macro-economic and political events have reshaped the global supply landscape and we do not expect to see this unwind in the short to medium term.”

“Over recent months we have seen significant increases

in many of our costs,” says kp UK & Ireland sales director Sally Molyneux. “In particular, energy prices are rising steeply but these have gone hand in hand with increases in the cost of haulage, labour and packaging materials. Our teams have worked tirelessly to minimise the impact of these increases, but there comes a point where mitigation can no longer address unprecedented inflationary pressures. We are investing in automation and value engineering projects to reduce the impact on customers.”

“With the upcoming Plastic Tax we can expect to see continued uptake in the use of recycled material in the UK,” says PakTech. “With consumers also embracing more minimalist lifestyles, we are seeing more and more minimalist packaging designs that help to reduce the use of unnecessary material while enabling cost savings. We are also confident that as consumers become more educated on plastic and how the material could be applied sustainably, we will see fewer businesses making swift exits out of plastic and into paperboard.”

“The Plastics Packaging Tax coming into force will significantly impact the industry as manufacturers adapt operations to ensure they are using the correct packaging and don’t fall foul of the new legislation,” says Parkside’s Birch. “This will result in many brands releasing new packaging designs that possess more recycled content.

“Food waste is also a hot topic. The need to combat this escalating issue is especially prevalent in developed nations, where almost half of the food

waste is derived from preventable waste by consumers and retail brands. Reclosable packaging and solutions extending shelf-life will likely become more popular on supermarket shelves as brands seek to help consumers reduce food waste.”

As we enter a post-pandemic world, there are indicators that there will be a resurgence for on-the-go consumption again, says SIG’s Gierow. As a result, smaller, more convenient packaging formats will rise again. “The pandemic has also led to consumers increasingly demanding and specifically seeking out sustainable products for them. Product packaging falls under this sustainability umbrella and demand for sustainable solutions will further increase among consumers and retailers.

“Another avenue we expect to see in the coming year is the rise of tethered caps,” he adds. The European Union’s Single Use Plastic Directive requires all single-use beverage packaging to have any closures attached to the packaging by July 2024, requiring them to be disposed of and recycled together with

the packaging. Although not yet a legal requirement in the UK, Gierow says SIG is already seeing demand for this type of closure here too. “We expect retailers will see this as an offering for all beverage packaging that can help improve sustainability.”

A big key trend in the packaging industry will lie in exploring and producing more sustainable packaging options for wide use across industries, says Highland Spring. “Whether plastic, cans or glass, overall, we believe it’s about harnessing the benefits of the materials and working together with all stakeholders – from business to government and consumers – to encourage increased recycling rates and responsible disposal. This will help contribute to creating a truly circular economy in the UK.”

Sources

¹ Hearts & Science and YouGov survey, 2,000 UK adults, July 2021 <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/resources/articles-reports/2021/07/21/eco-credentials-impact-purchase-choices>

Ecommerce panel
I=IJD Shopper Vista, The Demanding Online Shopper, December 2021

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Designed to help products stay fresher for longer, Amcor's LifeSpan Performance Paper is a unique breakthrough for recyclable packaging solutions, says the company. As part of the global paper platform AmFiber, this latest development can offer high-barrier, paper-based packaging without the use of PVDC. "Offering the same level of oxygen and moisture barrier as metallised OPP (plastic) packaging, brands can receive a longer shelf-life for products such as chocolate, cereal bars and snacks, while ensuring recyclability in most countries," it says. "The product is PVDC-free, delivering on important barrier properties, yet stays recyclable. LifeSpan Performance Paper helps brands respond to a growing consumer desire for more sustainable packaging, without sacrificing product freshness."

Containing an average of 85% paper fibre content, LifeSpan Performance Paper meets the recyclability requirements in most countries' paper recycling streams, adds Amcor. "Plus, recycling trials have proven that over 80% of the packaging content is recovered in the recycling process¹ while the sourced paper fibre comes from FSC-certified forests."

LifeSpan Performance Paper, available in Europe from February 2022, complements Amcor's existing snacks and confectionery portfolio, already providing brands with recycle-ready PP-based, PE-based and bioPE-based packaging options.

Source

¹ Amcor internal research

Highland Spring Group

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KEY BRANDS

Highland Spring

2021 was a strong year for Highland Spring. The brand is committed to taking a holistic approach to sustainable packaging to meet different needs and occasions, says marketing controller Mike Buckland. Last year, it became the first UK natural source water to roll out 100% recycled materials (rLDPE) in shrink-wrap and it launched a 10-litre hydration pack, with the lowest ratio of packaging to water.

“All Highland Spring bottles are 100% recyclable, and we continue to innovate on sustainable solutions for the category, as well as future initiatives to minimise our environmental impact,” notes Buckland. “Our marketing strategies encourage responsible disposal and recycling of bottles and cans.”

Highland Spring’s sustainability focus starts with its land and water source, he says. “The land, stretching across the Ochil Hill in Perthshire, is protected and organically accredited, so the rainfall filters naturally over



“Highland Spring’s sustainability focus starts with its land and water source”

many years before making its way into bottles in its natural source condition.

“This year, the brand will introduce a 5L hydration pack and new flavours for sparkling water. The Eco-Range, made from 100% recycled plastic*, will be available in all bottle formats by the end of 2022 and our target is to increase the recycled PET content of all bottles to 50% by 2023 and 100% by 2025.”

* Excluding cap and label

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Birds Eye – Aunt Bessie's

A first for frozen packaging

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Aunt Bessie's

Every six minutes, someone in the UK begins to lose their sight, stripping away their ability to easily complete basic tasks that many take for granted – including reading labelling on food packaging. With nearly two million people in the UK suffering from sight loss and less than 10% of blind and partially sighted people able to read braille, it's the food industry's responsibility to find a solution to help give control back to this group in stores and in their kitchens¹.

In 2020, inspired by the roast dinner's spirit of bringing families and friends together, Aunt Bessie's set out to make a difference through its 'Caring is the hardest thing we do' campaign. This emotive TV advertising saw a blind actress take on the role of Nana June, cooking her weekly roast for her loved ones while, off TV, the brand sponsored Guide Dogs for the Blind. This year, Aunt Bessie's products will spearhead a first-of-a-kind programme, helping to make frozen food packaging more inclusive for the sight-loss community by using NaviLens technology.

NaviLens partnership

NaviLens technology uses printed codes, similar to QR codes, on packaging. These codes can be read by devices from up to three metres away, eliminating the need for a shopper to know the exact location of the code, either in store or in their own freezer.

Held within the code is on-pack information such as ingredients, preparation instructions and recycling information, which can be read aloud through the device.

Claire Hoyle, head of marketing for Aunt Bessie's comments: "We're delighted to be trialling such an impactful tool on our packaging, as we set out to support those who live with sight loss. 95% of blind and partially



“NaviLens technology will help ensure that our support for those with disabilities becomes a long-term statement of intent from Aunt Bessie's”

sighted people find food packaging difficult or impossible to read, making food shopping and preparation a real challenge – especially for those with specific dietary requirements.

“NaviLens technology will help ensure that our support for those with disabilities becomes a long-term statement of intent from Aunt Bessie's. We fully support the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) in looking to work with retailers to apply NaviLens tags on POS material, so that blind and partially sighted customers can use the technology to locate products easily and have access to the best deals.”

Marc Powell, strategic accessibility lead at RNIB, says: “Blind and partially sighted people should have the same freedom, independence and choice as sighted customers. Currently, important information on packaging can often be in very small print, making it difficult or impossible for people with sight loss to read. That is why RNIB is working with organisations to bring about a significant step-change in how brands can put accessibility at the forefront of design and packaging and be a catalyst for change. We're delighted that Aunt Bessie's is the first frozen food brand to sign up to using NaviLens technology on its packaging.”

Source

^{1,2} The RNIB 'The Retail Experience' Good practice and standards & <https://www.rnib.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/latest-media-releases/rnib-partners-kelloggs-trial-accessible-packaging>

* Full article: © RNIB registered charity in England and Wales (226227), Scotland (SC039316), Isle of Man (1226). Also operating in Northern Ireland.





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Look out for our new packaging design rolling out across our entire range, in stores from April 2022!

Accessible Packaging

Working in collaboration with the RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People) and NaviLens technology allowing pack information to be accessible for all.

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Klöckner Pentaplast

Tray2Tray closes the loop

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kp Elite®
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kp Kapture®
kp Zapora®
kp Tray2Tray®

 Klöckner Pentaplast (kp), a global leader in recycled content products and high-barrier protective packaging, launched kp Tray2Tray – an initiative centred on developing a closed loop specifically for PET trays and rigid films – which is making recyclable food packaging, from recycled food packaging, time and again.

Focused on delivering its vision ‘The Sustainable Protection of Everyday Needs’, kp has a broad portfolio of packaging solutions and plays an integral role in the customer value chain by safeguarding product integrity, assuring safety and consumer health, improving sustainability and protecting brand reputation, says the company. Achieving a circular economy, in particular tray-to-tray recycling, is integral to the company’s commitment to a future with less waste.

kp has been manufacturing food packaging made with post-consumer recycled PET (rPET) for almost two decades, it reveals. “With legislation and taxes coming into effect this year, food and drink processors will be including a minimum of 30% recycled content in their packaging, making demand for rPET higher than ever,” it notes.

“kp has been collaborating globally with the entire value chain, recyclers, expert partners, governments and stakeholders to establish sustainable ways to collect and process streams of rPET tray flake, aiming for the infrastructure and incentives to collect, sort and recycle, and develop a strong, stable end-market.

“In parallel, we are creating the pull-through with calls for customer partnerships to collectively pledge to increased volumes of recycled tray flake, jointly driving the demand



“By building on our relationships in the supply chain, we are able to create this pull for pivotal changes towards how our society recycles, while driving customer motivation for closed-loop plastic packaging”

for circularity in the stream and for closed-loop packaging. The goal is to find stable supplies of quality recycled material from food trays and thermoformed films to use again and again in packaging for fresh food, such as protein and produce.”

Designing for circularity is a core driver for kp, which already produces trays and rigid films with kp Tray2Tray flake and has committed to using 30% Tray2Tray content in all of its products by 2025 as part of its ‘Investing in Better’ sustainability strategy, says the company. The initiative is generating a secure supply of premium closed-loop packaging for packers, processors and retailers that remains fully functional, with exceptional performance in food protection, safety, quality and functionality.

Adam Barnett, food packaging president, says: “Our initiative is transformational, ensuring nothing goes to waste. By building on our relationships in the supply chain we are able to create this pull for pivotal changes towards how our society recycles while driving customer motivation for closed-loop plastic packaging.”

kp is opening up the conversation to the packaging industry to get involved in this change, he adds. It is currently working with several supply partners which have invested in its processing facilities to separate tray flake from bottle flake.

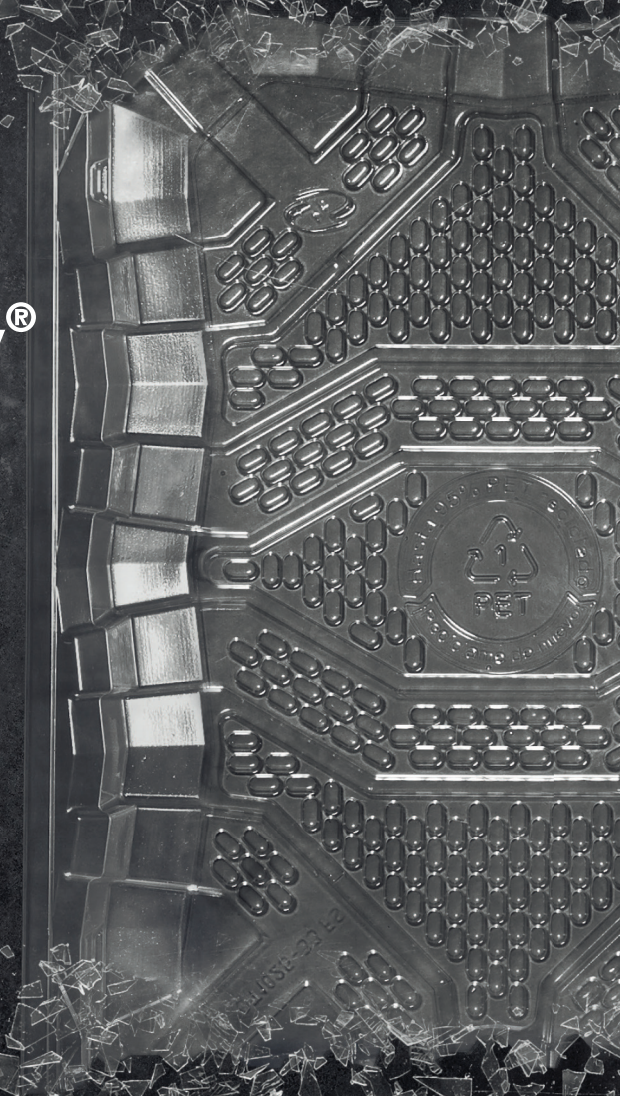


Tray²Tray[®]

Giving trays new life, time and again

Our goal is to revolutionise the recycling of food packaging, committing to a closed loop.

We are on a mission to recover used food packaging and turn it back into more of the same. Thanks to kp Tray2Tray[®], our plastic trays and rigid films can come back time and again as safe, protective, fully recyclable food packaging. The possibilities are endless.



PakTech

Getting a real handle on packaging

DETAILS

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KEY PRODUCTS

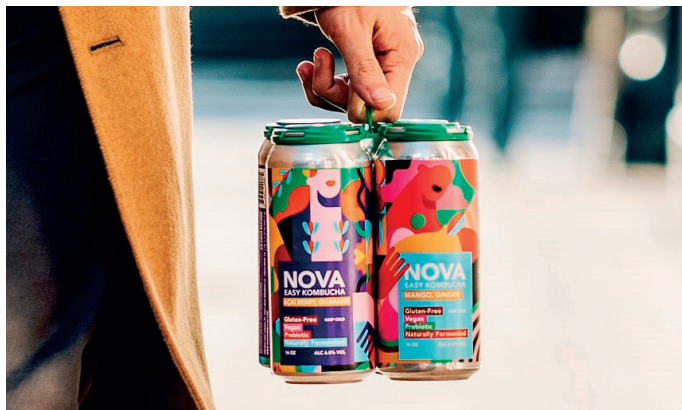
Multipak handles
Can handles
Unipak handles
Handle applicators

“While consumers demand that FMCG companies adopt sustainable packaging solutions, business needs – such as functionality and cost efficiency – must also be met,” says PakTech. “With PakTech, businesses can choose a minimal but mighty packaging solution that does not compromise on design, function or sustainability performance,” it notes.

“Both individuals and brands are adopting a more minimalist approach, from simpler design with sustainability in mind, to travelling with a lighter eco-footprint. This mindful behaviour is at the core of all PakTech handles, which are minimalist yet aesthetic and are designed with fit, form and function in mind. Durable, heat- and water-resistant, protective and secure, they help save costs while reducing waste.”

Pioneer in circular packaging

From the UK's Circular Economy Package to the EU's Circular Economy



“The global shift in consumer mindset for packaging is a reality”

Action Plan, there's a global recognition on the need to transition into a circular economy. In this regard, PakTech is a pioneer, having used 100% recycled HDPE plastic since 2012. The handles are not only recycled but also reusable and recyclable. Aligned in the common vision for a better future, PakTech is ready to deliver to its UK and EU clients who seek the most sustainable and practical packaging solutions available.

PAKTECH HANDLES

- MADE FROM 100% RECYCLED CONTAINERS -



SMART

Attractive & Innovative.
Value Added. Smart Form
& Function. Cost Effective.



SUSTAINABLE

Made from 100% Recycled
HDPE. Repurposed from
Recycled Containers.
Reusable. Recyclable.



SIMPLE

Easy to Apply, Carry,
& Remove. Grab & Go.
Highlight Brand with
Color Accent Handles.

**PakTech has Repurposed a Billion
Recycled Containers into Packaging Handles**



www.PakTech-opi.com

SIG Combibloc

Live life with a 'combismile'

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KEY BRANDS

combismile
SIGNATURE portfolio

Source

¹ Results based on ISO-compliant lifecycle assessment CB-100732c

² International Sustainability & Carbon Certification

As the daily commute and out-of-home activities return, SIG's on-the-go packaging innovation, combismile, offers the perfect solution for busy mobile and environmentally aware consumers, says Norman Gierow, head of marketing Europe at SIG. "Healthy diets and the increased shift towards on-the-go lifestyles mean the demand for nutritious, great-tasting and convenient beverages is set to rise once again," he notes. "SIG's combismile carton offers the perfect lifestyle match for these healthy drinks – easy to open, handle, hold, close and store on-the-go."

"With a curved, modern shape with easy grip corners, combismile offers consumers convenient consumption straight from the pack, thanks to a leak-proof and tamper-evident single action closure, as well as a paper straw option." combismile can also be paired with Signature Full Barrier packaging material, where fossil polymers are substituted with mass-balanced plant-



“combismile offers consumers convenient consumption straight from the pack”

based polymers, reducing the carbon footprint compared to a standard pack¹. Another option is Signature Circular packaging, with polymers 100% linked to post-consumer recycled materials. Both are certified according to ISCC² Plus via a mass-balance system.

combismile is the perfect solution for soft drinks, dairy, plant-based beverages and ready-to-drink tea and coffee.

COMBISMILE GOOD TO GO



Discover the perfect lifestyle pack for your product
Read more: www.combismile.com



Parkside Flexibles

Innovation and support

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KEY BRANDS

Recoflex®
Parkscribe™
Park2Nature™

 Parkside Flexibles prides itself on continually driving innovation and has invested heavily in a complete laboratory and creative suite to support brands seeking speed to market in new product development (NPD), says Paula Birch, global sales director.

“Sustainability, one of the key market drivers, remains key to our R&D efforts, ensuring we meet consumer demands while driving the circular economy,” she says. “We continue to build a comprehensive portfolio of paper and plastic flexible packaging that meets the UK waste directive to reduce, reuse and recycle. Lightweighting where we can, we seek solutions for reuse and refill while addressing the need for flexible packaging to be recyclable, compostable or contain post-recycled materials.

Parkside recently launched a new sustainable packaging portfolio comprising three variations of its Recoflex technology: a high barrier, single polymer laminate, ideal for recycling processes, which can be manufactured from paper, polypropylene or polyethylene. “Our Recoflex solutions can be widely recycled and are suitable for numerous applications, including pouches and flow wraps,” explains Birch.

“As we push towards a circular economy, our flexible packaging alternatives can be used in an array of applications where extended shelf-life through high barrier performance and, in some cases, reclosability are essential. Our leading Parkscribe reclose lidding films manufactured from >30% recycled polyethylene terephthalate are suitable for use on PET trays. This solution is perfect for the packaging of fresh and cooked meats, fruit and vegetables, and a



“As we push towards a circular economy, our flexible packaging alternatives can be used in an array of applications where extended shelf-life through high barrier performance and, in some cases, reclosability are essential”

range of other products. This creates a complete single polymer PET pack ideal for kerbside recycling when still attached to the tray and helping to reduce food waste in the home through the reclose functionality.

Parkside has also invested almost 10 years of R&D into its Park2Nature range of fully accredited home and industrial compostable laminates that retain the pack performance and attributes of standard flexible packaging, reveals Birch. “Parkside’s compostable range has assisted countless brands on their sustainable journey in – but not limited to – coffee, tea, snack and convenience foods.

“Working with niche applications has enabled us to become recognised for our innovation focus and support to our customers in NPD, unlike larger, more commodity-style packaging companies that often focus on volume.”

In the post-pandemic climate, many brands need help to market their products, adds Birch. “Across all our collaborations with brands – regardless of size and budget – we work hard to promote our customer’s product and our packaging solution holistically, with press releases to industry media and social media support to keep pushing the products after their launch.

“We have an exciting project coming in the next couple of months that will propel the business to the forefront of the market. We can’t say too much yet, but keep your eyes peeled.



Advanced Flexible Packaging Expertise



We specialise in the collaborative development of sustainable packaging solutions.

Get in touch to make a start on your bespoke solution...



parkside

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The Box Factory

Boxing clever for 30 years

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KEY PRODUCTS

Transit Packaging
Shelf-ready packaging
Bespoke die cuts
Multi-point glued

 The Box Factory is one of the largest independently owned, high-volume manufacturers of FSC®-certified corrugated packaging in the UK. Celebrating 30 years of trading this year, it has embarked on an ambitious investment programme, which will see capacity increase by over 50%, reveals Neil Price, managing director.

“From a standing start back in 1992, we have grown into a business turning over in the region of £20m – a fantastic achievement,” he says. “We’d like to thank our wonderful long-serving staff (both past and present), valued customers and professional suppliers for their support throughout our journey.”

Investment

“This year will see capacity grow by over 20 million boxes,” says Price. “Our third automated casemaker line is already in place, with capacity for an additional 800,000 boxes per month.

“Later this year we will take delivery of a new rotary die-cutter with the ability to print on both the inside and outside of the box in one pass. The trend for e-commerce boxes and an improved ‘unboxing experience’ has led to more interest in this type of work and we want to be able to produce this in the most efficient way possible.”

Supplying the food and drink industry forms a key part of the company’s growth strategy, he adds. “We continue to show our commitment to the industry through our BRCGS ‘A’ grade accreditation, which we have held since 2015.”

Service

Jamie Wicks, sales and marketing director says: “We offer all the benefits of a volume manufacturer alongside our fully managed stock holding service.



“This year will see capacity grow by over 20 million boxes. Our third automated casemaker line is already in place, with capacity for an additional 800,000 boxes per month”

“From the second half of 2020, there were huge supply chain issues in our industry and this service, along with our cautious approach to accepting new business, has helped protect and insulate our customers from these pressures. With the new manufacturing capacity, we’ve been able to welcome new customers and build new relationships for the future. As an independent company, customers can rely on our personally tailored service to keep their business moving.”

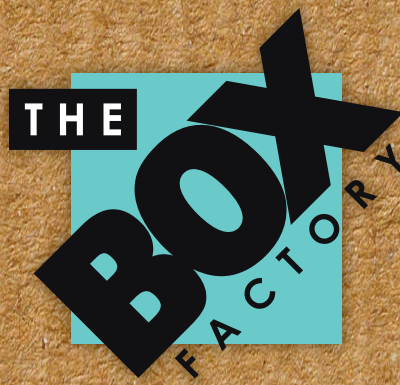
Sustainability by design

The Box Factory certification to FSC has proven to be invaluable in its offer to the customer, explains Paul French, senior designer. “By choosing an FSC-certified product you are supporting responsible management of the world’s forests,” he says. “This message can be clearly communicated via print on the box and is something customers and consumers are increasingly looking for.

“When designing new packaging, the team always keep in mind material efficiencies and environmental impact.

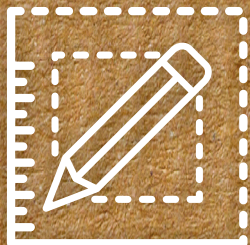
“We have several other initiatives to improve our carbon footprint, including the use of solar panels, and we will soon have news relating to our lorry fleet, so watch this space.”





THE CORRUGATED PACKAGING MANUFACTURER

BESPOKE DESIGN



FSC® CERTIFIED



STOCK & SERVE



TICKING THE RIGHT BOXES FOR 30 YEARS



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responsible forestry
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