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The Grocer Guide to...

The
Grocer

Packaging



Analysis

The heat is on

Pressure from consumers, retailers and regulatory authorities continues to drive packaging suppliers to seek out the most sustainable, but viable, options for their customers – and competition to be first to a breakthrough innovation is growing

With news earlier this year that Coca-Cola had removed labels from its Sprite and Sprite Zero bottles as part of a trial to boost recyclability and the reuse of packaging¹, it's clear that fmcg brands are ready and willing to test out bold new methods to increase their sustainability credentials – even if this means a certain level of risk to shelf stand-out. Food and beverage brands are only too conscious that they must continue to move their environmental stories on – and without greenwashing – as an increasingly aware and critical public votes with its wallet when it comes to sustainable packaging.

Meanwhile, suppliers in the packaging industry are at pains to invest in and discover the next best solution for materials and packs that will balance these sustainability requirements with the ongoing need

for security, longevity and on-shelf standout.

Tetra Pak, for example, is investing up to €100m per year over the next five to 10 years in sustainable solutions, a part of which is in packaging material innovation to help in the transition towards a circular economy, reveals marketing director Berit Hoffmann. The company's ambition, he says, is to deliver the world's most sustainable food package – one made solely of responsibly sourced renewable or recycled materials and which is fully recyclable. "This is a system based on the regeneration of materials and products, and it means building carton packages with multiple lives in mind."

Over the past year, the company has made "significant progress" in increasing the content of recycled polymers, and now offers this as part

of its packaging, covering new formats, product categories and geographies, notes Hoffmann. "This expansion is a key milestone in Tetra Pak's journey towards a circular portfolio, turning waste into new resources, and reducing the industry's dependence on virgin, fossil-based materials."

At Smurfit Kappa, the company's AquaStop water-resistant paper is being used for an increasing number of products, says Phil Barron, multi national account director. "In the last year, we have continued to push the boundaries of what paper-based packaging can do," he says. "Most recently, we partnered with Biobest, a world leader in biological crop protection and pollination, as it was looking for a pack it could use to transport live bumble bees." The solution, which comprised AquaStop



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paper and hexacomb fitments inside, was “a pleasure to work on ... because bees play such a vital role in global food production”, he explains.

Amy Hooper, innovation manager at Biffa, says the company works across the value chain to deliver novel, sustainable solutions that move the industry towards a more circular economic model. “From design to manufacturing, we’re working with customers and partners to increase the volume of products and packaging placed on the market that can be truly recycled, ultimately aiming to recover more, good-quality material in a closed loop system,” she says.

As an example, Biffa has worked with Zotefoams to provide advisory support on the design for optimised recyclability of its packaging material for aseptic cartons, ReZorce. “The packaging is

composed of a foamed mono-material HDPE, and Biffa is currently providing the recycled HDPE content required for its manufacture,” says Hooper. “ReZorce offers the potential for more products, like alternative milks, to avoid multi-layered, difficult-to-recycle packaging and instead, ideally, enter a closed loop system.” With growing interest from several retailers and brands, Hooper adds: “Watch this space for some exciting developments coming this year.”

As the “only system supplier covering carton, pouch and bag-in-box”, SIG’s versatile technology and product innovation capacity enable it to provide solutions across categories and channels, says marketing director UK and Ireland Caroline Barr. Last year, it launched SIG DomeMini, an on-the-go carton bottle, combining convenience

with sustainability, and introduced SIG Digital Printing for aseptic carton packs, without the need for cylinders or printing forms, enabling more flexibility and agility to meet customer demands, she says, also pointing to the company’s “many successful tethered cap solutions” and the expansion of its sustainable SIG Terra packaging material innovations.

Meanwhile, Parkside has invested heavily in its laser scoring technology, Parkscribe, reveals group sales director Paul McKeown. This solution means that, when working with monomaterials and multi-web polymer, the company can process the top and bottom of the web simultaneously, ensuring it can cut highly precise patterns into films without compromising production throughput or product shelf-life. “This helped

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us produce our Popflex solution, a recyclable monomaterial PET film with an integral perforated opening flap, which can be weld-sealed to a matching PET tray, ensuring it stays attached during the recycling process. This means packs can be OPRL-certified as fully recyclable and consumers only need to drop them into their recycling bin at end-of-life."

Parkside also has some exciting developments on a range of high-performance, paper-based solutions that are 100% recyclable, with news on the range launch imminent, he adds.

Pursuing the circular economy

Biffa's research reveals that more than half (51%) of the UK's retail businesses recognise their role in the circular economy, with small retail organisations leading awareness at 61%², says Roger Wright, waste strategy and packaging manager at the company. "Three in five consider the circular economy is important in day-to-day business³.

"The survey explored attitudes towards and engagements with the circular economy. Results revealed that most retail businesses are aware of sustainability and committed to it⁴," he says. "However, 63% of retail businesses consider sustainability to be their least important priority, compared with cost efficiency (92%), revenue growth and brand strength (88%), and data and reporting (82%)⁵.

"Moreover, evidence indicating retail businesses' primary barriers hindering sustainability include cost (48%), competing business priorities (30%) and lack of infrastructure (29%) to implement policies like Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)⁶"

The new [EPR] rules aim to inspire a circular economy for packaging in the UK, he adds. "In time, EPR could facilitate a wider transition towards a carbon-based hierarchy for waste management in a domestic supply chain – an essential step in creating a more sustainable future, as highlighted in Biffa's Blueprint for Waste Net Zero⁷."

When it comes to the circular economy, paper-based packaging can often be one of the 'low-hanging fruit' solutions for companies because of its inherent sustainability attributes, says Smurfit Kappa's Barron. "A box can be

recycled up to 25 times, making it the most recycled packaging material in Europe," he notes. "Total cardboard production in the EU is 32m tonnes, out of which 90% is recycled⁸. We believe the cardboard industry is a front-runner in delivering Europe's green transition with a product that is 100% recyclable, renewable and biodegradable."

Smurfit Kappa replaces the natural resources it needs, uses virgin resources in the best possible ways and reuses whatever it can, he adds. "Our closed loop model starts with 100% renewable, sustainable primary raw materials. This circular approach increases resource productivity, adding to our competitiveness."

Key to achieving a circular economy is tackling waste challenges through the food value chain, from responsibly sourced renewable raw materials to end-of-life management, says Tetra Pak's Hoffmann. "Consumers are

also becoming more environmentally conscious in their choices of food and food packaging, and providers need to stay aligned," he says. The company's carton packages can be recycled where collection, sorting and recycling infrastructure is in place, at scale, he adds. "Across Europe, one of our priorities is to work with governments and relevant authorities to improve the consistency of carton collecting and recycling infrastructure. Last year, we invested nearly €49m to accelerate beverage carton recycling worldwide. Over the short term, this should boost Europe's ability to recycle beverage cartons, including the non-fibre protective layers made from polymers and aluminium."

"Consumer demands and retailer requirements are increasingly driving brands towards solutions that are easier to recycle or compost at home," observes Parkside's McKeown. "So much of our NPD over the last year





AI and digital solutions

At Smurfit Kappa, Barron believes the biggest advantages of AI and digital enhancements is how they make things quicker. The company has been using a 'digital twin' approach in both its paper and corrugated divisions, which enables it to create a virtual representation to simulate performance. "It's a very effective way to reduce risk," he says.

Smurfit Kappa's 'Shelf Viewer' tool shows how products look on the shelf in-store across countries and segments and has amassed over 200,000 images to date, he reveals. "It provides real-life insights as to the 'first moment of truth' and how a pack

will perform on-shelf."

The company has been trialling AI for some time, especially to see the role it can play in running factories in a more energy-efficient way, reveals Barron. It is also looking at machine learning.

With a particular focus on food and beverage manufacturers, the industry took its embrace of digitalisation up a notch in the light of the Covid pandemic, says SIG's Barr. "Digital technology offered a lifeline in terms of helping the industry improve traceability and health & safety conditions.

"Making the digital transformation takes time, effort and patience, but

the benefits are multiple," she notes. "Using AI and even the cloud, producers and manufacturers can better predict upcoming consumer trends, making it quicker, easier – and therefore cheaper – to react to changes in demand. And with greater onus on issues like sustainability and traceability, technology like blockchain can help those in the industry reduce food waste, while improving their carbon footprint. These benefits ultimately apply to everyone involved in the supply chain, from farmers, to factory workers to the end-consumer."

Digital solutions from SIG include its SIG Asset Health

Monitoring, SIG ECS and SIG Line Monitoring, all of which are designed to work in tandem to help manufacturers collect data 24/7 as well as easily understand and utilise it.

According to Parkside's McKeown, generative AI still has a long way to go before it can achieve the kind of bespoke details that the company puts into every packaging job. However, it has adopted digital solutions in its on-site prepress area to ensure graphic designs are faithfully recreated on the press, reducing the need for ink drawdowns and cutting waste. It is also looking at AI-based software to quickly generate detailed mock-up imagery.

has been focused on this. Our Popflex and peel-and-reclose lidding films are huge leaps forward for the industry because they prove that it is possible to create high-performance monomaterial films that are simple for the end-user to recycle when paired with a tray made of the same material. This opens many possibilities for fresh produce, cooked meats, cheeses and more."

However, there is more to sustainability than material choices, he adds. "Our approach considers material reduction, plastic replacement, food waste reduction, recyclability and more, and balances these factors to develop a solution with the smallest possible impact on the environment."

Sustainability commitments are an integral part of SIG's business strategy, says Barr. The company's SIG Terra portfolio, comprising its most sustainable solutions continues to grow, she notes, with SIG Terra Alu-free + Full barrier the latest development

from its innovation pipeline. "It is the world's first full barrier solution for aseptic cartons with no aluminium layer and extends this solution beyond dairy to more oxygen-sensitive products such as fruit juices." For the company's bag-in-box and spouted pouch businesses, the innovation focus is on increasing their recyclability and exploring alternatives to virgin fossil-based plastics, she reveals.

Materials and design

The most exciting innovations can be seen in new material developments driven by brands and retailers looking to make their supply chains more sustainable by closing the loop at end-of-life, says Parkside's McKeown. "The performance of monomaterials has advanced to the point that we can now use them in applications such as condiment sachets, which would have been unthinkable a few years ago due to the demanding performance

requirements," he says. "At Parkside we're at the heart of the drive towards new bio-based renewable materials that are compostable in domestic compost heaps."

Materials made from renewable resources like wood, sugarcane or cornstarch, as well as the replacement of fossil-based materials are seeing a significant push, says SIG's Barr. "In tune with this, minimalist packaging design continues to be popular, focusing on clean lines, simple typography and a limited colour palette.

"Looking at packaging, consumers also want convenience and greater variety in terms of size," she adds. "They are increasingly looking for convenient, resealable packaging solutions, single-serve portions, and easy-to-open packs, catering to busy lifestyles and on-the-go consumption. And they are demanding more transparency from food and drink brands, leading to packaging designs that highlight the product's ingredients,

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sourcing and production processes.”

Packaging is perfectly primed to catch the eye of the consumer, says Biffa's Wright. “Studies” into the psychology behind purchase decisions reveal that aesthetics and feel are key motivators. Consumers may (consciously or unconsciously) seek out a colour and cue associated with a brand or, increasingly, more sustainable materials – such as choosing paper over plastic for their favourite products in-store.”

In terms of recent emerging trends, in materials there is the continued exploration of compostable packaging and finding out for which products and brands it works, he adds. “Packaging that was once full of colour is starting to be stripped back – take the lids of milk bottles, for example – in efforts to make packaging more sustainable. We may even see the complete removal of coloured labels on some products. There's also still a strong trend around paper bottles across an incredibly diverse range of products, whether laundry detergent or whisky.”

The biggest challenge of course is single use, which has a short, one-time lifespan, he notes. “Single use (or containing single use) characterises many types of packaging, in many materials and which can drive up waste – and therefore carbon emissions – as virgin materials are necessary to replace used goods.”

Conscious decisions about packaging material choices can be made today and are key to becoming a more sustainable business, he adds. Using sustainable packaging materials will also prevent consumers from ‘wishcycling’ – where waste is placed in recycling bins incorrectly.

“Simply switching out one material for another or changing the format completely could have a considerable positive bearing on a company's sustainability credentials in the long run,” he says, but advises that companies need to make those changes carefully “because even reusable and refillable formats aren't always recyclable”.

“The food and drink industry needs to reduce its reliance on fossil-based resources, while consumers also want to understand what materials are used in the packaging of the products they buy, with 82% actively trying to reduce



plastic use where possible¹⁰,” says Tetra Pak's Hoffmann. “The average Tetra Pak carton is made of 70% paperboard – a renewable material from FSC-certified forests” and other controlled sources. The rest of the carton package is composed of plastic (25% on average) and aluminium (5% on average). However, plant-based plastics derived from sugarcane can be used instead of virgin fossil sourced materials. Tetra Pak uses sugarcane-based polymers in several carton formats, including the Tetra Rex. These sugarcane-based polymers used in our cartons are Bonsucro certified and are traceable to their sugarcane origins thanks to the partnership with the polymer supplier.”

With an increasing emphasis on

reducing waste and emissions, there has been a trend towards lighter liners, says Smurfit Kappa's Barron. “We also find there are a lot of exciting developments in the area of coatings, which can be an excellent way to extend the properties of paper. “Our AquaStop paper is water-resistant and an excellent choice for packaging which can be subjected to moisture or humidity. We have also successfully used paper as a replacement for gel ice packs, which were used in e-commerce recipe kits.”

Increasingly, paper-based packaging is being used for food that traditionally relied on plastic – for example fresh fruit and vegetables, he adds. “There is also a continuing trend towards stand-out graphics and colours.”



On shelf standout and interactivity

Brands have to work a lot harder for consumers' attention and loyalty, which is why many of them have a digital component such as a QR code, adds Barron. "As packaging contributes to the experience of receiving and unboxing a product, consumers are often encouraged to go on an interactive journey with the brand – and this is increasingly facilitated by social media," he says. "Many of our customers require us to design packaging that provides a seamless shopping experience across multiple channels, rather than having a sole e-commerce focus."

Smurfit Kappa's paper-based detergent boxes have received an overwhelmingly positive reaction, says

Barron. "They have been incorporated using an eye-catching design in line with the customer's brand guidelines to stand out on-shelf," he explains. Several of its "attention-arresting products" included "a dramatic 'Line of Duty' pizza box for Papa John's", he says. Another project example was for PepsiCo's Walkers crisps brand in the UK, where the company designed a paper-based box to replace the bag that its multipacks come in. "By switching to cardboard, Walkers removed 250 tonnes of plastic from its supply chain."

Social media connectivity and QR codes enhance consumer engagement, provide instant access to information and enable brands to collect valuable data, adds Barr. However, packaging design still needs to cater to both online and offline channels, she says. "Key focuses include visual impact, functional and convenient design for usage and delivery, digital integration and sustainability."

SIG has worked with a leading Dutch plant-based food producer HAK, which recently opted for its SIG SafeBloc carton packs – "a more sustainable packaging option than cans or glass jars" – to ensure optimal protection for its pulses products, enabling them to retain high quality over a prolonged period, reveals Barr. "The high share of renewable materials and resource-efficient carton packaging results in a significantly lower CO₂ footprint¹². This means the traditional long-life vegetable aisle, made up of mainly cans and glass is now being disrupted by SIG carton packs, with its many convenience, efficiency and sustainability benefits," she notes.

The increase in smart packaging is an exciting design trend, says Parkside's McKeown. "One example we worked on included a hidden code that could be seamlessly designed into artwork on packs. Consumers can scan these packs with their phones and access specific information, such as recyclability, product authenticity, food chain security and more. As the pack is then connected to GPS via the user's phone, it can even point them towards the nearest recycling facility or other relevant information. These codes can be switched on and off and landing page information can be changed by the customer without having to reprint the packaging."

A view to the future

Tetra Pak's Hoffmann points to the disparate policy and ongoing inconsistency across the UK in how waste is collected and sorted. "Over half of consumers¹³ admit to not always being sure what can be recycled," he says. "In response, Tetra Pak has assisted in the development of the UK Government's proposals to drive better collection and recycling rates, including EPR, a DRS, and the 'Simpler Recycling' policy. Effective recycling of packaging materials will play a key part in the transition towards a circular economy."

At SIG, Barr says that while there will be an ongoing demand for even more sustainable packaging, the key challenge will continue to be balancing this with cost and functionality. She also identifies a "great opportunity to further integrate digital technologies for enhanced supply chain visibility and consumer engagement" but says the challenge will be the investment needed for technology infrastructure, data management systems and cybersecurity measures, and ensuring compatibility across all platforms.

Suppliers agree that changing legislation and uncertainty around regulations like EPR promise to profoundly shake up the market in terms of material availability and packaging design. "In the short term this will pose some challenges as demand for recyclable and recycled content increases, with supplies already stretched," notes Parkside's McKeown. "However, the continued drive towards reduced plastic packaging creates many opportunities for creative paper-based solutions to fill that gap."

However, he adds that a difficult economy could see demand for larger, more cost-effective and reclosable bags and pouches for cupboard staples like pasta and rice, as consumers seek to stretch their budgets but look for solutions to preserve food freshness.

Sources

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- ³⁻⁶ See 2, plus YouGov analysis institute survey of over 1,000 UK business decision-makers
- ⁷ <https://www.biffa.co.uk/biffa-insights/a-blueprint-for-waste-net-zero>
- ⁸ FEFCO, <https://www.fefco.org/lca/>
- ⁹ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/mar.20574>
- ¹⁰ YouGov 2019, <https://tinyurl.com/3yw8bzh2>
- ¹¹ The FSC licence code for Tetra Pak is FSC®C014047
- ¹² Based on the results of a comparative ISO-compliant, critically-reviewed LCA on retort food carton vs other substrates
- ¹³ Euromonitor International survey 2023

Biffa

What if waste wasn't wasted?

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KEY SERVICES

Waste prevention and
reduction solutions
Waste collection and
management solutions
Recycling and recovery
process management
Recycling and
recovery products

“Last year Biffa recycled over 10 billion plastic items into high-quality flake and pellets,” says Roger Wright, waste strategy and packaging manager. “Although well known as one of the UK’s top recyclers, there are some things you might not know about Biffa.

“Last year we: trialled AI sorting at one of our recycling facilities; supported smart barcodes on packaging to trace the waste journey; began upcycling our diesel refuse vehicles to electric powertrains; helped a high street baker find a recyclable baking paper; supported John Lewis on a new recycled kitchenware product line; trialled reusable pint glasses at football matches with Greene King; and even provided the compost for the toilets at Glastonbury festival.

“We also helped thousands of manufacturers and retailers prepare for and manage new regulations including Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging and Plastic Packaging



“Biffa helps businesses understand and manage the materials flowing through their operations”

Tax (PPT),” he says. “As the UK and devolved governments’ resources and waste strategies roll out, the regulatory landscape will see further change, so having the right partner to support through this transition is critical.

“Biffa continues to find new ways to reduce waste and recycle more. We help businesses understand and manage the materials flowing through their operations.”

what **iff** business challenges became dinner solutions?

Last year, we prevented over 40,000 tonnes of surplus food from going to waste. That’s thousands of great quality meals our Company and Community Shop members bought at massively discounted prices. It’s what we do. Helping local communities and businesses by unlocking value from surplus that would otherwise end up in the bin.

Change begins with what iff...



Watch our film to find out more

Biffa

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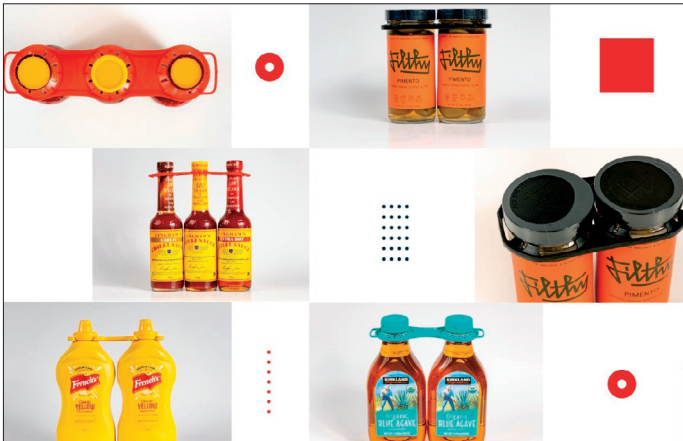
KEY BRANDS

Multi-Pack handles
Can handles
Bottle handles
Handle applicators

“European consumers have higher expectations than ever before when it comes to packaging, from sustainability and comfort, to function and aesthetics,” says PakTech. “Meanwhile, businesses need cost-effective solutions that meet logistical needs. With PakTech handles, meeting multiple demands has never been easier. Thanks to our client-centric and eco-friendly approach, European FMCG businesses see PakTech as a versatile partner that meets their requirements.”

With over 30 years in the secondary packaging space, PakTech has perfected its approach to custom solutions. “We look at each product’s weight, shape, primary packaging, function and visual identity,” it says. “If existing designs don’t fit your needs, our design team quickly create a custom digital design that can be turned into a prototype.”

“We manufacture with 100% recycled HDPE, and have saved more than 21 hectares of land from turning into



“With our handles, juggling multiple demands has never been easier”

landfill waste, and kept over 61m kg of plastic out of landfills and oceans. The handles themselves can be recycled and their lightweight and compact design reduces carbon emissions in transportation.”

“We’re excited to partner with UK and EU businesses seeking sustainable automated handle applicators that meet their every need.”

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PakTech has repurposed over a billion milk jugs into packaging handles



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Colour Accent Handles.



View all of our Handles & Applicators
www.PakTech-opi.com

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KEY BRANDS

Parkscribe™
Popflex™



As concerns around our climate continue to grow and the cost-of-living crisis means businesses have to maximise their ROI from material investments, flexible packaging is an increasingly attractive solution.

"Parkside is known for its range of award-winning paper, plastic and foil flexible packaging solutions, designed with sustainability in mind," says the company. "But did you know we're experts in almost every flexible packaging application? We create materials suitable for everything from flow wraps to bags, sachets, stick packs, pouches, lidding films, and much more.

"Smooth, consistent print runs across our fleet of high-quality wide web HD flexo printing presses are supported by our patented ParkScribe™ laser scoring system and precision slitting capability, enabling us to meet clients' exact specifications. And our award-winning NPD department brings your ideas to life in our innovation suite.



"We're experts in almost every flexible packaging application"

"Popflex™, the latest innovation from our NPD team, is a game-changing recyclable PET lidding film with an integral, laser-perforated easy-open flap. It's designed to be weld-sealed to a matching PET tray, so it stays attached through the recycling process. So, the whole solution can be OPRL-certified as recyclable, as all the consumer has to do is drop it in the recycling bin."

Think you know Parkside?

From flow wraps, bags, sachets and stick packs to pillow packs, pouches, lidding films & more...

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Award-winning NPD, with state-of-the-art customer innovation suite



Precision slitting to bespoke specs



Market leading laser scoring & Perforation

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SIG Combibloc

SIG: Sustainably designed

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KEY BRANDS

**SIG Terra Alu-free
+ Full barrier**
**SIG Terra Alu-free
Tethered Cap**

Source

¹ Based on the results of a comparative ISO-compliant, critically reviewed LCA: sig_lca_signature_230522_final-report_incl_appendixes_v2_incl_criticalreviewstatement.pdf
² 63% lower than SIG's standard packaging materials, achieved by linking the polymers to 100% renewable forest-based materials via a certified mass-balance system

Striving to provide the most sustainable food and drink packaging on the market, SIG led the industry with the first ever aluminium-free solution for aseptic cartons in 2010. In the past year, on top of the successful UK launch of its SIG SwiftCap Linked tethered caps, SIG has introduced its groundbreaking SIG Terra Alu-free + Full barrier – the world's first full barrier packaging material without aluminum layer for aseptic carton packs. This further extended its range of lower carbon packaging materials without an aluminium layer to both high- and low-acid products.

"Offering a product shelf-life of up to 12 months, this innovation gives consumers the confidence that the high quality of their product will be maintained, and offers an even more sustainable carton pack that is fully recyclable," explains Caroline Barr, marketing manager UK & I at SIG.

SIG Terra Alu-free cuts the carbon



"SIG Terra cuts the carbon footprint of SIG's standard packaging material by up to 63%²"

footprint of SIG's standard packaging material by 23%¹. SIG Terra Alu-free + Forest-based polymers takes this one step further, offering a 63%² lower carbon footprint than standard.

SIG is committed to developing a full-barrier alu-free aseptic packaging structure with at least 90% paper content by 2030. Its higher recyclability strategy aims to help customers to reach their own sustainability goals.

Be more sustainable. Be alu-free.

SIG Terra Alu-free Full barrier has been developed to offer enhanced sustainability with the same barrier properties of a standard aseptic carton



Exclusive packaging structure with no aluminium layer

Lower CO₂*

Providing full barrier to oxygen, light, water vapour and aroma

Also available with materials which are 100% forest-based**



*Indicative result, based on ISO conform SIG internal simplified LCA tool for SIG MiniBloc 200ml sleeve without closure for an EU average, cradle to gate vs. a standard structure with an aluminum foil layer. ** Via mass balance.

Smurfit Kappa

First-class customer support

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KEY PRODUCTS/SERVICES

Paper-based packaging
Displays
Bag-in-Box solutions
Paper and board
Recycling

2023 was a very successful year for Smurfit Kappa, says Phil Barron, multi national account director. “We recently released our second-best set of results in our 90-year history and reported revenue of €11.3bn,” he reveals.

“Our team of designers delivered an array of innovative and sustainable packaging solutions for our customers. The paper-based dishwasher tablet pack we designed for a leading provider of own-label consumer goods has a significantly lower carbon footprint than the previous plastic version.

“During the year we also expanded our Design2Market Factory – a facility that enables customers to test and adapt their packaging on a small scale before market launch. So far, we have launched many solutions including a replacement for shrink-wrap and a range of e-commerce packs.”

Positive performance on all levels

Smurfit Kappa provides a holistic service, notes Barron. “More than 65,000 customers trust us globally to provide solutions that perform on all levels – from protecting the product throughout even complex supply chains, to increasing brand awareness and reducing their carbon footprint.

“We employ an end-to-end approach to innovation when designing grocery packs, using an extensive set of packaging tools, including software which recommends the most suitable composition of paper for the job at hand and a system that calculates the exact strength required for a pack. Our database contains more than 8,000 packaging designs, many of them patented, which have been proven to outperform across sectors.

“Customers benefit from our scale and 90 years of experience, and know their sustainability goals will be supported alongside creating a positive experience for their own clients.”

The company has strong, long-term relationships with its customers, enabling it to anticipate and answer their packaging challenges. “We can also tap into the big data gathered from our analysis of over 110,000 supply chains,” adds Barron.



“More than 65,000 customers trust us globally to provide solutions that perform on all levels – from protecting the product throughout even complex supply chains, to increasing brand awareness and reducing their carbon footprint”

“Our ‘Shelf Viewer’ tool is invaluable as it provides real-life insights on how a pack will perform on-shelf across countries and segments. Meanwhile, the ‘Shelf Stacker’ tool ensures our retail packaging works hard both on pallets and on display. And our network of 29 Experience Centres globally allows customers to test our tools and interrogate our packaging’s capabilities.”

Smurfit Kappa’s integrated business model guarantees supply and operational excellence, giving it a competitive advantage, he adds. “From the making of the paper, through to the box manufacturing and recycling, customers can avail of a truly closed-loop service when they partner with us.”

“In 2024, we plan to continue making significant progress towards achieving our environmental goals and advancing our customers’ performance through the inherently sustainable nature of fibre-based packaging.”

In September 2023, Smurfit Kappa announced an agreement to combine with Westrock to form Smurfit Westrock, a global leader in sustainable packaging with unparalleled scale, quality, product and geographic diversity.

Leading the field in sustainable solutions.

From our ground-breaking, compostable AgroPaper™ to our recyclable, biodegradable crates and punnets, Smurfit Kappa helps you get your produce from the farm to the table sustainably.

› Find out more at smurfitkappa.com

**Better Planet
Packaging**
 SmurfitKappa

PAPER | PACKAGING | SOLUTIONS

Tetra Pak

Innovating for tomorrow

DETAILS

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KEY BRANDS

Tetra Rex® plant-
based carton

➡ Tetra Pak was born in the 1950s in Sweden from a simple yet revolutionary idea — to create a packaging solution that could make milk safe and available everywhere. It not only transformed the dairy industry but also had a massive impact on food packaging around the world.

Fast-forward to now and Tetra Pak stands as a global leader, known for its dedication to sustainability and innovation within the food and beverage industry, says marketing director Berit Hoffmann. “This led to the creation of the plant-based Tetra Rex carton, using sugarcane-based polymers instead of fossil-based plastic, marking another milestone in the company’s remarkable journey¹.”

Hoffmann highlights the company’s motto, ‘Protects What’s Good’ – a principle guiding its strategy to increase access to nutritious food, reduce food waste, build sustainable food supply chains, and continue to innovate in packaging while keeping environmental stewardship in focus. “Our objective is to positively impact our climate and resources,” she says, noting the company’s dedication to reducing the environmental footprint of its products and services.

The Tetra Rex plant-based carton is emblematic of this commitment. Made from certified renewable materials, it is composed of paperboard from FSC-certified² forests and other controlled sources, as well as sugarcane-based polymers, which are Bonsucro-certified. The sugarcane-based polymers are also traceable to their sugarcane origins, thanks to the partnership with the polymer supplier. “This carton is a significant step towards our renewable goals,” says Hoffmann.

Tetra Pak is also pivotal in advancing food packaging and processing. “Our aim is to lead the shift in decarbonising food systems and ensuring they are increasingly resilient,” she adds, referencing the company’s engagement in initiatives like the Global Dairy Processing Task Force.

Additionally, Tetra Pak is investing up to €100m per year over the next five to 10 years in sustainable solutions, including



“Our aim is to lead the shift in decarbonising food systems and ensuring they are increasingly resilient”

packaging material innovation to help in the transition towards a circular economy. In the last year, the company has increased the content of recycled polymers and now offers this as part of its packaging, covering new formats, product categories and geographies. In 2024 it will invest heavily in increasing carton recycling capacity, helping to transform used beverage cartons into new products.

Hoffmann concludes: “At Tetra Pak, we’re not just envisioning a circular future; we’re actively building it. Our goal is to increase paperboard and fibre usage in our cartons and replace fossil plastics with plant-based alternatives. Our packaging innovations empower consumers with the information they need to make an informed choice, in turn helping to drive sales.”

Through these efforts, Tetra Pak is demonstrating how the company’s vision of ‘Protecting What’s Good’ extends beyond its products.

Source

¹ <https://www.tetrapak.com/about-tetra-pak/who-we-are/heritage>

² The FSC licence code for Tetra Pak is FSC® C014047.



Tetra Rex[®] cartons are fully renewable and made from responsibly sourced materials.

Manufactured with paperboard from FSC[®] certified forests and other controlled sources, with polymers derived from Bonsucro certified sugarcane.

Make an informed choice, consider Tetra Pak cartons for your chilled dairy products.

<https://www.tetrapak.com/en-gb/campaigns/UK-dairy-package>

The FSC license code for Tetra Pak is FSC[®] C014047
www.bonsucro.com



Tetra Pak[®]
PROTECTS WHAT'S GOOD

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