

Finding a Cost-Effective Poly Replacement for Packaging

The Move to Eco-Friendly Packaging

Over the past several years, businesses across multiple industries have taken a growing interest in environmental sustainability. The packaging industry plays a critical role in this movement, as packaging is often the first thing a customer notices about a product. As such, companies are tasked with reconciling environmentally-conscious material selections with cost-effective production.

Petroleum-based plastics, though affordable and easily sourced, are nearly impossible to recycle, The Guardian recently explained; they litter the Earth and pollute oceans forever without biodegrading. Instead, packaging companies must seek out alternatives to create more sustainable solutions. Even candy manufacturers are now looking for eco-friendly wrappers, using wood-based materials and non-toxic ink to create a compostable solution.

Replacing PVC and Plastics in Packaging

✘ Recognizing this shift toward sustainability, Sierra is seeing a growing opportunity to replace polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and other harmful plastics with greener, biodegradable package made with paper. This is especially relevant to blister packaging; because it cannot be recycled due to mixed material limitations, the packaging tends to wind up in landfills.

PVC and low-density polyethylene (LDPE) resins, found in many of today's packages, are neither recyclable nor biodegradable due to their use in a package design. When exposed to high temperatures, these wrappers can also release toxic fumes and dangerous chemicals into the environment.

Plastics, which for many years held the advantage over paper for being heat sealable, have finally met their match. Sierra has developed innovative paper-based blister pack technology to reduce or replace PVC, LDPE, and other harmful plastics commonly used in packaging structures.

These paper-based recyclable coatings provide protective features that can compete with traditional packaging – but without the negative side effects. Both environmentally friendly and affordable, Sierra's blister packs can be heat sealed while still allowing products to biodegrade much more easily. These state-of-the-art "green" coatings can be used to design packages that reduce PVC or replace poly coatings.

Creating a Cost-Effective Poly Replacement

Many companies are seeking affordable poly-replacement materials that will allow their packages to biodegrade, allowing them to position their products

as environmentally friendly. For decades, this was a high-priced specialty order, but now Sierra is working on closing the gap on cost-effective poly replacements with paper-based packaging like blister packs.

Until recently, green packaging solutions only existed on a small scale due to relatively higher costs compared to polys. As more brand owners respond to customer desires for an environmental solution, innovation has created alternative options that are reducing costs. Sierra continues to source and test these innovative coatings to drive this technology into the mainstream.

To learn more about the benefits of blister packages, as well as what to consider when designing them, download our eBook, "Critical Elements of Blister Packaging."

