

How Major Retailers are Redefining the Sustainable Packaging Game

As consumer preferences continue to shift, with more people seeking eco friendly, sustainable packaging in the products they buy, some of the world's biggest retailers are taking note. Both Walmart and Amazon, for instance, have launched comprehensive packaging sustainability initiatives.

Walmart's Packaging Scorecard

Just over a decade ago, Walmart introduced their proprietary Packaging Scorecard to companies throughout their supply chain.

RELATED: Biodegradable vs. Compostable vs. Recyclable – How to Choose the Right Packaging

Working with guidelines established by the Packaging Sustainable Value Network, a group of leading companies in the packaging industry, Walmart's Packaging Scorecard identified nine key metrics to consider when designing and creating eco friendly packaging:

1. Greenhouse gas/CO2 generation per ton of packaging produced
2. Material value
3. Product-to-package ratio
4. Cube utilization
5. Transportation
6. Recycled content
7. Recovery value
8. Renewable energy use
9. Innovation

Each of these environmentally relevant metrics is represented as a percentage of 100 possible points for rating existing packaging, developing new packaging, and comparing one's own environmentally friendly packaging solutions to those of other companies.

Walmart doubled down on their sustainable initiatives in 2016 when they released their Sustainable Packaging Playbook – which focuses on optimizing packaging design, securing sustainable material sources, and supporting recycling – to help guide companies toward methods for improvement.

Amazon's Certification Guidelines

Walmart is not alone in recognizing the importance of sustainable packaging, both for the environment and manufacturer ROI. In 2008, Amazon, the world's largest online retailers, introduced their own eco friendly packaging initiative, the Frustration-Free Packaging Program.

Frustration-Free Packaging takes a more consumer-oriented approach – its main goal is to ease “wrap rage,” the frustration that consumers often feel when faced with excessive amounts of packaging materials or difficult-to-open designs.

The program aims to drastically reduce the number of boxes used in shipping, as well as packaging materials in general, such as clamshells, wire ties, and plastic bindings. By putting a focus on material reduction and recyclability, Frustration-Free Packaging is also eco friendly packaging.

Taking the Eco-Friendly Packaging Leap

Manufacturers large and small, and from all types of industries, are increasingly adopting the sustainable packaging requirements set into motion by mega-retailers like Walmart and Amazon.

These practices are often considered to be cost-ineffective for manufacturers, but with the right amount of research and analysis, environmentally friendly packaging practices can actually lead to significant cost savings.

Have you been considering making the switch to eco friendly packaging? Download Sierra Coating Technologies’ free eBook, **“Taking the Eco-Friendly Packaging Leap,”** to learn how to take the first steps and explore the unique benefits of various types of packaging, such as recyclable and compostable. Or, to discuss your unique packaging needs with an expert, contact the team at Sierra today.

Download the eBook

The Rise of Single-Serve Food Packaging

As consumer preferences shift and technologies advance in both the food and beverage and the food packaging industries, smaller-sized packages are becoming more popular. Thanks to an increased focus on health, convenience, and environmental sustainability, single-serve and miniature food packaging solutions are in high demand.

RELATED: Taking the Eco-Friendly Packaging Leap

With consumers now placing more importance on dietary intake – having a better understanding of what they’re eating and how much they should be eating – single-serve packaging is becoming the go-to choice for many health-conscious consumers.

Ease of use is another factor; in today's fast-paced world, consumers desire portability, the ability to eat on the go, kid-friendliness, the ability to meet TSA regulations, and so on.

And finally, as environmental and sustainability concerns mount, steps are now being taken to reduce the risk of food spoilage while minimizing waste.

Companies Driving Demand for Single-Serve Food Packaging

The fast food industry has long depended on miniature packaging for on-the-go, portable condiments, salt, pepper, and other items. More recently, changes to kids' meals, such as the inclusion of fruit as a side-dish option, are necessitating new miniature packaging solutions.

Traditional retail food producers are also beginning to require single-serve food packaging solutions. Yogurt and beverage producers are introducing portable standup pouches, while producers of items like jam and nut butters are increasing the number and variety of single-serve cup options. Companies in the spice industry are also expanding their product offerings to include individual and premeasured retail options.

Meal-kit services like Blue Apron, Plated, and HelloFresh are some of the largest – and newest – drivers of the single-serve trend in food packaging, as these companies depend on miniature and single-serve packaging to effectively portion out ingredients for consumers. Using this type of packaging for meal-kit services allows for optimal portability and intuitive consumer use.

How Companies are Meeting the Demand for Single-Serve Packaging

✖ Food and food packaging companies are now pursuing various methods to meet consumers' desire for conveniently packaged food. The specific solutions used, however, depend on the food product itself.

For instance, creating snack-sized packaging – or “snackifying” products – is an increasingly popular technique.

Snack-style packaging designs can be used for a range of products, such as single-serve spices and condiments for at-home use. This type of packaging is novel, convenient, and can help with portion control for consumers with health and dietary concerns.

Nutrition information labeling is also becoming more and more important; in addition to meeting FDA labeling guidelines, food packaging must also appeal to consumer sensibilities – a recent report showed that 61% of grocery shoppers believe that reading food packaging labels is an important step in maintaining health.

The “rightsizing” or downsizing trend in food packaging makes it easier for

consumers to portion control and understand the nutritional value of the foods they're purchasing.

Because producing miniature and single-serve packages inevitably increases the volume of packaging material used and ultimately disposed of, many companies are also focusing on environmentally friendly packaging initiatives.

To reduce waste and meet the growing consumer demand for sustainable business practices, many food packaging companies are offering compostable and even biodegradable packaging products, which are commonly produced using polylactic acid (PLA) based materials.

Partnering with an Experienced Contract and Toll Manufacturer

As demand rises for convenient, sustainable, and healthy food options, food and beverage producers and packaging companies are consistently working on innovation solutions to meet those demands.

To do so, companies often must partner with experienced contract or toll manufacturers; these experts can offer a wide range of services to help food-industry and food-packaging businesses create reliable miniature and single-serve packaging products.

Sierra Coating Technologies is proud to provide industry-leading contract and toll manufacturing services for the food packaging industry. To learn about the cost-saving benefits of working with a contract manufacturer, download our free eBook, "The Financial Case for Contract Manufacturing."



3 Ways Industries Are Using Paper Lamination

Manufacturers have been using the process of lamination globally for over a century. One of the earliest variations of this process comes from the French chemist Edouard Benedictus.

In 1903, Benedictus accidentally coated a glass flask with a plastic compound; when the flask fell to the ground, the chemist was shocked to see the glass merely shatter and not break.

This concept behind laminated glass paved the way for several innovations from industrial manufacturers—including those in the paper industry. The modern applications for paper lamination are very distinctive.

- ***Enhanced product protection.***

Laminations are ideal for creating a protective layer against substances such as water, oil, or grease; and is a common requirement in food and beverage packaging.

To ensure products remain sterile until they are ready for use, a vapor barrier—a thin, impermeable coating—can be used in conjunction with various laminates to keep moisture and oxygen out of the packaging.

- ***Security from counterfeiting.***

Paper manufacturers often use specially colored laminating adhesives as a security measure against counterfeit ticketing. When a laminate-treated ticket is torn, the unique color is clearly visible, signifying the ticket's authenticity. These specialized tickets are resilient enough to withstand contact with water and mild bending.

This practice is used with many types of tickets, such as those for sporting events, musical performances, and even public transportation.

- ***Light “Block Out” Barriers.***

Some laminations are used to create an inside adhesive layer able to block the transmission of light. This “block out” coating is popular for many products that need to keep light from showing through the other side.

These products include advertisements (aisle signs or those found in store windows), trading and playing cards, photographic light boxes, and many others.



Learn About Our Paper Lamination Services

At Sierra Coating, we have over 20 years of experience providing customers with consistent, high-quality laminated paper products. In addition to being ISO, FDA, and NSF compliant, our products and services are versatile enough to meet the requirements of any application.

For more information on the extensive lamination services we offered, please contact Sierra Coating today