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PLUS:

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## ➔ Cover story

Necco's reclosable stand-up pouch for Sweethearts gives this American icon a new and dynamic shelf presence.

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#### Ice River springs for a new bottling line

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# Cashing in on recovery



A number of economic indicators are now suggesting that a recovery is indeed under-way. So it's not a bad idea to ask the following question: What regions are poised to recover fastest and what opportunities will their recovery present to U.S. manufacturers of packaging machinery?

Most observers see China as ready for a rapid recovery. Some are even saying that "recovery" isn't the right word because the recession that hit so much of the world so hard missed Asia for the most part. According to **packwebasia.com**, Asian packaging markets are "booming once again, reaching pre-crisis growth rates of 8 to 13% throughout the region."

Stuart Hoggard, the publisher of **packwebasia.com**, wonders why U.S. manufacturers of packaging equipment have historically been so slow to establish a presence in Asia. "The Germans, the Swiss, the Italians, and even the Spanish machine manufacturers have been all over Asia like a rash," Hoggard tells me in a recent email exchange. "But the U.S. presence has been very low key. Is this a cultural isolationist thing, or does the prospect of having to set up an infrastructure seem too daunting, or is it that there is a fear of having their IP copied?"

Chinese manufacturers of packaging machinery, on the other hand, have become anything but low key when it comes to establishing a presence at packaging shows outside their national borders. After attending a number of packaging shows in different parts of the world—from Fispal in Brazil to Koreapack in Seoul to a small regional show in Indonesia—Hoggard has noticed that Chinese exhibitors have been front and center. And their presence, he notes, has been characterized by a slick professionalism that was conspicuously absent from China's showing just a few years ago at interpack 08.

Hoggard's observations about the presence of the Chinese at recent trade shows around the world prompted me to ask my friends at Messe Düsseldorf, sponsors of interpack, for the number of Chinese exhibitors we can expect to see when interpack 2011 opens May 12 in Düsseldorf. Here's what I learned:

- interpack 2005 drew 22 Chinese exhibitors occupying 5,296 sq ft
- interpack 2008 drew 97 Chinese exhibitors occupying 16,609 sq ft
- interpack 2011, as of January 31, has 140 Chinese exhibitors occupying 27,986 sq ft

Another perspective on China and its ability to make and market packaging machinery comes from IMS Research, a consultancy based in the UK with offices in, among other places, China. Due to what it calls "huge internal demand and investment," IMS Research expects to see a rapid increase in Chinese machinery production in three industry sectors: medium- and small-scale agricultural machines, material-handling machinery with a high performance-price ratio, and low-end food and beverage machinery. According to IMS Research, "With the increasing numbers of the middle class and the wealthy in China, IMS Research notes the demand not only for basic machinery with a high performance-price ratio but also for advanced processing and packaging machinery."

IMS Research's Wilmer Zhou, market analyst in the Industrial Automation sector, admits that China's ability to produce advanced packaging machinery is still down the road a bit. But manufacturing of packaging machinery that is not in the advanced category, says Zhou, is expected to show a compound annual growth rate of 22% for 2009-2014. It's worth noting that IMS Research pegs the CAGR of Chinese machinery production overall for the same five-year period at 17%.

Sooner or later, Chinese packaging machinery manufacturers will spend less time copying the designs of western OEMs and will engage in the kind of R&D that will permit them to make advanced packaging equipment of their own. In the meantime, U.S. OEMs already capable of making advanced packaging equipment would do well to explore sales opportunities in China. If that's where packaging markets are "booming," as Hoggard puts it, then maybe that's where U.S. packaging machinery manufacturers need to have a more noticeable presence. **PW**

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## Nestlé to describe how it wants packaging machines programmed

➔ If optimizing manufacturing operations is anywhere on your list of things to do, be sure to attend the sixth Packaging Automation Forum April 26 in Chicago. Sponsored by *Packaging World* and sister publication *Automation World*, this unique event features peer-to-peer education about how to increase productivity, flexibility, and performance using state-of-the-art packaging controls and information technology.

Professionals from Nestlé, Frito-Lay, Kraft, Rich Products, and other leading companies will be presenting at this year's event to demonstrate how emerging technologies are optimizing manufacturing and packaging operations. Nestlé's Bryan Griffen, electrical and automation engineering group manager who is based at Nestlé headquarters in Vevey, Switzerland, is sure to command the attention of the audience at this event. He'll be describing a significant change in focus now underway at the world's largest food and beverage company wherein packaging line efficiency is being carefully examined to see how it might make a better and more consistent contribution to the bottom line. Right in the middle of this entire initiative is PackML, or, as it is more officially known, the ISA-TR88.00.02 PackML Standard.

"We've come to realize that in order to improve the bottom line, in

order to drive effectiveness and efficiency in our operations, we need to take a more active and direct role in defining what packaging equipment should look like," Griffen tells *Packaging World*. "We want to make it clear that on the process side of things, where we own the technology, we will continue to be very dogmatic about whom we will use for process automation and how it will be used. But when it comes to packaging,

it's the OEMs who build the machinery, not us. We are now saying look, we'd like you to use this international standard called PackML. We'd like to implement PackML in a way that lets us do two things. First, connect your machine with someone else's machine in one of our packaging lines. And second, get information out of our packaging machines and into our MES systems so that we have better business visibility. We have several approved PLC suppliers you may use. Just make sure that you implement it with PackTags according to the PackML State Model. Our goal is to avoid exorbitant integration costs and to avoid

having systems that don't let us move data readily into the MES layer."

To learn more about the Packaging Automation Forum and the half-day training session covering Make2Pack and the Connect-and-Pack standards, visit [www.packworld.com/paf](http://www.packworld.com/paf). The early bird registration ends March 25. —Pat Reynolds

## PACKAGING AUTOMATION FORUM 2011

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## New compostable snack bags are easier on the ears

➔ Look out Frito-Lay! Boulder, CO-based snack food manufacturer Boulder Canyon Natural Foods may have cracked the compostable snack chip-package challenge. The company has launched a 7.5-oz compostable bag for five varieties of its All Natural Kettle Cooked Potato Chips that boasts the look and feel, as well as the sound, of its former, petroleum-based film bag, but contains more than 90% renewable material.

"It functions exactly as our standard package in terms of freshness, shipping/portability, retail presentation, etc.," says Boulder Canyon senior vice president of marketing Steve Sklar. "In light of all the 'noise' associated with the SunChips bag, it's perhaps important to note that our compostable bags feel and sound very similar to our standard packaging."

Bag film, selected by Boulder Canyon and its converter, Genpak (www.genpak.com), is 3.25-mil NatureFlex™ NKM from Innovia Films (www.innoviafilms.com). The high-barrier metallized film is made from wood pulp and is certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute to meet ASTM 6400 standards for compostability. Innovia reveals that the film's "exceptional" barrier properties—a big selling point for Boulder Canyon—are enhanced by a small addition of polyvinylidene chloride.

Says Sklar, "We've been talking about compostable packaging for years because it fits our corporate values, and we feel it fits the interests of our consumers. Ultimately we weren't willing to sacrifice the taste or freshness that are the core of the Boulder Canyon brand, and the technology didn't exist until recently."

Film for the chip bags is printed by Genpak using seven-color (CMYK + RGB) Opaltone® technology. The process, which eliminates the need for spot colors and reduces the frequency of wash ups, is said to reduce solvent usage by up to 40%. During packaging, the converted film is run on a variety of form/fill/seal machines and performs "very similar to the noncompostable material," Sklar relates.

As for cost, while raw materials for the compostable bag are more expensive, Sklar says that Boulder Canyon has managed to reduce the cost per ounce so that it is now on par with the cost of its standard, 5-oz bags.

Boulder Canyon introduced the new bag in several test markets in spring 2010, with a full release last fall in retail stores including Whole Foods and some Safeway locations. Concludes Sklar, "We're optimistic that we'll have the opportunity to put more of our snacks in this new bag, but ultimately consumer interest/demand will drive that process." —Anne Marie Mohan





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## What's New

[www.packworld.com](http://www.packworld.com)

### Tuna cans open with ease

➔ Jealsa, the leading Mediterranean fish canner, is relaunching its oil-based tuna product using PeelSeam™ peelable ends.

The ends are supplied by **Crown Food Europe**, a business unit of Crown Holdings, Inc. ([www.crowncork.com](http://www.crowncork.com)). The new metal cans address the growing demand for more convenient product access, offering enhanced packaging openability for consumers. Jealsa is incorporating Crown's PeelSeam peelable end on its 150 mm x 65 mm cans for the tuna product line it supplies to Mercadona, Spain's leading retailer, under the Mercadona's Hacendado brand. The decorated can also features a reclosable plastic lid to facilitate reuse.

"Using Crown's peelable easy-to-open end has enabled us to offer a new level of convenience on larger can sizes, ideal for families, caterers, and even hotels," says Carmen Calvo, a spokesperson from Jealsa. "Crown provided strategic guidance and support throughout the project to ensure smooth delivery to Mercadona."

Crown's PeelSeam peelable ends consist of a thin flexible foil heat-sealed to a rigid steel ring for conventional double seaming onto standard containers. No adjustment to tooling or seaming processes is required. The end enables consumers to open the metal package smoothly, easily, and safely, crucial in an industry where convenience is key.

The latest family of PeelSeam peelable ends—now including 65 mm (211), 73 mm (300), 83 mm (307), 99 mm (401) and 150 mm (600) diameters and also rectangular ends—is compatible with Crown's steel and aluminum stylish bowl-shaped cans, standard three-piece cans with volumes up to 2 kg, as well as nonround cans. The ends are suitable for both processed foods such as fish, ready meals, vegetables, or desserts and nonprocessed dry foods such as milk and coffee powder. —**Pat Reynolds**



### 'Third moment of truth' among Landor's 2011 packaging trends

➔ In 2011, expect packaging to become more sustainable, incorporate recent technological advances, and feed into consumers' desire for their purchase to serve a greater purpose, predict Wendy Hunt and Anne Reid, two packaging trends forecasters at **Landor Associates** ([www.landor.com](http://www.landor.com)).

Hunt and Reid predict that:

- More brands will make possible a third "moment of truth"—the capability for consumers to reuse packaging. This follows the first moment of truth—packaging's marketing impact on the store shelf—and the second moment of truth—packaging's functionality at the point of use. The third moment of truth will bank on packaging's "cool" factor to extend brand messaging beyond the life of the product.
- More companies will pledge to lessen their impact on the environment and will look for innovative ways to do so. For example, Paper Mate recently introduced biodegradable pens with compostable outer shells that break down into organic matter within one year.
- More brands will have purpose to remain relevant on crowded store shelves. They will accomplish this objective by standing for something and aligning their brand promise with the good they do. One example is Procter & Gamble's Tide Loads of Hope program and its limited-edition Tide detergent give-back, in an on-brand way, to the New Orleans community after Hurricane Katrina. The P&G-sponsored initiative, marketed online and through special labels on Tide detergent bottles, resulted in nearly 14,000 washed loads of laundry for 11,000 families. —**Jim George**





# Healthcare Packaging Conference & Workshops agenda takes shape

Registration is now open ([www.regonline.com/HPC\\_2011](http://www.regonline.com/HPC_2011)) for the *Healthcare Packaging Conference & Workshops* event, May 26, 2011 at the Westin Princeton at Forrestal Village, Princeton, NJ. This fifth-annual educational and networking event is hosted by Summit Media Group, publishers of *Healthcare Packaging* and *Packaging World* magazines.

Mike Wokasch, author of *Pharmaplasia* and longtime pharmaceutical industry veteran, will deliver the keynote address, focusing on what today's pharmaceutical manufacturers must do to weather the uncertainties in the healthcare marketplace. As in his blog ([www.PharmaReform.com](http://www.PharmaReform.com)), Wokasch will underscore the need for a financially healthy pharmaceutical industry, and will identify specific actions companies must take to remain prosperous in an increasingly demanding and less-tolerant marketplace.

Returning to the event this year is Mike Drues, Ph.D. and president of Vascular Sciences. His presentation will cover the latest developments in combination products and the FDA, providing industry intelligence and unique perspective.

Continuing on the combination product packaging subject area will be Laure L. Larkin, packaging validation supervisor, Synthes

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## Healthcare Packaging Conference & Workshops

USA, an international medical device company. She will focus on package stability aspects and validation issues.

James Evans, The Novartis-MIT Center for Continuous Manufacturing, will examine packaging's role in transforming pharmaceutical production with continuous manufacturing, describing the benefits this process delivers, including production efficiency, lower capital costs, and minimized waste and energy consumption.

Via several case histories, Russ Napolitano will inform event attendees how to make their brand stand out in the marketplace. Napolitano, vp of strategic development for Wallace Church, a consultancy providing brand identity strategy, packaging, and self-promotional materials, will look at Internet and sampling strategies, focusing on packaging structure and graphics.

Also watch for three special insights from Euromonitor pertaining to consumer behavior trends and insights, pharmaceutical trends and intelligence, and a look at healthcare and pharmaceutical statistics and trends.

Event updates will be posted as they become available at [www.healthcarepackaging.com/conference](http://www.healthcarepackaging.com/conference). — *Jim Butschli*



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Processing & Packaging Machinery Association

## Snack bags' single graphic message signals cholesterol reduction

Consumers are paying more attention to what they eat, and packaging can play a big role in helping steer them to health-conscious products. Great on-pack communication involves more than just the label, however. It extends to the graphics as well.

Corazonas Foods Inc., Los Angeles, offers a recent example of how

this works in the snack aisle with redesigned packages for its Corazonas line of kettle-cooked chips and oatmeal squares. The product family's main selling benefit is reduced cholesterol, achieved by using plant sterols. Food and Drug Administration guidelines say that a daily intake of at least 0.8 g of plant sterols may reduce LDL cholesterol levels by 5% to 14%. One Corazonas serving provides 0.4 to 0.8 g of plant sterols.

Pillow bags across the Corazonas product family signal this benefit by anchoring a colorful illustration of a large heart in the center of the bag, supported with the tagline, "Love Your Heart, Love the Taste." Mouth-watering product photography ties into the tagline's taste message. The bags are a three-layer construction of oriented polypropylene, metallized polyester, and polyethylene, along with a special sealant layer to assure seal integrity. A number of suppliers, including **DuPont** ([www.dupont.com](http://www.dupont.com)), provide materials for the bags.

Kent Ervin, a designer at **LeeReedy** ([www.lee-reedy.com](http://www.lee-reedy.com)), which created the package graphics, explains that besides a powerful product-benefit message, the design also manages to make effective use of white space and the heart icon outline to simplify communications.

Printing is done in rotogravure, in six or seven colors. The design is produced on a matte, heavy-gauge, oriented PP film to provide a robust feel in the hand that supports the brand's premium positioning.

Corazonas snacks include five flavors of potato chips, three varieties of tortilla chips, and five types of oatmeal squares. The line is available in supermarkets and specialty stores in the Western U.S. — **Jim George**



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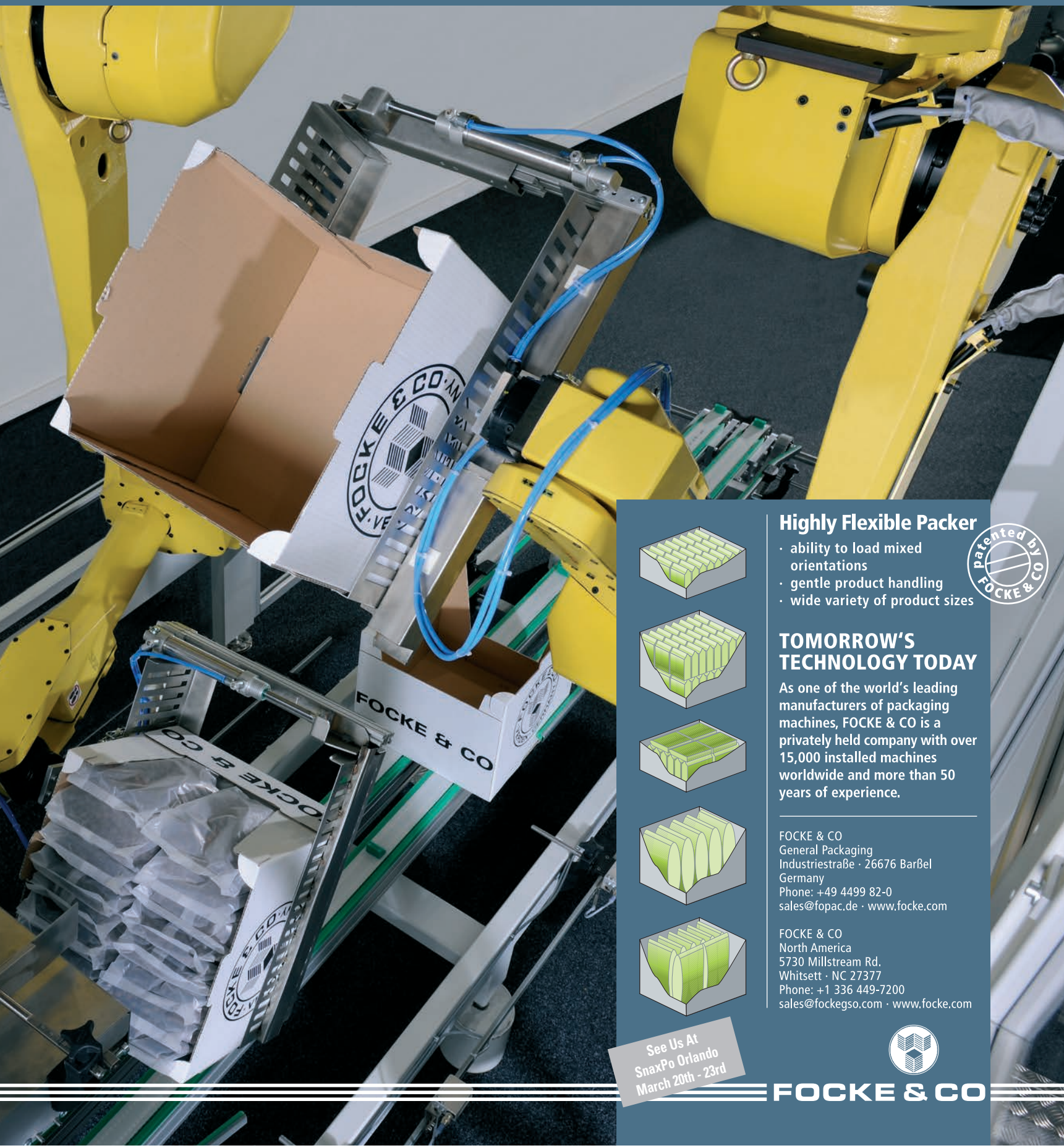
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**Fogg Filler Co.** 616/786-3644

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## Quick-changeover, high-speed tray sealer

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**Heat and Control, Inc.**

510/259-0500

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## Top-loading machine (TLM) line

Schubert's TLM line of packaging machines features fully automatic tool changing and can be changed over to work with different products ranging from chocolate Easter bunnies to yogurt cups in only 4.5 min.

**Schubert Packaging Systems LLC** 972/233-6665  
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## Bulk-bag unloader for combustible input processes

National Bulk Equipment's (NBE) bulk-bag unloader system is designed for use in highly contaminant-sensitive process areas handling bulk materials known to generate combustible dusts.

**National Bulk Equipment, Inc.**

616/399-2220

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## Large-character ink-jet printers

Videojet's 2300 Series of large-character ink-jet printers reduces expenses by eliminating the need for preprinted cases and by providing an alternative to print-and-apply labeling.

**Videojet Technologies Inc.**

800/843-3610

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## Portable RFID reader

Tharo's PR100 portable Gen2 RFID reader features an LCD display and long battery life, and is capable of saving up to 4,000 RFID scans in its internal memory.

**Tharo Systems, Inc.** 330/273-4408  
[www.bit.ly/pw00419](http://www.bit.ly/pw00419)



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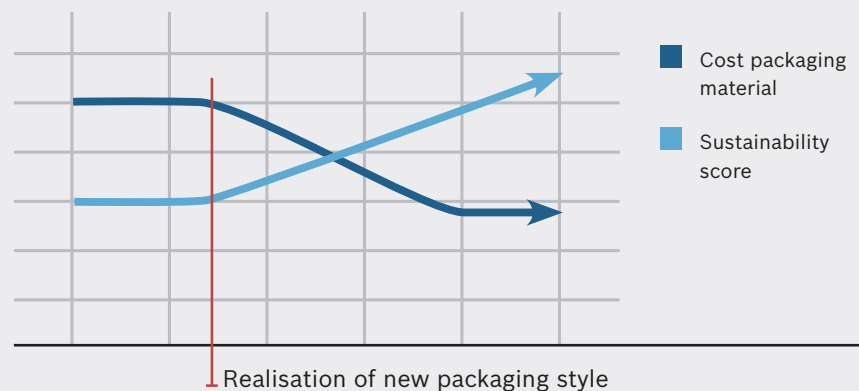


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Value creation of a new packaging style (as seen on the left) and its effects on costs and sustainability score



## Sustainable Retail Ready Packaging

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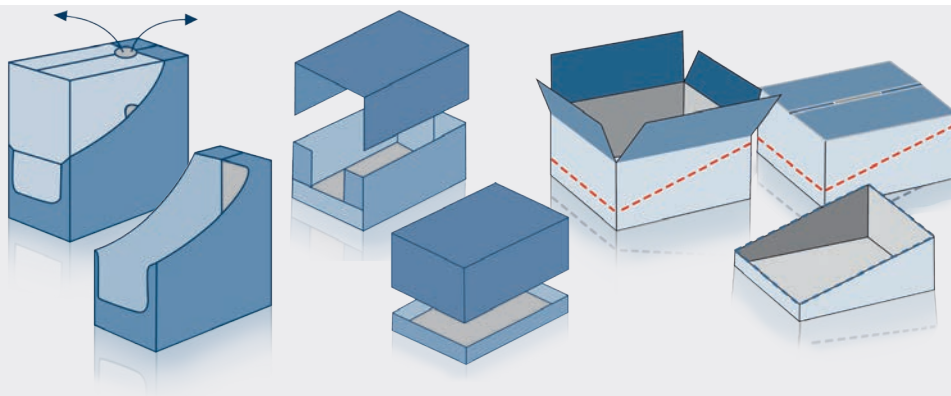
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### Retailers require:

- ▶ Easy identification
- ▶ Easy opening
- ▶ Easy replenishment
- ▶ Easy shopping
- ▶ Easy disposal

**Bosch Packaging Systems offers the know-how in retail ready packaging that you need.**



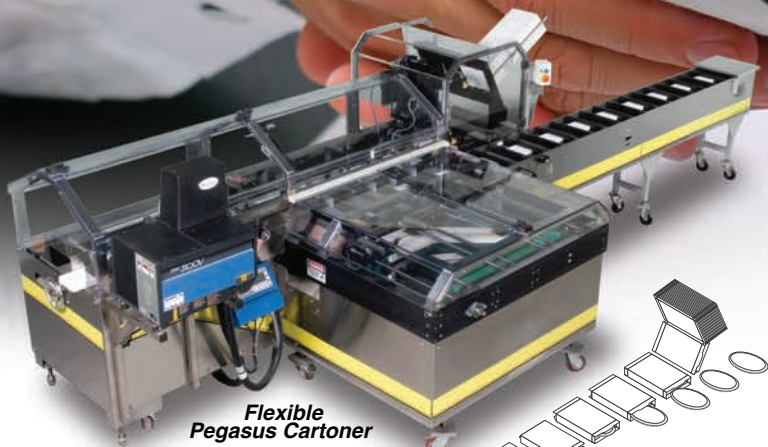
### Benefits of Retail Ready Packaging:

- 1 Improved sustainability score
- 2 Cost savings due to reduction of packaging material
- 3 More efficient logistics thanks to cubic efficiency and easy case handling
- 4 Outstanding product placement at point of sale

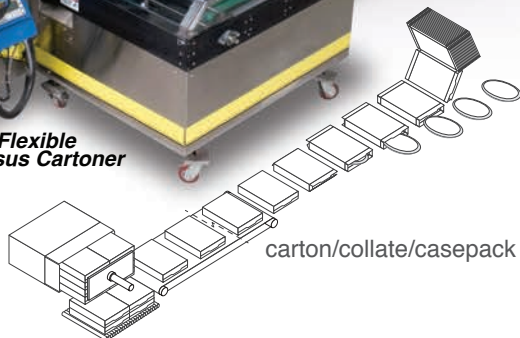
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## Packaging Innovation

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Squid Ink's Vector XII modular ink-jet printing system prints up to 12 lines of code using several different print head combinations.

**Squid Ink** 763/795-8856  
[www.bit.ly/pw00417](http://www.bit.ly/pw00417)

### Flow-wrapper infeed systems

Designed for packaging bakery and confectionery items as well as products in plastic, cardboard trays, and some nonfood products such as pharmaceutical goods, Pack Feeder 4 infeed systems from Bosch Packaging Technology offer a cost-effective, high-performance solution that ensures efficient performance and minimizes downtime.



**Bosch Packaging  
Technology** 715/243-2334  
[www.bit.ly/pw00388](http://www.bit.ly/pw00388)

### Tabletop blister-packing machine

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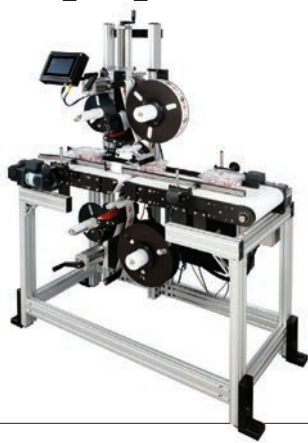


## Equipment

### Top and bottom labeler

EPI Labelers' top and bottom label system labels the top and/or bottom of tub-style containers, cartons, and clamshell packaging neatly and accurately.

**EPI Labelers** 717/235-8345  
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### Printers for retail applications

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**Sato America, Inc.** 704/644-1650  
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### Long-reach SCARA robot

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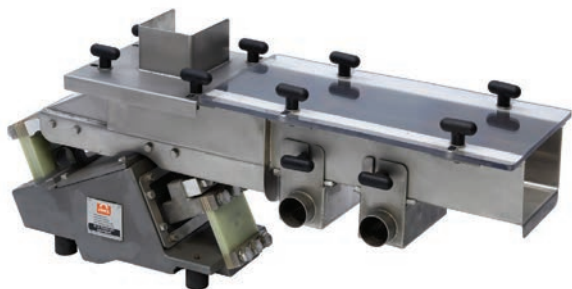
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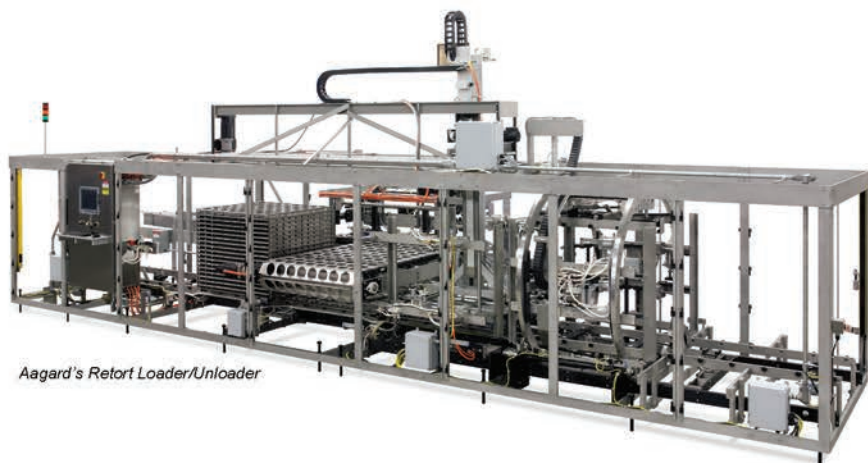
## Electromagnetic screeners provide material separation

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**Eriez Magnetics** 888/800-3743

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Aagard's Retort Loader/Unloader

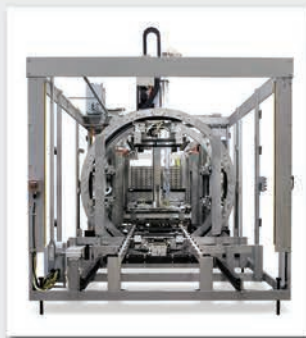
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Aagard's Retort Loading and Unloading modules provide you with a customized solution to your product specifications and production environment. Increase your line capacity and efficiency by automating your retort operation. Aagard's modular designs provide flexibility, innovation, optimization and superior performance.

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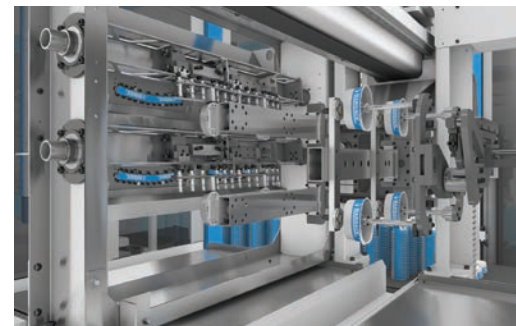
Intelligrated's PLC-controlled Kuka robot for Alvey palletizers offers an alternative to traditional proprietary robot controllers, providing a familiar user-machine interface.

**Intelligrated, Inc.** 866/936-7300  
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## Harnessing digital printing's potential

**Mike Ferrari, president of Ferrari Innovative Solutions LLC and retired from Procter & Gamble as associate director for package development, believes digital printing is ready for a surge in packaging. He discusses why—and the potential roadblocks at CPG companies.**

### **Packaging World:**

**You believe that digital printing is primed for a huge growth spurt in packaging. Why?**

### **Mike Ferrari:**

First, CPG companies need to reignite sales growth. During the last 18 months, we've seen a number of new business approaches that fully leverage digital technologies to engage consumers. Second, product customization continues to accelerate SKU proliferation. Three years ago, the average U.S. supermarket contained 33,000 SKUs. Today, there are 38,000 SKUs. Third, "green" is becoming normal. Several years ago, Walmart issued a sustainability scorecard to CPG companies. Now we are seeing CPG companies bring Walmart's sustainability programs to its suppliers, including printers. Procter & Gamble several months ago announced a long-term set of goals. These are forces that will collectively drive much more use of digital package printing. All of these favor a digital printing supply chain.

### **What types of consumer product manufacturers are positioned to take advantage?**

CPG companies that focus on commercial innovation will find digital printing technology an enabler to engage consumers through new marketing programs. Those that have the courage to embrace disruptive innovation and a willingness to change/streamline their supply chain will be the early adopters.

### **What are the marketing and cost advantages for CPG companies that make the best use of digital printing?**

A successful marketing strategy will focus on the three Es: energizing consumers, enhancing brand image, and executing responsibly. Digital printing will contribute to all three points of this model. Hobby Lobby grew candle sales by 3% with seasonal introductions, while L'Oreal introduced a line of kids shampoo using Toy Story III with digitally printed shrink sleeves.

### **What's holding more CPG companies back from taking full advantage of digital printing?**

I have three observations. First, CPG companies and their agencies lack awareness of what's possible. Second, misperceptions persist of digital printing as inferior. Third, purchasing approaches digital printing for bottom-line savings versus a marketing/design approach investing in packaging for top-line growth —**Jim George**

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# Medical device pathway gets touch-ups

Eric F. Greenberg | Attorney-at-Law



It might soon get easier to be OK with the 510(k).

The very common FDA clearance process for medical devices, called “510(k) notice” after the section of the law, is supposed to be a swift path to market, but it’s not always so.

What’s more, although large swaths of the device industry have been exempted from having to file a 510(k) notice before entering the market, those companies that do have to file 510(k)s will often struggle with knowing exactly what’s expected of them.

More than any other product category The Food and Drug Administration regulates—including food, drugs, cosmetics, biological products and animal foods and drugs, among others—the medical device field includes an extraordinary variety of technologies and purposes. Medical devices encompass items as simple as latex gloves, surgical gowns, and tongue depressors, all the way up to sophisticated electronic diagnostic equipment complete with computer software, MRI machines and artificial hearts and limbs. It is difficult, therefore, to come up with a one-size-fits-all regulatory scheme.

Even the 510(k) process, because it applies to such a wide range of devices, is complex. One indication of the complexity is that when FDA wants to spiff it up, it announces, as it did in January, 25 separate steps it will take, and that’s just for starters.

When a company files a section 510(k) notification to FDA, it is supposed to establish that the new device is “substantially equivalent” to a pre-existing device that is legally on the market, called the “predicate device.” Problem is, it can be difficult to know exactly what else is on the market, and to make judgments about whether your product’s characteristics really are close enough to the other to take advantage of the exemption.

The search for substantial equivalence is an inquiry into facts that establish that your device is at least as safe and effective as the predicate, and though the two devices need not be identical, it’s rarely a walk in the park. An FDA guidance document explains that substantial equivalence “is established with respect to intended use, design, energy used or delivered, materials, chemical composition, manufacturing process, performance, safety, effectiveness, labeling, biocompatibility, standards, and other characteristics, as applicable.”

What’s more, although the conventional wisdom is that clinical trials (experiments in people) are not required for 510(k)s, sometimes they are, and predictability is not always possible. Figuring out if you’d need clinical trials can be important to deciding whether to pursue a new product at all.

For FDA, there has always been a kind of natural tension between its twin missions of, as the agency puts it, “the two public health goals of facilitating innovation and assuring that medical devices are safe and

effective.” For a device maker facing a possible 510(k), there’s always been a natural tension between coming up with a new and different medical device that is worth marketing, while at the same time wanting to fit it into a conceptual regulatory pathway that emphasizes your device’s similarity to prior devices.

Everyone’s job is just made harder when the key concepts involved are hard to interpret.

FDA’s new series of 25 specific actions are intended to implement recommendations made by two different advisory bodies to the agency’s device folks, the Center for Devices and Radiological Health.

And, in a nutshell, FDA does not appear to be fooling around: It announced these 25 actions together with projected dates of completion, all of which are within 2011. Some of them call for FDA to issue industry guidance to improve predictability, some are internal and administrative matters, others are “programmatic and regulatory,” and some are matters on which FDA is asking for some further input on from the government’s Institute Of Medicine.

FDA says it will streamline the “De Novo” process, which itself was supposed to be a streamlined review of low-risk devices. When a new device is found by FDA to be not “substantially equivalent” to a “predicate device,” the law used to say in most cases that that device was Class III, meaning it required a premarket approval, the big, expensive laborious path to marketing. You could petition for reclassification to Class II or I, but after all, what a headache.

Congress changed the law in 1997 and set up a “De Novo” process that, says FDA, “provides a possible route to market low risk device types.” Under this process, the applicant can ask to avoid the premarket approval, with the hope that FDA agrees to put it into Class II or I even though there is no predicate device preceding it. Now, FDA says it plans to streamline this would-be streamlining process.

FDA says it will take a closer look and get more public input before implementing some of the recommendations, including the idea of posting labeling and photographs of cleared devices online.

Public input has been an important part of this process, says FDA, and patterns did emerge from the input. Watch for a public meeting on the measures sometime in April. It commented in announcing its actions, “The recommendations that received strong support generally encouraged increasing the efficiency and transparency of the review process through guidance, enhancing training for CDRH staff and industry, assessing center [CDRH] staffing needs, and improving the quality of the review process and the use of new science by developing better internal business processes and engaging with external experts.”

The device industry hopes the 25 steps lead to an easier path to market for packages of safe and effective new devices. **PW**

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## GFSI and food packaging

Kay Cooksey, PhD

 For those who aren't steeped in GFSI Certification, it stands for Global Food Safety Initiative. It is a nonprofit organization established as part of Belgian law and is being adopted globally as a benchmark for food safety and quality. It is also part of ISO 22000 standards. One of the objectives is to align food safety and quality standards to reduce food recalls and improve food safety and protection through the global supply chain. This standard has been around for about 10 years but is becoming more common in the last couple of years in the United States.

At Clemson University, we've experienced an increased number of food companies requesting information on shelf-life testing as well as performing shelf-life testing. Third-party validation of product shelf life is necessary if companies do not have the facilities for shelf-life testing internally. Another reason for third-party testing is that the results are considered more valid when they come from a third-party test lab, which is apparently a positive for GFSI audits. Since more people are considering doing their own shelf-life testing or looking for a test site, it is a good idea to understand the basics of shelf-life testing in order to know what to ask for and look for in a good test.

Shelf-life testing is a process for food companies that was originally adopted by the medical and pharmaceutical industry. There are several theories of how shelf life should be measured and/or calculated, but the generally accepted method is the Q10 method. This means that for every 10°C incremental increase, the reaction rate doubles. For example, if room temperature is 23°C and the shelf life of your product

at room temperature is 2 years, you could store your product at 43°C for 6 months to validate the shelf life.

One of the assumptions made during accelerated shelf-life testing using the Q10 method is that the reaction occurring is linear (steady

state). This is a safe assumption if the main quality factor being measured is moisture gain or loss, but it's not always a safe assumption if nutritional changes are measured. An alternative to this method is to determine the energy of activation for a given reaction (for example, enzymatic color degradation), determine if the reaction is linear or non-linear, then design the experiment and calculations based on this knowledge. Most companies do not have the time, expertise or lab equipment to perform these experiments. In addition, accelerated shelf-life testing for refrigerated or frozen foods is designed differently than for shelf stable products.

To get the most from shelf-life testing and help fulfill GFSI Certification for your product, be sure you know the following: moisture content, water activity, storage conditions, distribution chain, most significant factor for determining end of shelf life, and microbiological considerations. Another important issue is whether shelf life is to be validated using objective (instrumental) or subjective (sensory) methods or both methods. Third-party testing can be a significant investment, but it's necessary if GFSI Certification is being sought. **PW**

Kay Cooksey (kcookse@exchange.clemson.edu), PhD, is a professor and the Cryovac Chair at Clemson University's School of Packaging.



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## LATEST NEWS

### New carton launched for eco-conscious wine enthusiasts

Bota Box, a wine producer of premium 3-L California varietals in Napa, CA, has announced an extension of its environmentally sensitive portfolio with the launch of 500-mL cartons from **Tetra Pak** ([www.tetrapak.com](http://www.tetrapak.com)). Bota Box will roll out its new, vintage-dated 500-mL wines nationwide with four of its most popular varietals: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Grigio, and Chardonnay. Each is priced at \$4.99.



"We take great care in making sure our wines are packaged in environmentally friendly packaging, and in doing so, [we] have received an overwhelming response from our customers," says John Garaventa, senior brand manager for Bota Box. "We knew it was time to push the envelope by bringing something fresh and innovative to quality- and eco-conscious wine enthusiasts. For us, Bota wines in Tetra Pak cartons are a

homerun: quality wine, sustainable packaging, and convenient size."

The 3-L Bota Box—packaged in 100%-recyclable, unbleached, post-consumer fiber, printed with soy-based inks—is already the green choice for wine enthusiasts, according to Bota Box. Lightweight Tetra Pak cartons for Bota 500-mL packs will further those eco-friendly efforts by boasting a smaller carbon footprint than the equivalent amount of 750-mL glass bottles. The alternative packaging and size are said to reduce greenhouse gases by 75% and waste by 50%, cut fuel emissions due to the lighter shipping weight, and are produced primarily from paper, which is a renewable resource.

[greenerpackage.com/node/3445](http://greenerpackage.com/node/3445)

### 61 million tons of trash recycled in 2009, says EPA

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ([www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)) has released its annual report for 2009 on municipal solid waste (MSW) in the U.S., which includes a wealth of information on national recycling and composting trends. In 2009, Americans generated about 243 million tons of trash and recycled and composted 82 million tons of this material, equivalent to a 33.8% recycling rate. Sixty-one million tons of MSW (excluding composting) were recovered through recycling.

The recycling rates of packaging materials were as follows:

- More than 66% of steel packaging (mostly cans) was recycled.
- About 72% of paper and paperboard containers and packaging was recycled, including 81% of all corrugated boxes.
- The recycling rate for aluminum packaging was about 38%, including almost 51% of aluminum beverage cans.
- Around 31% of glass containers was recycled.
- About 22% of wood packaging—mostly wood pallets—was recovered.
- Almost 14% of plastic containers and packaging was recycled, mostly from soft drink, milk, and water bottles. Plastic bottles were the most recycled plastic products. Recovery of high-density polyethylene natural (white translucent) bottles was estimated at about 29%. PET bottles and jars were recovered at 28%.

[greenerpackage.com/node/3473](http://greenerpackage.com/node/3473)

## SOUND OFF!

**The USDA has launched a voluntary product certification** and labeling program to encourage the identification and use of bio-based products. Will this be just one more green label destined to further confuse consumers?  
[greenerpackage.com/node/3424](http://greenerpackage.com/node/3424)



**Rewards, reverse-vending solutions, and greater participation by packagers** will be the key drivers for recycling in 2011, according to one supplier of reverse vending machines. What do you think?  
[greenerpackage.com/node/3435](http://greenerpackage.com/node/3435)

**The lack of consumer composting networks** in most areas of the U.S. is predicted by Freedonia Group to hamper the growth through 2014 of what it terms 'degradable packaging,' in its new study, 'Green Packaging.' What do you see as the future of composting?  
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## FEATURED DISCUSSIONS

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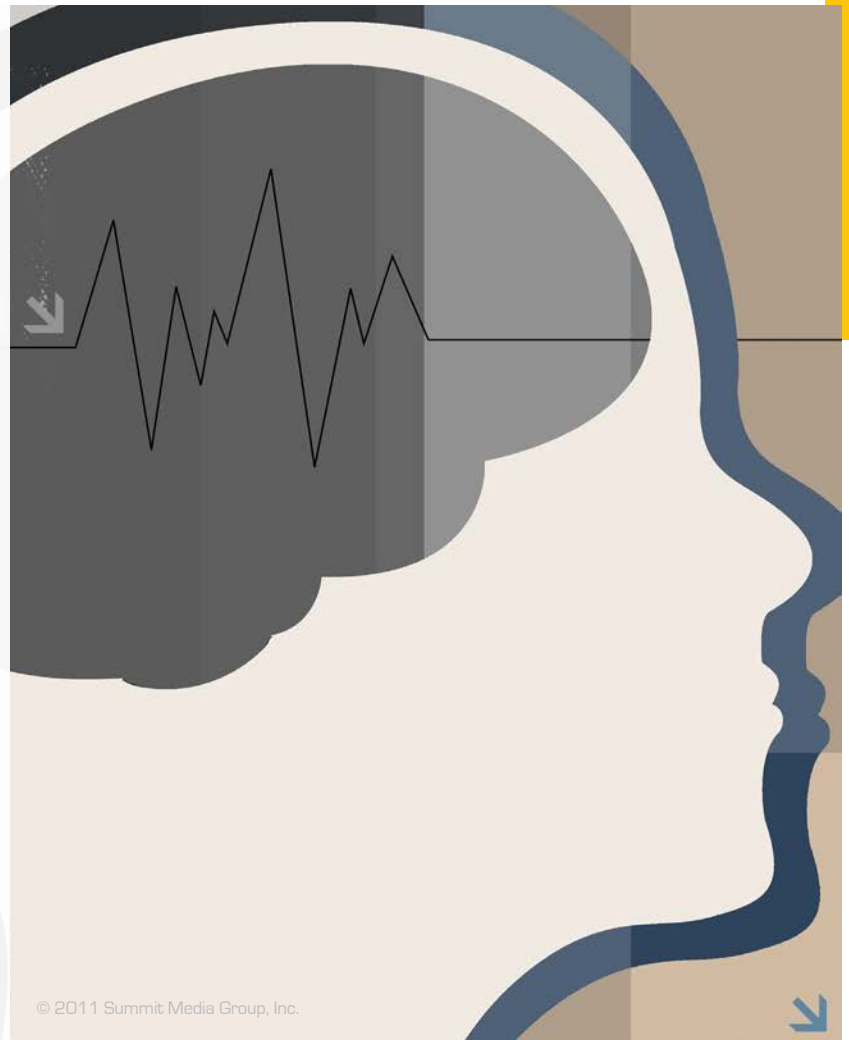
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# Iconic candy meets stand-up pouch

Necco Sweethearts have been an American favorite since 1902, but even the most iconic confectionery can benefit from a packaging upgrade.

## Pat Reynolds | Editor



In the multi-serve 16-oz category, the switch from a lay-flat pillow-style pouch to a stand-up pouch with a reclosable zipper is giving an iconic American candy a whole new shelf presence.

The candy is Sweethearts, made by the Boston-based New England Confectionery Co., better known as Necco.

"Through 2009 and 2010 we reformulated the product itself to give it brighter colors, softer texture, bolder flavors, and new consumer-driven expressions like LOL, BFF, and so on," says Necco brand manager Aimee Scott. "We then realized that with all these great new brand developments to talk about, the lay-flat package we were in offered no real opportunity for brand exposure. We needed a package format that would let us emphasize the Sweethearts brand. That brand identification had never been a communications priority. We wanted

to raise the awareness of the Sweethearts brand, which had gotten overshadowed over the years as people tended to think more in terms of Necco Conversation Hearts than the Sweethearts brand. Think about Pepperidge Farm Goldfish. Everyone knows the Goldfish brand. We want the same kind of recognition for the Sweethearts brand."

**Brigandi + Associates** ([www.brigandi.com](http://www.brigandi.com)) was tapped for the design of the new package, a task that was handled "brilliantly," says Scott. Iris Alicea, executive vice president and creative director at Brigandi, says it was a fun project to work on because it triggered a lot of childhood memories. The challenge was to balance the integrity of the brand that consumers know and love from their childhood while giving the new package a fresh, high-impact look.

"The new package facilitates ease of storage, distribution, and resealability while creating a billboard effect on shelf," says Alicea. "The



brand logos are clearly visible and shopper friendly."

The big, smooth "landscape" on the back of the pouch also provided an opportunity for Brigandi to create an engaging and interactive game on the back panel (see photo below).

The pouch material comes from **FM Packaging** ([www.fmpkg.com](http://www.fmpkg.com)). It's a two-layer adhesive lamination of reverse-printed 48-ga polyester and 3-mil white polyethylene. Flexo printing is done in eight colors. Rollstock is transformed into stand-up pouches on a horizontal form/fill/seal system.

## ↻ ContraCt paCkaging

Like many consumer packaged goods manufacturers with a new package format to try, Necco elected to go the contract packager route rather than install pouch filling equipment of its own. **Ryt-way Industries, LLC** ([www.rytway.com](http://www.rytway.com)) produces both 16-oz pouches of Sweethearts and 14-oz pouches of Sweetheart Dazzle Tarts. "The Tarts have a slightly sassy quality that speaks to 'tweens,'" says Scott. "These are consumers who want to share sweet expressions similar to what are found on regular Sweethearts. But the expressions they favor have a little more punch and are borrowed from what you'd expect to find in text messages or tweets. The flavors, too, are more tart than sweet."

Ryt-way uses a Bartelt RPM hf/f/f system to produce the Necco pouches. Applied on line, the zipper material is from **Zip-Pack** ([www.zippak.com](http://www.zippak.com)).

The suggested retail price for the 16-oz stand-up pouch of Sweethearts is \$2.67. Scott says the stand-up pouch with its re-closeable zipper feature permits a 15 to 25% premium in on-shelf pricing compared to a lay-flat pillow pouch holding the same 16 oz. "Consumers are willing to pay more for a package that communicates value the way this package does," says Scott.

Mass merchandisers like Target and Walmart were

the first retailers to jump on the Sweethearts stand-up pouch bandwagon. "Target was among the biggest supporters," says Scott. But she also notes that a number of grocery store chains are on the list of retailers who are taking shipment of the new package.

"One thing the grocery chains are trying to do is capture purchase occasions from the mass merchandisers," says Scott. "A package like this that generates impulse purchases can help them do that." **PW**

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# interpack 2011: altbier, spargel, and so much more

**It's the largest packaging show in the world and will unveil a number of new pavilions, including a Save Food congress developed in cooperation with the UN.**



Some 2,700 exhibitors from 60 countries are expected to be on hand when interpack 2011 opens its doors May 12-18 at the fairgrounds of Dusseldorf, Germany. All 19 halls of the fairgrounds will be filled to capacity with packaging and process solutions for companies in industries including food and beverage, confectionery, baked goods, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, personal-care, non-food consumer goods, industrial goods, and related services.

interpack's status as the leading international packaging trade fair is not only demonstrated by the exhibitors' interest but also by the future-oriented special topics it will address. In addition to Innovationparc Packaging, focusing on Quality of Life, visitors will have the opportunity to experience the first Metal Packaging Plaza and the Save Food special exhibition and congress.

Following the positive response to the Innovationparc Packaging at interpack 2008, visitors at interpack 2011 can look forward to the Quality of Life show, which will be organized in cooperation with the European Retail Institute (EHI), the Pan-European Brand Design Association (PDA), the Zukunftsinstitut (the "future" institute), and representatives of various companies. Quality of Life describes an all-embracing concept directed at the individual with the subthemes of health, identity, simplicity, and aesthetics. These subthemes precisely match the core competences of the packaging industry, as they shape human behavior and hence consumption patterns as well. In the Innovationparc Packaging, best-practice examples of sustainable packages will be presented in a realistic environment. The special show will therefore become a "mall" with a variety of stores, with each store standing for one of the individual Innovationparc Packaging subthemes.

Brand new this year at interpack is the Metal Packaging Plaza. With this debut, interpack is creating a new forum for the international metal packaging industry and its suppliers. The centerpiece of the show will be an information platform providing background data on current industry topics. Around this platform, companies will present themselves and their innovative metal packaging solutions.

The Save Food exhibition and congress will highlight how the individ-



ual links in the packaging value chain—including production, transport, logistics, and retailing—can contribute to solving the critical problem of worldwide food waste. Messe Düsseldorf is working on this special theme in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the trade associations that support interpack. In addition to highlighting the current situation, solutions and concepts will be presented showing how packaging can effectively prevent food spoilage at every stage from production to consumption. Before the start of interpack 2011, the FAO will prepare three studies that will be presented on May 16 and 17 during a top-level congress to be held in the Congress Center East at the fairgrounds. Parallel to this, plans are underway to stage an exhibition in the SAVE FOOD pavilion on the interpack exhibition grounds.

As the world's largest international packaging trade fair, interpack 2011 will present innovations for the entire value chain. Three key trends of relevance to virtually all players in this industry have been emerging: sustainability, safety, and convenience. Sustainability is

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*“interpack’s status as the leading international trade fair for its industry is not only demonstrated by the exhibitors’ interest but also by the future-oriented special topics it will address.”*

increasingly becoming a competitive factor. In production, sustainability means taking all possible measures to save energy in the form of electricity or minimizing the required material input. Packaging also provides consumer safety by ensuring the seamless traceability of packaged goods such as pharmaceuticals and food products. In packaging machinery, hygienic design is playing an ever-greater role, focusing on minimizing biological risks during processing and assuring easy cleaning of the machines themselves.

Convenience will be a recurring theme, too, at interpack. Global changes in society, with more and more single-person households and higher percentages of women working outside the home, are resulting in changes in lifestyles and habits. Food-on-the-go products, snacks, or pre-cooked meals are becoming increasingly popular. In addition, the range of available foods is steadily increasing. This trend towards more convenience has been going on for years and the packaging sector has to adjust to it by providing packages that are easy to handle or are smaller in size. For packaging machinery manufacturers, this means rising demand for systems and lines that can process a wide range of packaging styles with quick and easy changes of product, volume, and formats.

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# Tray pack for cheese is brimming with benefits

Consumers are showing a keen interest in this tray-style packaging concept for sliced, shingled cheese. It's all about ease of use and convenient re-closeability.

Pat Reynolds | Editor

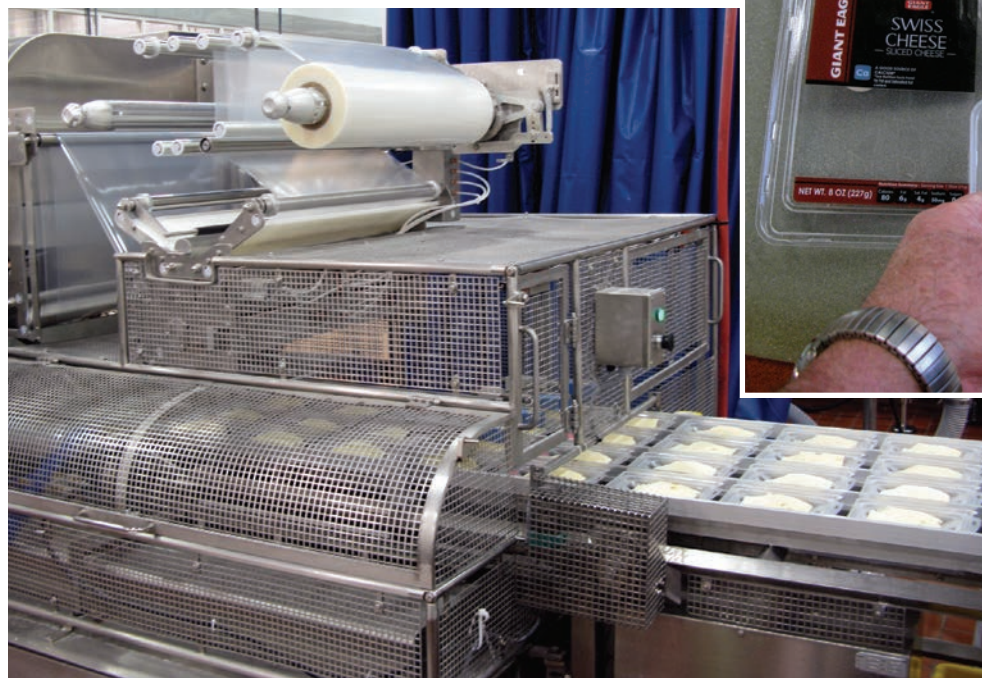


The C-Pak, a three-piece package for sliced, shingled cheese, is helping Great Lakes Cheese Co. win new packaging business, most of which consists of private-label work for retailers who have their own store brands.

The innovative re-closable tray consists of a preformed bottom and lid that press together with a friction fit. Between these two parts is a clear flexible film that gets heat-sealed to the inner flange of the tray before the lid is pressed on. The consumer removes the snap-fit lid, peels away the flexible film lidding, extracts as many slices as desired, and then re-closes the package by snapping the lid back in place.

Slicing, shingling, tray loading, and tray sealing are all done on automated systems. GLC chooses not to identify the name of the slicing machine. But tray sealing and application of the snap-fit lid are done on a Mondini system from **Harpak-Ulma** ([www.harpak-ulma.com](http://www.harpak-ulma.com)). Tray de-nesting is also done automatically on a machine that sends trays

to the infeed of the tray-sealing system. The tray de-nester is also a Mondini machine from Harpak-Ulma. In fact, Harpak-Ulma handled the design, installation, and integration responsibilities for the entire line from beginning to end. Placement of the cheese can be seen in Figures A and B on page 41. The cheese is conveyed forward in 10-slice stacks that are in a 4x4 pattern (**Figure A**). The preformed trays, meanwhile, are conveyed into position beneath the conveyor holding the stacks



**EASY-PEEL FILM.** An easy-peel film (above) holds the modified atmosphere inside, while a friction-fit lid provides re-closeability. Evacuation, backflush, film lidding, and application of the friction-fit lid are all done on one system (left).



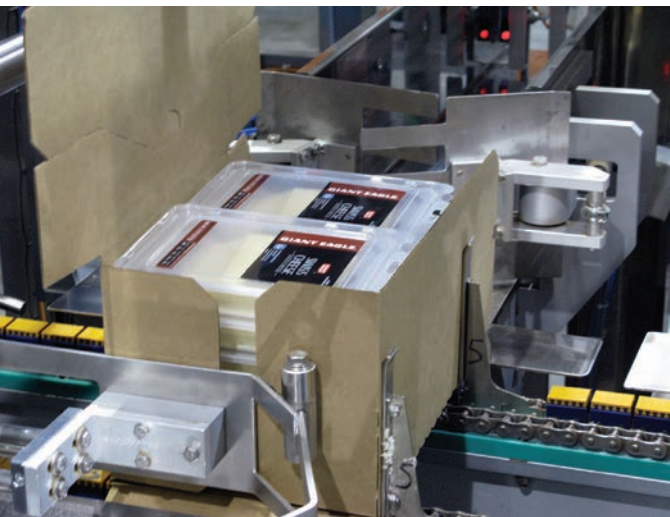
of cheese. As the conveyor holding the cheese retracts, each of the 16 stacks of cheese slices drops a very short distance into the trays (**Figure B**). Then the cycle repeats itself.

The trays move next into the evacuation/backflush chamber of the Mondini tray sealer. A mix of nitrogen and carbon dioxide helps give the cheese a six-month refrigerated shelf life. Also assisting on the shelf life are the packaging materials used, all of which come

trying to access the cheese from the side, you can extract one piece cleanly and conveniently without touching any other pieces."

Armstrong says the concept of the shingled slices of cheese in a rigid tray as opposed to a flexible zippered package is popular in Europe and has been for at least the past five years. But usually the packaging

→→→ p. 40



**WRAPAROUND PACKER.** Two stacks of six trays each are collated and ready for insertion into a wraparound case.

from **Winpak** ([www.winpak.com](http://www.winpak.com)). The tray, chiefly polypropylene, is thermoformed from a coextruded sheet that includes an oxygen barrier layer. The flexible film lidding material is a multilayer coextrusion that also includes an oxygen barrier layer. The snap-on lid is thermoformed of high-impact polystyrene.

Once the flexible film lidding is applied, the trays move next into a station where the preformed HIPS lids are automatically applied to the trays. Unlike most such applications, where the lid is snapped onto the tray flange, in this case the lid is snapped into a channel running around the perimeter of the tray. This patent-pending closing concept from Harpak keeps contents fresh and moist longer than conventional sliced cheese packaging formats.

#### ➔ One Of a kind?

According to GLC package engineering manager Stew Armstrong, GLC is the only user of the C-Pak at this point in time. It was designed to meet a number of objectives, he says.

"Sliced cheese is usually sold in a flow wrap with a zipper along the side. When you go to get a piece of cheese out of that package, you can't really do it without handling most of the other slices. With this package, because the lid is removable and you're not



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consists of a rigid tray and peel/reseal lidding with no rigid lid like the GLC pack has. This certainly works well enough, but the tendency in Europe is to have just five slices of cheese in these packs.

"We have 10 slices in our packs," says Armstrong, "and the peel/re-seal just doesn't hold up to the amount of re-sealing that has to be done with a 10-slice pack. The snap-fit lid does. So we took the tray concept popular in Europe and improved upon it to meet the needs of the U.S. marketplace."

Sealed, lidded trays emerge from the Mondini system four across. A gating mechanism creates two lanes from four, and each lane leads to checkweighing, metal detection, labeling, and date-coding. The checkweighing and metal detection are done on a **Mettler Toledo Safeline** ([www.us.mt.com](http://www.us.mt.com)) system. An **Accraply** ([www.accraply.com](http://www.accraply.com)) top-and-bottom pressure-sensitive labeler puts an attractive label bearing store brand information on the lid of the tray and an informative label with nutrition facts and other data on the bottom of the tray. An ink-jet printer from **Videojet** ([www.videojet.com](http://www.videojet.com)) applies the date code on the side of each tray.

Once trays get past labeling, the two separate streams are merged back into one for transfer to case packing.



### ➡ Retail-Ready

Trays of cheese are placed into retail-ready cases supplied by **Georgia Pacific** ([www.gp.com](http://www.gp.com)). "It's a wraparound case that's perforated so that the top and side can be ripped off and the whole retail-ready unit of 12 can be placed on the store shelf," says Armstrong. "Here again is where this C-Pak format is so much better than the wallet-style package made of flexible film. While the C-Pak stands up and displays beautifully in the retail-ready corrugated, it can also be hung on a peg or stacked flat in a well."

Case erecting and case packing are done on a Model FW749 wraparound system supplied by **CAMA** ([www.camausa.com](http://www.camausa.com)). Its conveyor connections and sweep arms take trayed cheese on a forward, left, forward, left, forward trajectory. Just ahead of the actual case packer is an infeed stacker from CAMA that pivots up and down to stack trays six-high in a flighted conveyor that moves perpendicular and to the left of the infeed stacker. A sweep arm pushes two stacks at a time at a

**P-S LABELER.** This p-s labeler applies an information-rich label to the bottom of each tray and a brand-oriented label to the top.

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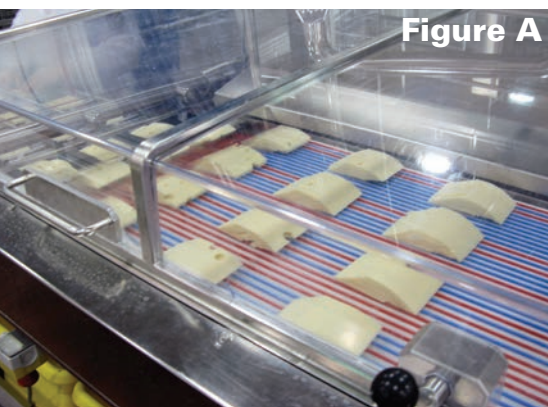
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**Figure A**



**Figure B**

INTO TRAYS. Stacks of cheese in a 4x4 pattern are conveyed into position above the thermoformed trays (A). As the conveyor holding the stacks of cheese retracts, each stack drops into a tray (B).

right angle so that a second sweep arm can push the 12 trays of cheese into a case that's been pulled from a magazine feed and erected. From there the cases are pushed forward so that flaps can be folded and adhesive applied.

Cases exiting the CAMA system receive two identical labels: one on the side and one on the trailing edge. A print-and-apply labeler from **Weber Marking Systems** ([www.webermarking.com](http://www.webermarking.com)) fitted with a **Sato** ([www.satoamerica.com](http://www.satoamerica.com)) thermal-transfer print head delivers these labels with a pair of tamp applicators.



Watch video of this packaging line in action at [packworld.com/video-31255](http://packworld.com/video-31255)

An incline conveyor takes cases to a palletizer/stretch wrapper from **Top Tier** ([www.toptier.com](http://www.toptier.com)). Each time it forms a layer, that layer is lowered onto a stretch wrapper turntable and a stretch film is applied. Armstrong likes the way in which the Top Tier machine builds pallet

layers immediately above the space where stretch wrap is applied because it eliminates the need to have a separate stretch wrapper occupy valuable floor space.

The packaging line viewed during *PW*'s visit to the Plymouth plant was the first of three C-Pak lines GLC now operates. A second one in the Plymouth plant is used to produce 2-lb shingled cheese that is sold primarily through the club store channel. And in GLC's Wausau, WI, plant, another C-Pak system produces 10-oz snack packs of cracker-sized cheese slices in what looks like a "butter dish."

As for the cost of the C-Pak format, Armstrong admits it's a little more expensive. But consumers have shown a willingness to pay a little more for the package because it is so much more practical and convenient. "They also like not having to mess with those bits of white paper that are used to separate slices in the wallet-style packs," adds Armstrong. "With this package, the slices are so easily removed there's no need for the separators." **PW**

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# Maui Brewing gets a handle on growth pains

**The Hawaiian maker of craft beers expects to double production volume in 2011, and a new can carrier applicator is helping to dramatically increase line speed and cut costs.**

**Jim George | Marketing & Design Editor**



Maui Brewing Co. is increasing production line speed a whopping 12-fold and reducing labor-per-unit costs more than 75% while also expanding its distribution reach as consumers with discerning palates continue to discover its selection of craft beers.

The Lahaina, Maui, HI-based brewery is making these quantum leaps with a faster automated filling line and switching to a mostly automated line where distinctive handled ring carriers with dust-cover tops are inserted on its beverage cans. The savings are coming in reduced need for operators, which allows for more unattended run time, and also in streamlined changeover processes that minimize downtime.

With these upgrades, Maui Brewing Founder Garrett Marrero projects that production volume for his craft beers, which includes varieties like Bikini Blonde Lager, CoCoNut PorTeR, and Mana Wheat, will double from 11,000 barrels (2.5 million cans) in 2010 to more than 22,000 barrels (5 million to 6 million cans) in 2011. This will occur as the brewery's distribution expands from Hawaii, Japan, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Colorado to include Texas and Arizona in 2011.

## **➔ Upgrading to 7-stack**

The brewer recently upgraded its filling lines to significantly increase volume. But overall production can only go as fast as ring carriers can be applied to the cans, and this is the latest area at Maui Brewing where the operation is making a quantum leap. The company is upgrading from **PakTech's** ([www.paktech-opi.com](http://www.paktech-opi.com)) single-stack CCA600 carrier applicator to a 7-stack version. In a little more than a year, the operation has gone from manual to one that is able to keep pace with the markedly faster filling-line speeds.

"We're the guinea pig for PakTech's 7-stack," Marrero says. "We were the first craft beer maker to use their rings, and now we're the first to use the 7-stack."

Guinea pig or not, the operation seems to be running very smoothly, Marrero says. The cans, from **Ball Corp.** ([www.ball.com](http://www.ball.com)), arrive at Maui Brewing, where they are filled on another new piece of equipment at the brewery, a Crown 40-Valve Can Filler from **Bevcorp LLC** ([www.bevcorp.com](http://www.bevcorp.com)), outfitted with an Angelus 61H Can Seamer from



**FILLING THE BREW.** Empty beer cans are filled and sealed at Maui Brewing prior to heading to the carrier application operation (left). Cans of Maui Brewing's Bikini Blonde variety enter the ring applicator lane on the infeed side of the CCA600 machine (below).







**NEWLY PACKAGED.** A freshly completed QuadPak of CoCoNut PorTeR is ready for palletizing, the final step in the packaging operation at Maui Brewing.

**PRO 120L** ([www.pro120l.com](http://www.pro120l.com)). The new setup, installed during 2010, enables the brewery to fill and seal cans at up to 300/min, compared with 27/min on the company's previous canning line. **California Food Machinery** ([www.cfmworldwide.com](http://www.cfmworldwide.com)) provided all can conveyors and the line integration into the carrier applicator.

Filled cans then proceed through rinsing and drying stations, and then pass through an inspection area where fill heights are checked. After passing inspection, the cans are conveyed to an accumulation table that feeds into the CCA600. QuadPaks and 6Paks are completed on the same line, as the brewer's CoCoNut PorTeR is the only product produced in QuadPaks. "The applicator applies whichever rings we put in," Marrero says.

Lightweight, injection-molded, high-density polyethylene (HDPE) ring carriers are top-loaded into the CCA600, and the machine positions the handles onto the beer cans, completing bundling of the multipacks.

One advantage of the machine, as it is set up for Maui Brewing's operation, is that it can be quickly adjusted back and forth between the QuadPak and 6Pak lanes with minimal downtime, says Amie Thomas, PakTech marketing manager.

"There are no change parts, so the operator makes a simple adjustment to be able to run the different pack sizes," Thomas says. "We trained their staff to do this correctly. It is quite simple and intuitive to do."

#### **Dust covers**

The ring carriers, also supplied by PakTech, feature a dust cover designed to keep the can tops clean—a marketing plus for craft beer consumers. These distinctive carriers have been appearing on Maui Brewing beers for several years. Garrett says they are a natural fit for smaller-run craft beers and help give them an edge on shelf from mass-produced brews.



Watch video of this packaging line in action. Go to [packworld.com/video-31160](http://packworld.com/video-31160)

"They look better, the cans don't fall out of them, and the can tops stay clean," Marrero says of the ring carriers. "We want to increase the value to our consumers. Craft beer quality caters to a totally different consumer from mass-produced beer, and we believe the packaging needs to be just as high-quality as the beer going inside."

PakTech has been selling the carriers to beverage processors for several years. The company realized that by providing machines to

→→→ p. 44



**READY FOR HANDLES.** A bird's-eye shot shows the CCA600 carrier applicator where QuadPak and 6Pak handles slide down before they are applied to the cans at the end of the machine's production line.

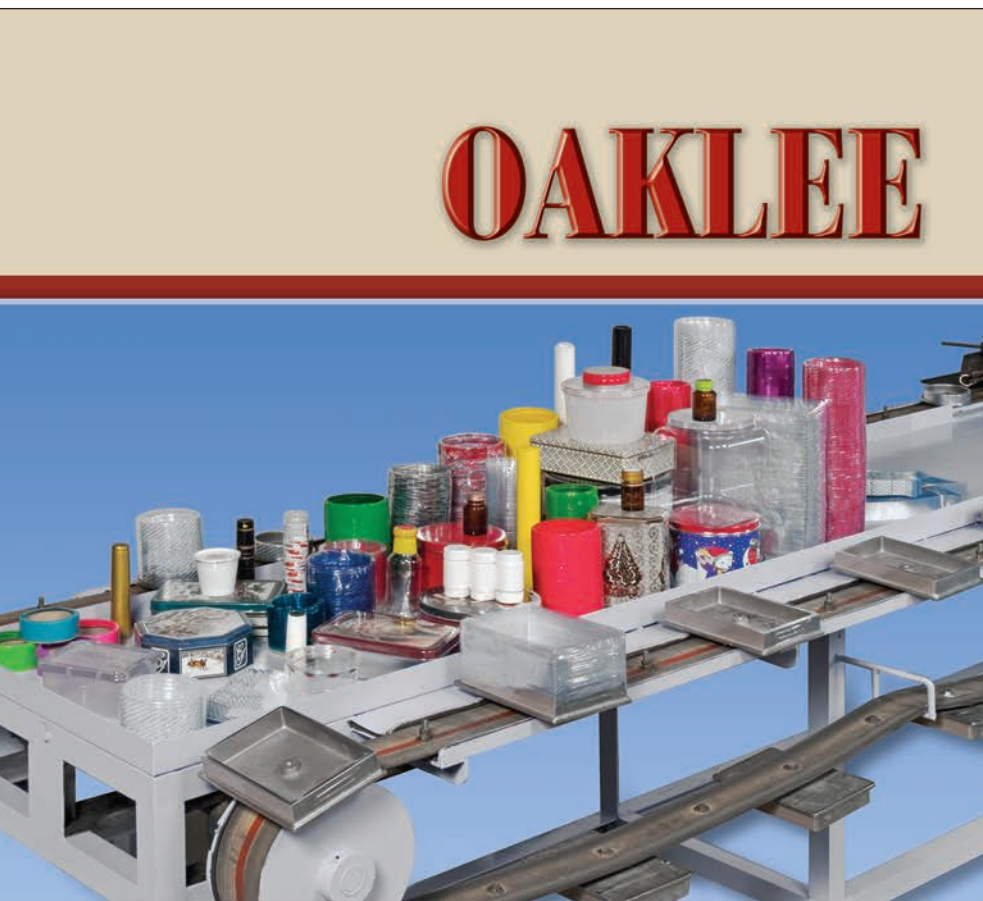
apply them to cans, customers would continue to purchase the carriers.

"Being able to automatically apply the QuadPaks and 6Paks that we make is a way to upgrade their line," Thomas says of Maui Brewing's operation. "On the scale that they are doing, the 7-stack is exactly what they need for their operation. The operator can load the individual queues anytime and doesn't have to wait until all seven queues are empty, so it keeps the machine moving."

By converting to a 7-stack operation, Marrero's crew gains operational flexibility. "With the single-stack, I have a guy running the applicator and doing work elsewhere," he explains. "If he doesn't have to worry about stacking handles constantly, he can focus on other areas."

## On to palletizing

Upon exiting from the handle applicator, the cans head to a bi-directional conveyor, which channels the QuadPaks and 6Paks into separate staging areas, where the multipacks are manually loaded onto pallets. Here, the carrier handles serve Maui Brewing well in another way. The company is a staunch supporter of earth-friendly packaging materials, and the durable carrier handles, besides being recyclable, resist scratches and cuts. That enables the multipacks to be stacked without the need for paperboard inserts, Thomas says. All that's needed are the handles and paperboard corner brackets. The pallets are wrapped three times around in .001-mil stretch-wrap.



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**SPEED CHECK.** The operator panel on the CCA600 shows the line speed as a batch of cans passes through the machine. The carrier applicator can operate as fast as 650 cans/min, but Maui Brewing has found its optimum production speed to be 200 to 300 cans/min.

The CCA600 gives Maui Brewing a turnkey solution for keeping pace with its rapid growth, in addition to a line that can adjust speeds to meet day-to-day needs.

"The new line is capable of 650 cans/min, but we choose to run between 200 and 300," Marrero notes. "If we run the machine at a higher speed, there is more wear and tear on the machine. For us, the sweet spot is 'jogging' at 200 to 300 cans per minute. A nice, comfortable jog is still 12½ times faster than before." **PW**



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# Packaging helps power store brands

**Rx-to-OTC switches, and a shift of top execs from CPGs to retailers, increase the emphasis on package design to help store brands gain greater market share.**

**Jim Butschli | Features Editor**



Using low cost as their marketing hammer, makers of yesteryear's generic products used no-frill package graphics, printing product name and ingredients information in one or two colors. Today, however, retailers are relying more on packaging to market their store brands/private-label offerings as an alternative to national brands. And due to a combination of economics, package shelf appeal, and other factors, store brand awareness and sales are growing.

Last Spring, **Group 360 Worldwide** ([www.group360.com](http://www.group360.com)), a design and strategic marketing communications firm, sponsored a first-ever Store Brands Decisions Packaging Design Retailer Benchmarking Survey, conducted by **Store Brands Decisions** ([www.storebrandsdecisions.com](http://www.storebrandsdecisions.com)), a media provider of information for store brands executives.

Conducted last April and May, the survey aimed to help retailers benchmark their practices and plans against the broader store brands retailing market. The survey sought to provide recommendations to retailers, manufacturers, and design agencies within the consumer packaged goods (CPG) segment. Survey respondents included 36 companies operating more than 58,000 stores that generate more than \$900 billion in annual retail sales, and included retailers from the U.S., Canada, and Korea.

Mark Rutter is president and CEO, Group 360 Worldwide, which helps its clients' companies deliver their brands to market through a single, strategically focused point of contact, including strategy, content, packaging, marketing, and related functions. He notes, "Our business is to help grow both CPG and store-brand clients. I refer to them as store brands rather than 'private label,' a term that could be interpreted like a private club. There are so many retail stores that have their own line of products. Nowadays, it's not good enough, let's say in the salty snack category, to have just Frito-Lay products," says Rutter. "You also need to have all the other brands out there, including store brands, which now are very popular because of their improved reputation. Store brands are an increasingly powerful category. Long gone are the generic products that people used to think about, mostly due to the power of the design and the promise and characteristics of store brands."

Costs have been a significant factor in store-brand growth. Says



Rutter, "Economic downturns make lesser-priced products more attractive to people making less money. So retailers need to grow their own brands as well as national brands."

Asked if retailers make a different profit on their own brands versus national brands, Rutter says several factors must be weighed. "My guess is they probably do because they control their own supply chain more than they do with national brands. But they sell for a lesser price, so their margins could be very similar," he says. Another dimension here is that consumers may shop for a national brand in one product category, but a store brand in another segment.

## ➔ Executives moving to store-brand companies

One of the survey's key findings was that 57% of shoppers are purchasing store brands, up from 36% compared to 10 years ago. John Failla, Store Brands Decisions' president and editorial director, says several factors are behind that purchasing change. "Ten years ago, the business was unsophisticated and was dominated by generic products. There was a can of soup that said 'soup' on it," he says. "Retailers essentially had two tiers of product: the national-brand equivalent, such as a bottle of shampoo that looked like Head & Shoulders, and the national brand. The generic version appealed almost exclusively to a price-driven shopper." He says store-brand sales peak during recessionary periods, but tend to plateau afterwards.

"What happened in the last five years in particular, and what we think is going to drive substantial growth going forward, is this incredible influx of classically trained consumer products executives leaving companies such as Procter & Gamble, Unilever, ConAgra, and Kraft, and taking senior management positions at retailers like Kroger, Safeway, Walgreens, and Target, with the goal of developing store brands for those retailers," Failla says. "So, now you see well-developed, well-positioned store brands driving incremental growth for retailer products."



## ➔ Store-brand deSignation S

Failla defines three tiers of store brands. He describes them as "generic, which are all about price; a national-brand equivalent that says it's as good as the national brand but costs less; and then there is the premium, private label, whose attributes are marketed to better those of the national brand."

Before this study, Failla believes, "there was no information out there on best practices and on what other retailers were doing. So, the focus of this study was not to advocate selling store brands versus national brands, but to give retailers an idea of how the packaging design was being managed within their peer groups so that they could make better decisions."

## ➔ deSign, development, and execution

Three key packaging-centric areas covered in the study are the approach to packaging design, strategy development, and execution. "One of the trends we saw was that in all three areas, the percentage of retailers hiring specialized outside resources was increasing. The area of strategy development showed the largest percentage increase in the use of outside resources. Retailers realize that if they are going to move their store-brand business forward, they are going to have to get specialized outside resources," says Failla.

Greater reliance on technology to help manage the package design process is also rising. "Believe it or not, there are still retailers who are managing their workflow on a package redesign with spreadsheets," he says. "There is a lot of information changing hands between the vendors and the retailers, and between the design agency and the retailer. CPGs have used technology to manage this process for quite some time. Now retailers are in a position of catching up."

Group 360's Rutter says, "Store brands are catching up and will adapt quickly to some of the newer technologies." He points to a system that employs Smartphone technology to link packages and in-store promotions, sampling programs, and Web sites as examples. "So when you look at the study and see that the people who participated represented \$900 billion dollars in sales over 58,000 stores, it's clear that there exists a powerful distribution system."

Asked what trends he sees developing in the over-the-counter pharmaceutical and nutraceutical areas, Rutter says, "The possibilities with OTC store brands are fascinating because the next big step involves all of those pharmaceutical product patents running out. Obviously, there will be opportunities for retailers to be able to market all of those products in a different way altogether."

"The key question is how do they make their own OTCs as attractive as the national brands? In the case of pain relievers, for example, how does someone like

Kroger or Safeway or Walgreens make those in clear, attractive ways that the consumer sees as having the same efficacies as the name-brand drugs? There will be opportunities for the retailer because packaging design has a great deal to do with how people view or perceive the product that they are buying." To learn more about the full report, or to purchase it, visit [www.storebrandsdecisions.com/research\\_checkout.php](http://www.storebrandsdecisions.com/research_checkout.php) **PW**



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# FPA winners are good as gold

Notable advances in sustainability, shelf impact, laser micro-perforation, and shelf life extension are all on display in the Flexible Packaging Association's Gold Award winners.

## Medical device wallet pack shares highest award

Even if sustainability were not a dominant packaging driver, the ConforMIS Drill & Pin Kit Wallet would merit considerable recognition. Compared to a more traditional thermoform package, the new pack uses less energy to produce and transport, offers customization, and takes up minimal space. Those attributes helped the ConforMIS Drill & Pin Kit Wallet earn FPA's Highest Achievement Award, Gold Award for Packaging Excellence, and Silver Award for Environmental and Sustainability Achievement.

ConforMIS, Inc., Burlington, MA, develops and commercializes medical devices for osteoarthritis treatment and joint damage. ConforMIS knee implants and instrumentation are designed to address all stages of osteoarthritis, the most common reason for knee replacement surgery.

The wallet pack helped earn the FPA recognition for **Beacon Converters** ([www.beaconconverters.com](http://www.beaconconverters.com)). Beacon worked on the ConforMIS project with its representative Greg Dahl of **Dahl Packaging** (Phone: 413/599-0465).

"The package is distinctive because sharp, multi-component orthopedic drill and pin kits are characteristically packaged in thermoformed trays," says Alison Tyler, Beacon's technical director. "In order to protect the sterile barrier from the sharp points and edges, each component would have its own cavity and be snapped in. The wallet pack differs from a thermoformed tray in several ways. First, it fits in the hand and allows the end user to access the components with ease. And there is no need to snap components out of cavities. The wallet is made from a thin sheet of A123, 100-percent virgin white HDPE [high-density polyethylene], yet is capable of doing the work of two thermoformed trays."

This particular wallet's thickness is 23 mils. It is received flat and then erected, with the drill and pin kit components loaded into it and then it is folded. The wallet is then placed into a pouch for sterilization. The wallet contains several components of varying diameter and shape that are used in an orthopedic surgical procedure. The wallet is part of a surgical kit that is customized for each patient.

"We use the wallet pack for our iUni or iDuo brands," says

John Slamin, vice president, engineering at ConforMIS. "It replaces an older, reusable kit, and is a single-use, disposable pack that we've been using now for five months or so. It's very useful for both brands, and we've been happy with the packaging."

In certain regulatory environments, the packaging for terminally sterilized medical devices must comply with ISO11607 parts I and II. The wallet is terminally sterilized inside a pouch so it is also sterile and can be handled in the sterile field to facilitate aseptic presentation.

Beacon's Tyler explains, "The most challenging requirements were protection and size [footprint]. We knew the wallet had to contain all the components, protect them from each other, protect the packaging from the components, and fit into a prescribed footprint. All of the components needed for a surgery including the contents of the wallet had to fit into a specific-sized shipping box."

ConforMIS Drill and Pin kits are shipped overnight for use for a specific patient. Tyler says, "The necessity to withstand the vigor of single-parcel overnight shipping is no small task. The wallet system passed aggressive distribution tests to allow for 'overnight shipping.'"

The wallet's tiers were devised to compactly fit all the parts in one pack-

age. A thermoformed tray alternative would have required two trays and would still have exceeded the footprint objective.

Sustainability was an important consideration in designing and developing the packaging. "Sustainability is always a consideration when working as a team to develop a package. It is often challenging because of the nature of medical devices. The stakes are high if something is not adequately packaged. In this case, the biggest impact was distribution and storage," says Tyler.

"Because the wallets are made and shipped to the customer as flat sheets, they are packed and shipped densely, creating shipping efficiencies. There is no need to nest them, as there would be for thermoformed tray counterparts, which decreases the efficiency of shipping LTL (Less-Than-Truckload) or FTL (Full-Truckload), as it requires more space in a truck to deliver the same number of package units," she adds. —**Jim Butschli**





## MAP for produce also Highest Achievement

The Fresh-N-Tasty Produce Pouch from **Robbie Flexibles** ([www.robieflexibles.com](http://www.robieflexibles.com)) won a Highest Achievement Award from the FPA judges. This pre-made pouch—which also won Gold for Packaging Excellence and Gold for Technical Innovation—wasn't on store shelves at press time. But it's believed to be headed there soon.

About all Robbie Flexibles is saying about the standup pouch is that it's a lamination of two coextruded substrates, it has a convenient carrying handle, it has a see-through window, and it has a zipper reclosure feature. The Robbie Web site also mentions that more consistent product quality throughout the entire shelf life of the pineapple, watermelon, cantaloupe, peppers, or other produce packed in the pouch results from modified-atmosphere packaging and laser micro perforation. Robbie acknowledges that it has been working with **PerfoTec** ([www.perfotec.com](http://www.perfotec.com)) on the Fresh-N-Tasty pouch project. So a look at PerfoTec's technology seems warranted here.

Based in the Netherlands, PerfoTec offers Automatic OTR Control®, which it describes as a “breakthrough” in MAP for fresh

produce. It's a micro-laser perforation system with online camera inspection. It calculates the amount of oxygen that can permeate a given surface area of film that has just been micro-perforated.

If permeability is too great or too little, the laser-perforated holes made on subsequent packages are immediately made smaller or larger, and this adjustment is made at line speeds up to 600 ft/min. When asked why the microperfs would ever need to be changed on the fly, PerfoTec president Bas Groeneweg explained.

“The film used in fresh-cut produce has a nominal thickness that is supposed to be consistent. But in fact there are always variations in film thickness, so when a thin section of film passes through the laser perforation station, the laser energy creates a hole larger than what's specified, which in turn shortens shelf life. Our vision system detects when laser-perforations are not the right size and signals the laser perforator to modify the

amount of energy it emits. That way, the microperfs are immediately right-sized and the film quickly returns to the permeability rate that was specified.” —**Pat Reynolds**



## Baby food benefits from flexible pouch features

A stand-up, reclosable, flexible retort pouch from **Ampac** ([www.ampaconline.com](http://www.ampaconline.com)) for a line of organic baby foods from New York City-based Sprout was awarded Gold for Environmental & Sustainability Achievement. According to Sprout CEO Ron Davis, package safety, product freshness, convenience, and sustainability were among Sprout's top concerns in selecting a packaging format to launch the new brand in early 2009.

Says the Ampac FPA entry form: “Sprout is a company that knew it wanted to differentiate itself on its fresh, organic ingredients and its philosophy of providing parents [with]

natural food options for their children. Their choice to use Ampac stand-up pouches with differentiating opening and closing features to bring these products to the market is an indicator of the increasing knowledge of brands and manufacturers about the benefits of flexible packaging, including sustainability benefits that are a major feature of the flexible packaging format.”

Sprout is using the pouch format for 30 product SKUs in 2.5-, 3.5-, and 5.5-oz sizes. The pouch is a four-layer, BPA-free construction of PET/foil/biaxially oriented nylon/polypropylene, and includes Ampac's proprietary Linear Tear technology for easy pouch opening and a retortable, reclosable zipper. Film is gravure-printed in eight colors with graphics designed to showcase the product's “freshness, quality, and flavor,” according to Davis, and is supplied to Sprout as a preformed pouch.

The primary sustainability feature of the pouch cited by Ampac in the FPA entry form is its reduced weight versus the glass jars or rigid cups traditionally used for baby food. “A comparable glass jar for baby food makes up 70 percent of the weight of the product being sold,” says Ampac. “A comparable rigid tray with a peelable lidstock and rigid lid makes up 14 percent. In contrast, the new retort pouch makes up six percent of the weight

of the product sold, providing a tremendous improvement in the product-to-package ratio.” This results in reduced shipping costs, as well as lower inventory costs, as only one package component is required.

Other advantages of the pouch format include safety, portability, convenience, and enhanced product freshness. Compared with a glass jar, the pouch will not shatter or break during distribution or use, and product packed in the pouch requires less time for sterilization “resulting in a higher-quality, better-tasting product,” says Ampac.

Sprout also required that the pouch be non-microwavable; consumers heat the product by placing the pouch in hot water, ensuring that the food retains its flavor and nutritional value. Sprout notes that this also eliminates the energy needed by consumers to prepare the food. Baby can also be fed directly from the pouch, eliminating the need for dishes or bowls and the subsequent energy required to wash them.

Davis notes that both retailers and consumers have responded very positively to the new product and package. “Retail distribution is expanding as a result,” he says, “and consumers love the product, the quality of the food and the convenience of the package.”

—**Anne Marie Mohan**



## Film for bulk liquids earns Gold for Packaging Excellence

→ Liquiflex® Advance™ films for bulk liquids is designed to replace metal foodservice cans or traditional bulk liquid films. The 13-layer Liquiflex film generates 96% less waste than cans and up to 30% less waste than other films, and includes redundant nylon and ethylene vinyl alcohol layers for strength and resistance. It is manufactured by **Curwood Inc.**, a Bemis company ([www.curwoodliquiflex.com](http://www.curwoodliquiflex.com)). The film is available in 2.5 to 5.5-mil thicknesses, depending on the end user's needs.



Designed for products such as soup, sauces, and condiments in weights up to 30 lb, Liquiflex films go from the freezer to re-thermalization in boiling water for easy food storage, preparation, and serving.

The film was first commercially available in January 2009. Since then, several companies have used the film, but the first user of the total system of the film and the vertical form/fill/seal equipment used to make pouches from the film was Deli Star Corp., a Fayetteville, IL-based deli product maker/bulk liquid processor (see story, page 60).

Liquiflex Advance is a proprietary coextrusion of polyethylene and nylon, with or without EVOH for oxygen barrier. The 13 layers are bonded together in the molten stage during extrusion, with no further converting necessary beyond slitting to the customer's required width.

The film delivers improved strength per mil of thickness, providing users the opportunity to downgauge films for cost savings with no compromise in product performance, according to Curwood. The material is available in medium, high, and ultra-high barrier levels, each in multiple thicknesses. Films are available that provide up to a 24-month shelf life for oxygen-sensitive products. Material can be printed flexographically in up to 10 colors.

Curwood says the film can also be used for nonfood applications, such as bulk personal care, liquid soaps, bag-in-box, or any pumpable product. The manufacturer says that competitive films in this market segment are coextruded and do not yield a 13-layer structure.

—**Jim Butschli**

## Pet food pack par excellence

→ Gold for Printing Achievement went to **Nordenia USA** ([www.nordeniausa.com](http://www.nordeniausa.com)) for a 2.7-kg (5.95 lb) package of Nestlé Purina ONE Dog pet food sold in the Canadian marketplace. The pack's outer layer of 25-micron polyester is reverse-printed on a gravure press in seven colors; an MX-NA-1 ink system from **Siegwerk** ([www.siegwerk.com](http://www.siegwerk.com)) plays a key role. This substrate is adhesive-laminated to a 125-micron white polyethylene.

"We wanted more impact on the shelf," says Nestlé's Margaret-Anne South. "The plastic produces greater brightness, and graphics don't get scratched because the reverse-printing is protected."

The other thing South likes about Nordenia's FlexZiBox® flat-bottom package is that it offers five display panels: Front, back, two side gussets, and the bottom. That means that no matter how retailers display the bag, good brand visibility and messaging is still a given. And because the bag is more durable and tear-resistant than the paper-based flat-bottom bag that preceded it, Nestlé even gains some source-reduction benefits. "It lets us cut down on the number of bags returned to us because of tears or other damage," says South. "That means we send less packaging material to the solid-waste stream."

Nordenia notes that the package has light half tones that are difficult to print and incorporates vignettes with subtle changes from light to dark printing. Nordenia also gives a nod to three additional suppliers who were important participants in bringing the package to the marketplace: **Windmoeller & Hoelscher** ([www.whcorp.com](http://www.whcorp.com)), makers of film blowing and converting machinery;



**B&B MAF LP** ([www.bub-maf.com](http://www.bub-maf.com)), makers of bag-making equipment; and designers at **Pigeon Branding + Design** ([www.pigeonbrands.com](http://www.pigeonbrands.com)). —**Pat Reynolds**



## Cat litter bag stands up and stands out on-shelf

Forty-two pounds of scoopable cat litter are now more visually inviting on shelf, easier to carry, and more sustainable, with The Clorox Pet Product Co.'s switch from a polypropylene pail to the FlexZiBox® flexible stand-up, handled bag from **Nordenia** ([www.nordenia.com](http://www.nordenia.com)). Created for the Fresh Step brand, the new package was awarded Gold in both the Package Excellence and the Environmental & Sustainability Achievement categories.

The side-gusseted, resealable bag—said to be the first to support this product weight with these features, according to Nordenia—stands upright on the store shelf and offers a large billboard space for improved shelf impact. The vertical positioning is key, notes Nordenia, as competitive



products are typically packed in layflat, bottom-gusseted bags or in rigid pails with minimal space for front-panel graphics. The proprietary multilayer structure is also said to reduce material weight by 77% versus the former PP pail and lid, resulting in savings in both shipping and disposal.

Notes Nordenia, "One pallet of bags equals 13 pallets of pails/lids. Pails/lids require 144 pounds of dunnage compared to the bags, which require 21 pounds of dunnage."

For consumer convenience, the bag provides a handle for carrying and pouring, two reclosable features—a top slider and

resealable tape—and a format that stands up upright in storage, without tipping. —**Anne Marie Mohan**

## Dynamic labels give Australian Gold lotions stopping power

Australian Gold regularly creates new indoor tanning products, and keeps the packaging fresh as well, to create a sense of anticipation for new product launches. The company did not disappoint Flexible Packaging Association judges with the launch of shapely squeeze bottles for its Ex Appeal and Reef'r Madness bronzing and tanning lotions.

The design merited a Gold Award in the Printing Achievement category for dynamic package labels and design, provided by **CL&D Graphics Inc.** ([www.cldgraphics.com](http://www.cldgraphics.com)).

To assure visibility in the sun and skincare category, in which festively decorated packages prevail, success requires more than just offering product value; the packaging has exhibit marketing flair. Australian Gold's 8.5-oz bottles reach this loftier branding status

with label designs that use spot cold foil technology for reflectivity on the labels and matte varnishes for texture. The textured labels also provide functional value by enabling consumers to squeeze product from the bottles without worrying about moist hands slipping off the labels.

The richly colored labels are printed flexographically using UV-based and water-based inks, as well as proprietary cold-foil applications. The environmentally friendly labels resist fading and have an easy-squeeze feature built into the ink process.

The result is an easy-to-grip, high-visibility label that is mindful of the bottle shape and green packaging initiatives, and that also gives the Australian Gold lotions stopping power in the store aisle. —**Jim George**



## 2011 FPA Silver Award Winners

To view photos of the Silver Award winners, go to [packworld.com/webonly-31330](http://packworld.com/webonly-31330)

### Packaging Excellence

**Hormel E-Z Zip® Pouch** - Ampac

### Printing Achievement

**John Soules Rotisserie Chicken** - American Packaging Corp.

**Masa Pizza** - Peruplast S.A.

**Safeway Frozen Pasta Quad Seal Package** - Berry Plastics Corp.

**Wyman's of Maine Wild Blueberry Juice** - Printpack, Inc.

### Technical Innovation

**Zone Coated Rollstock** - Oliver-Tolas™ Healthcare Packaging

**Cryovac® Oven Ease™ Bags** - Sealed Air Corp.

- Cryovac Food Packaging

### Environmental & Sustainability

**Trail's End Classic Caramel Popcorn** - DanaFilms, Inc. and Plastic Packaging Technologies, LLC



# PLC-based control tames obsolescence headaches

This manufacturer of thermoformers and trim presses finds multiple benefits in its newly developed PLC-based controls platform

## Pat Reynolds, Editor

A recent switch to a controls platform based on a robust PLC rather than a PC is said to be bringing improved performance and a more reliable electrical control and motion solution to the thermoforming systems made by **Lyle Industries** ([www.lyleindustries.com](http://www.lyleindustries.com)). A key driver behind the switch to the Informer2 controls package, says Lyle's Gary Sowden, is that with a PC-based system there are too many recurring obsolescence issues.

"Whether it's components or the operating system, obsolescence is a problem with PC-based platforms," says Sowden. "By contrast, a PLC-based system is all solid state componentry. There are no hard drives or spinning media."

The PLC vendor in Lyle's case is **Mitsubishi** ([www.meau.com](http://www.meau.com)). Its iQ PLC requires no Windows software. Operator interface terminal and servo drive system are also from Mitsubishi. This single-source supply, says Sowden, is another improvement.



"In the past we wound up acting as our own integrator," says Sowden. "We were buying a variety of different components from different suppliers on the controls side and we were the ones taking responsibility for integrating them and making them all work together in our control scheme. So we were really excited about the idea of having a system that whether it was the operator interface, the PLC controller, or the servo drives and motors on the machine, they all come from a single source and are all meant to work together. We no longer have to play the role of integrator on our own machine."

Sowden appreciates some of the "intangibles" that come with the new controls platform. "There's a reduced panel space, which shrinks

the footprint of the machine," he observes. "But what it really comes down to in terms of improvement is the jump in precision and reliability that came with the new controls platform. For example, a key element in thermoforming is temperature control in the oven. We are now able to achieve plus or minus two-tenths of a degree F in our oven. That's a huge advantage."



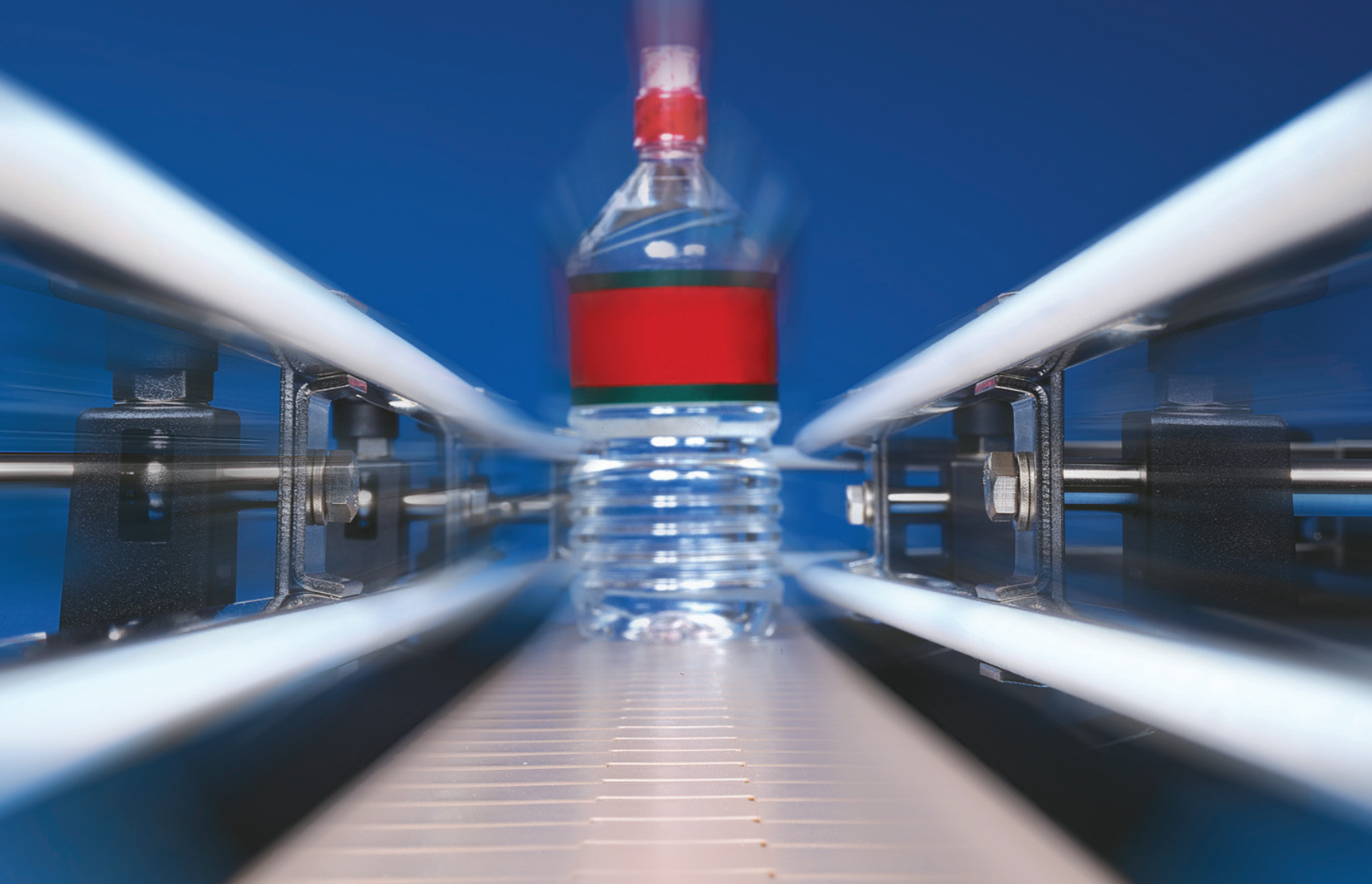
**Precision, reliability.** Since a PLC controller (left) became the brains of Lyle's thermoforming systems (above), precision and reliability have both been increased.

According to Sowden, the Informer2 platform runs on a variety of Lyle equipment, including thermoformers, horizontal trim presses, and vertical trim presses. Axes of servo motion in such systems might number as many as eight or nine.

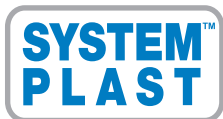
"We've also been doing a pretty robust business in terms of upgrading some of our already installed equipment with the Informer2 package," says Sowden.

When asked if the Informer2 comes at a premium compared to the controls platform it replaced, Sowden said no. "One of our goals was to improve the technology and stay cost neutral, and that goal, I'm happy to say, was achieved." **PW**





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# Ice River springs for a new PET line

**The newest bottled water line at Ice River Springs blows and fills 1,200 half-liter bottles/min for private-label customers that include Walmart and Loblaw.**

**Pat Reynolds | Editor**



Few companies in North America have been better at taking advantage of the growing popularity of bottled water than Canada's Ice River Springs. Headquartered near a springwater source in Feversham, Ontario, nearly all of what the firm produces is in the private-label category. And since its customers include the likes of Walmart and Loblaw, we're talking about a whole lot of bottles coming out of the firm's seven plants, including several in the U.S.

The most impressive new line Ice River has installed is Line 8 at its sprawling Feversham headquarters facility. It's dedicated to 500-mL bottles made in-house from 100% post-consumer recycled PET (for a look at Ice River's ambitious, vertically integrated, and successful closed-loop bottle-to-bottle recycling operation, go to [packworld.com/video-31156](http://packworld.com/video-31156)).



Line 8 is a blow/fill line that runs at 1,200 bottles/min. Preforms made in Feversham are stored in large bulk containers until cool and then taken to hoppers that feed two **Krones** ([www.kronesusa.com](http://www.kronesusa.com)) stretch blow molders.

"We've looked at conveying them straight from injection molding and into the blow molders, but they do need to cool to ambient temp, which takes about 24 hours when they're stored in the bulk containers," says James Gott, project manager at Ice River. "If we sent preforms straight into the blow molders, we'd need at least 20 minutes of conveying time, and probably even some cooling or air conditioning would have to be involved in the process."

One blow molder has 24 cavities and produces 800 bottles/min while the other has 12 cavities and does 400/min.

"These are our first Krones blow molders," notes Gott. "We've always had good experience with their other equipment, primarily fillers and cappers, and we'd heard good things about their blow molders, so we wanted to try them."

Bottles exit the blow molders on air conveyors that bring them to a Krones filler/capper/labeler block. Along the route is a drop bin. If anything goes wrong downstream to cause a backup, bottles drop into this bin until the backup issue is resolved. Bottles from the drop

→→→ p. 58



**LIGHT CAPS.** Made in-house, Ice River's short-skirted caps (top) weigh just 1g. Shrinkwrap bundling in many formats is done on the machine shown left.



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**STRETCH WRAP.** At the end of the new line is a pallet wrapper from a firm that Ice River has relied on for many years.

bin are then fed back into production through an unscrambler from **Lanfranchi** ([www.lanfranchigroup.com](http://www.lanfranchigroup.com)).

Bottles are single-filled just ahead of the Krones filler/capper/labeler block, which has 104 filling nozzles, 39 capping heads, and 36 labeling stations. Glue-applied paper labels are of the cut-and-stack variety.

Caps are sorted and fed by a machine from **Aidlin** ([www.sidel-ec.com](http://www.sidel-ec.com)). Like the preforms that are fed into the line, the polypropylene caps are injection-molded in-house. While Gott acknowledges the cost savings that accrue from this kind of vertical integration, he says there are other benefits to be gained, as well.

"We've been making our caps since 2008," says Gott. "It gives us more freedom to experiment and push things forward, which is why we were about two years ahead of the bottled water industry in general when we introduced a short-skirted cap weighing just one gram instead of 1.8. Keep in mind, too, that when you change the cap configuration

you also need to modify the neck finish on your preform, and here again we were able to do all of this much more quickly because we are so vertically integrated."

Filled, capped, and labeled bottles pass through a Krones Checkmat vision system that checks for cocked caps, proper fill level, damaged labels, missing labels, or defects in bottles. Bottles that are defective in any way are kicked off the line. Laser date-coding by a **Markem-Imaje** ([www.markem-imaje.com](http://www.markem-imaje.com)) system is followed by multipacking, but first is a large accumulation table. Should downstream equipment go down for any reason, blowing and filling can continue unabated and bottles can flow onto the accumulation table until the downstream problem has been resolved."

Multipacking is done on a Model M-75 shrink-wrap system from **Douglas Machine** ([www.douglas-machine.com](http://www.douglas-machine.com)) that has 15 axes of motion driven by Kinetix servo drives from **Rockwell** ([www.rockwellautomation.com](http://www.rockwellautomation.com)). Also from Rockwell is the ControLogix controller that governs the Douglas machine. Douglas's Smartrak® infeed takes incoming bottles through a narrow choke section that is two thirds the width of the desired multipack pattern. Shortly after this choke section, the bottles enter a more open area where they are allowed to spread out freely, evenly, and with minimal back pressure. The Douglas Slipstream™ pinless metering system requires fewer change parts compared to a pin metering system. Metering belts advance the bottles into the metering area, a slip sheet creates the appropriate pack pattern gap, and metering bars stabilize tipsy bottles as they leave the metering section and enter the load area.



Watch video of this packaging line in action at [packworld.com/video-31285](http://packworld.com/video-31285)

Ice River produces 12-, 18-, 24-, and 30-count bundles. Like the Krones blow molders, this is Ice River's first experience with a Douglas shrink wrapper. According to Gott, it's likely not the last.

"The operators love this machine," says Gott. "It's robust and fast, and if there is an issue that needs to be addressed, it's easy to get at it and get it fixed. Not only does it run reliably, the heat tunnel is very accurate and consistent in shrinking the film so that it makes a strong

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An ink-jet system from **Videojet** ([www.videojet.com](http://www.videojet.com)) prints date-code information on each multipack. The low back-pressure conveyors from **Descon** ([www.desconconveyor.com](http://www.desconconveyor.com)) that take the multipacks away from the shrink wrapper are helpful, says Gott, because the gentle handling they provide ensures that the shrink film won't be damaged or dislodged while it is still hardening after the heat of the shrink tunnel.

A **Ryson** ([www.ryson.com](http://www.ryson.com)) spiral conveyor takes film-wrapped multipacks to an overhead conveyor leading to a high-level palletizer from **Production Automation Inc.** ([www.palletizers.com](http://www.palletizers.com)).



**OVERHEAD PALLETIZER.** This overhead palletizer feeds directly into the pallet wrapper that brings the line to a close.

"This palletizer is another first for us," says Gott. "We wanted high speed and we'd heard good things about PAI in the industry. It's proven to be a good machine."

The last machine in the line is a stretch wrapper from **Wulftec/M.J. Mallis** ([www.wulftec.com](http://www.wulftec.com)). This machine, notes Gott, is anything but a first for Ice River Springs. "We've been using Wulftec pallet wrappers on our lines since we started the business," says Gott.

Running commercially now since early 2009, Line 8 marks a sizeable improvement over the line it replaced, which was only capable of 500 bottles/min. Pleased though he is to have this increased production capacity, Gott marvels at the fact that in just two years,

the technology showcased in Line 8 is practically passé.

"The 800 bottle-per-minute blow-molding system was state-of-the-art when we bought it, but it's been surpassed already by a new-generation machine from Krones that does 900 per minute," says Gott. This being the case, he adds, he wonders if he should be interpack-bound when that triennial packaging machinery extravaganza opens May 12 in Dusseldorf, Germany. **PW**



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# Bulk-liquid packaging system serves up savings for Deli Star

**Leading provider of protein salads, cooked meats, and sauces doubles productivity, improves versatility, and reduces packaging failure with new bulk-liquid packaging system.**



Like many bulk liquid processors, Deli Star Corp. of Fayetteville, IL, has experienced both big opportunities, and big challenges, while serving the fast-growing foodservice market. For more than 20 years, Deli Star has been among the Midwest's premier deli product manufacturers. Offering products that include chicken and tuna salads, diced and shredded meats, dressings, and sauces, among others, the company provides an expanding menu of ready-to-eat meal solutions for the foodservice, food processing, and retail grocery industries.

But an inefficient packaging system—using cumbersome, clipped, premade bags, or bag-in-bucket packages—created operational bottlenecks that limited output for its liquid and semi-liquid food products. The company needed a flexible, reliable packaging alternative that could significantly accelerate throughput, with the versatility to package an array of bulk hot- and cold-fill products and offer rapid payback through system-wide savings.

The answer came in a new bulk-liquid packaging system from **Curwood** (www.curwood.com). The company's recently launched Liquiflex® AV Series vertical form/fill/seal equipment combines an accelerated production speed with simplified setup, operation, changeover, and maintenance. The equipment runs films engineered for bulk liquids, such as Liquiflex® Advance™ film, a proprietary 13-layer structure that allows up to 30% downgauging compared to competitive bulk films. This 3.5-mil film can be used for applications that historically required a 5.0-mil film.

According to Deli Star general manager Justin Siegel, the turnkey system brought together all the right ingredients. "We came across Liquiflex film and equipment through conversations with Curwood, and we were immediately attracted to its combination of competitive cost, versatility, and high-speed throughput," he says.

## **SyStem DouBLeS prODuctivitY, rEDUCEs lABor cOST**

Within weeks after installing their new liquid packaging system in August 2009, Deli Star doubled productivity and reduced the cost of labor in its packaging operations.

The majority of liquid and semi-liquid products Deli Star produces



**ZERO LOSS.** Deli Star ships most products in bulk bins, where pouches on the bottom of the containers must stand up to the weight of 2,000 pounds of bags on top of them without tearing, shearing, or bursting. So far, Deli Star has experienced a zero-loss record.



**ALL-PURPOSE.** Deli Star's new equipment performs equally well for hot-fill products and ambient products, and the packaging process is similar, regardless of the product type or package size.





**IN-LINE PRINTING.** A thermal-transfer printer on the packaging machine's universal mounting dock can print the Deli Star logo, product name, code, lot number, and ingredient statement directly on the pouch, positioned anywhere on the package.

are now packed in 20-lb bags. Previously, the packages were 45-lb bags placed in 5-gal plastic buckets. While the former process topped out at 4,000 lb of product/hr, depending on product type and viscosity, the Liquiflex vf/f/s system has ramped line speeds up to 8,400 lb/hr for products like sauces, with a maximum output of 9,000 lb/hr.

And since the machine only requires one operator, Deli Star was able to reduce labor versus the more time-intensive bag-and-clip method.

*"We were immediately attracted to its combination of competitive cost, versatility, and high-speed throughput."*

Deli Star realized further productivity gains in processing functions with the new packaging as well. Whether hot- or cold-filled, the foods have to be cooked to 7-log lethality to kill bacteria and extend shelf life. Sauces and toppings are cooked before filling, then hot-filled and moved to racks for chilling. When filled, the new bags have a 2-in. profile, allowing them to cool significantly faster than the larger, 45-lb bags could.

Protein salads, on the other hand, are cold-filled, post-pasteurized, and then chilled. In this case, the smaller-profile bags reduce both cook and chill time, helping boost throughput.

#### **Flexibility From pump to Finished package**

Deli Star quickly found their new equipment was an all-purpose switch-hitter for a range of products and package sizes. It performs equally well for hot-fill products and ambient products, and the packaging process is similar, despite the product type or package size.

Liquids or semi-liquids are placed into a large hopper, where they are agitated and pumped to the packaging machine. Deli Star uses two types of pumping mechanisms for process flexibility based on the product's viscosity. Less-viscous products like sauces are batched

and cooked, then pumped into the machine with a **Waukesha** ([www.gowcb.com](http://www.gowcb.com)) positive-displacement pumping system and hot-filled into the bags. More-viscous products, like chicken salad, egg salad, and tuna salad, are dispensed using a **Handtmann** ([www.handtmann.com](http://www.handtmann.com)) meat stuffer and are cold-filled.

A standard **Allen-Bradley** ([www.ab.com](http://www.ab.com)) control system controls the process from pump to finished package for reliable product delivery, telling the machine when to start, how fast to run, and when to stop. A color touchscreen provides an easy operator interface with help screens for diagnostics and troubleshooting. The Liquiflex machine's 50-program expandable-memory function makes it easy for operators to call up machine parameters for a wide variety of sizes and product types. Touchscreen-adjustable, servo-driven components make it simple for Deli Star's operators to fine-tune any tracking or other adjustments.

The machine forms a bag with a fin or lap seal and bottom end seal;

→→→ p. 62



**STRONG SEAL.** The machine forms a bag with a fin or lap seal and bottom end seal; then it fills the bag. Squeeze-nip rollers ensure consistent voiding and zero headspace. A top-end seal is then made, which at the same time forms the bottom seal of the next bag.

then it fills the bag. Squeeze-nip rollers ensure consistent voiding and zero headspace. A top-end seal is then made, which at the same time forms the bottom seal of the next bag. Pull belts synchronized with a rotary encoder ensure accurate bag length and precise fill consistency.

"When you're hot-filling 20 pounds of product every 8.5 seconds, a particular challenge is getting that seal strong enough to hold the hot, heavy product," says Siegel. "The machine has an in-line air-blast

cooling process to assist the seal cure and significantly improve cooling time."

Deli Star installed an in-line **Videojet** (www.videojet.com) DataFlex® thermal-transfer overprinter on the packaging machine's universal mounting dock. This allows them to print the Deli Star logo, product name, code, lot number, and ingredient statement directly on the pouch. Printing can be positioned anywhere on the package.

### Quick-change artist

Siegel is impressed by the Liquiflex system's simplified setup and changeover for multiple product types and package sizes. He notes that the ease of operation and intuitive controls dramatically accelerated the learning curve on the new equipment, despite his company's wide range of packaging applications. "Most machines in this category take about six months for the operator to master," he says. "With this machine, it took less than a month."

While the majority of Deli Star's products are in 20-lb pouches, the new system produces pouches as small as 3 lb, with the flexibility to go up to a 30-lb capacity. Pouch size can be changed in minutes with the tool-less, quick-change forming collar and tool-less unwind mandrel for the film. "Whether we're running a 20-pound barbecue sauce or a 20-pound chicken salad, we use the same forming collar and film," explains Siegel. "We can quickly change between a 20-pound bag and a 3.3-pound bag just by changing the forming collar and film." As for changing between high- and low-viscosity products, switching from the Waukesha liquid pump and Handtmann meat stuffer is as simple as changing a plug.

Memory for preset parameters makes it easy for operators to change settings back and forth between sizes: Once a product is run, the operator simply calls up the setting, feeds the film, and presses "go."

Since different SKUs are processed in different areas of Deli Star's plant, the compact mobile Liquiflex machine—with a 4.5 x 4-ft footprint—can be wheeled from one department to another, and it can be positioned for optimum efficiency near coolers or other equipment.

### Bulk film delivers under pressure

While the new packaging equipment performed beyond Deli Star's expectations, the material technology of the 6658-S Liquiflex bulk film equally impressed Siegel and his team. Since making the transition to the new system, Deli Star ships most products in large, 40 x 48-in. bulk bins. That means pouches on the bottom of the containers must stand up to the weight of 2,000 pounds of bags on top of them without tearing, shearing, or bursting. So far, Deli Star has experienced a zero-loss record. "I don't think we've had one package fail since installing the system," says Siegel.

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The bulk films utilize a proprietary new Curwood extrusion technology to produce a 13-layer construction, including redundant nylon and ethylene vinyl alcohol layers, to provide strength, abuse-resistance, and barrier. The increased number of layers in the film provides a strengthening effect, not unlike that in plywood. According to Curwood, the result can offer a significant savings over other bulk films on the market, delivering downgauging opportunities without sacrificing performance characteristics.

But strength was only part of the picture. Liquiflex film's advanced oxygen, moisture, and light barrier has allowed Deli Star to deliver a 180-day shelf life, while safeguarding product freshness and flavor. The film also provides excellent machinability and heat-seal performance. The material stays soft and clear without hazing during cold or ambient fill. And because the coextrusion is extremely consistent in temperatures up to 212° F, it does not exhibit weak spots to compromise food quality in hot-fill applications. Plus, it delivers consistent fill weights, with no stretching or package distortion.

#### ➡ **EasE of usE, yiEl d, sanitat ion** **pl EasE cust omEr s**

Deli Star's customers are also pleased with the new packaging format. Once they became familiar with the new pouches, they found them safe, efficient, and easier to handle than the bag-in-bucket pack.

The smooth profile of the pouch eliminates the folds of tail materials or voids between pouches and buckets, offering a sanitary package that reduces the chance of contamination. The format also saves the disposal costs of the unwieldy buckets: Most food processors or operators now landfill buckets, due to a USDA mandate that buckets can no longer be reused or sold without inspection, storage, and washing.

Operators also enjoy virtually 100% product yield, since pouches are dispensed bottom-to-top, maximizing evacuation and minimizing product waste.

Finally, the format provides food preparation efficiencies for heat-and-serve applications, since the bulk-liquid packages can go directly from freezer or cooler to rethermalization in boiling water.

According to Siegel, the benefits of Deli Star's new packaging system have truly added up. "We've doubled our production, significantly improved the speed of secondary operations like post-pasteurization and chilling, and reduced package failure," he says. "Plus, we're getting 700 more pounds of packaged products on every pallet for transport savings. By moving to the Liquiflex system, we've realized efficiencies and savings in every area." —**Anne Marie Mohan**

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# Duane Reade finds a cure in private label

The drugstore chain's private-brand sales double as redesigned stores, repositioned brands, and feels-like-home package designs win back New Yorkers with 'attitude.'

**Jim George,**  
Marketing & Design Editor



**Section shift.** Duane Reade's Apt 5 brand has moved out of the cosmetics department and into household cleaning products, where it has been repositioned to reflect New York City apartment dwellers' lifestyles.

In less than two years, Duane Reade's private-label brands have doubled in sales. Some of the New York City-based drugstore chain's private brands have emerged as bestsellers. Beyond that, improved private-label sales have brought higher average gross margin rates and raised overall store gross margin.

Duane Reade has achieved these eye-catching results by repositioning and redesigning more than 2,000 private-label SKUs, as well as giving its 250-plus stores a facelift. In the process, the retailer, synonymous to New Yorkers with "pharmacy," has evolved into a store with a pharmacy, and Duane Reade appears to be re-emerging as a meaningful shopping destination for consumers in New York City and surrounding boroughs.

With its extensive makeover, Duane Reade paints a picture representative of retailers who are getting more adept at leveraging packaging's power as a brand communicator and sales influencer, especially when it complements other marketing efforts. The company has completed the arduous process of creating new brand experiences, discontinuing products that didn't meet consumer needs, and upgrading food product quality under its four primary private brands.

The new look emphasizes the tagline "New York Living Made Easy." Duane Reade's private brands bear such package images as gritty photography capturing the character of the city and clever UPC code-like depictions of New York landmarks, from the Empire State Building to the Brooklyn Bridge. The strategy behind Duane Reade's fresh appearance was carried out by a new management team that reports to new owner Walgreen Co.

## Inspiration for a new direction

Duane Reade's rebirth began more than two years ago with both research of the chain's core consumers and market analysis. Research showed that the stores did a decent job in some categories and a less-than-stellar job in others of meeting New Yorkers' basic product needs. But as a brand, the stores lacked "New York attitude," which many local shoppers found perplexing given the chain's birthplace in Manhattan in 1960. In addition, the retailer was coming under increased competition

from other drugstore chains moving into the metro area.

Research also uncovered the need for a more careful approach to product merchandising that accounted for localized shopper preferences. There is no typical Duane Reade shopper, so store offerings would need to be customized to neighborhoods. Besides demographic considerations, merchandise offerings would be dependent on store size; Duane Reade stores range from 15,000 to 20,000 sq ft.

Working with CBX ([www.cbx.com](http://www.cbx.com)), Duane Reade gathered quantitative insights in six or seven consumer segments, and then narrowed the results to five segments where focus would be placed. Duane Reade set out to improve its pharmacy and health-related product offerings, make a stronger play in beauty products, leverage its strengths as a convenience store, and evolve into a store that included a pharmacy, says Todd Maute, CBX managing partner. His company influenced the store redesign and played a major role in package creation.





**Value brand.** Besides food and bottled water, the Cityscape brand extends into stock-up household products such as bath tissue.

Adds Paul Tiberio, Duane Reade's senior vice president of merchandising and marketing, "Both the store design and packaging originate from a clean, sophisticated look with a definite New York feel."

The store redesign includes new and redesigned department areas and consulting services that give shoppers the experiences they associate with salons and high-end department stores. The company also restyled its logo to cast the Duane Reade brand in a more contemporary light.

### Holistic integration

Packaging for Duane Reade's private-label products supports the overarching brand strategy by integrating with the store layout and collateral materials. The use of color, imagery, and clever wordplay all express Duane Reade's "New York Living Made Easy" mission. The brand names and package designs reflect the store and the store reflects them, whether it's Delish All Butter Chocolate Chip Cookies or Apt 5 Goes Green paper products (made from a sugar cane by-product).

"From the outset, our goal was to develop a European-style private-brands program at Duane Reade," Tiberio explains. "This includes alignment throughout the organization, from the senior ranks down, and a brand management approach to our category strategies."

"For example," he continues, "we developed two quality tiers within food so that we could deliver what New Yorkers were telling us they wanted. DR Delish was created because we needed a differentiated offer, and then a 'value' brand, which we refer to as Cityscape, was added as a complement. These brand designs are purposefully very different, clearly communicating their differentiated versus value positioning to our customers."

It's easy to see the differences in those two product-positioning approaches by looking at the packaging. DR Delish is the retailer's new line of premium foods created in a partnership with Zabars, a bakery well established in New York, to generate good-tasting foods and gain consumer trust. As the products were being created, Duane Reade collaborated with CBX to create distinctive packaging. The



**Gritty scenery.** Labels on DR Delish nut cans make the product the star of the show against black-and-white scenes photographed around New York City.

### Beauty department gets a makeover, too

Beauty products also play prominently into Duane Reade's revamped private-label strategy. The retailer's market research found that beauty product sales were being lost to competing drugstore chains expanding into the New York City area, as well as to specialty retailers such as Sephora.

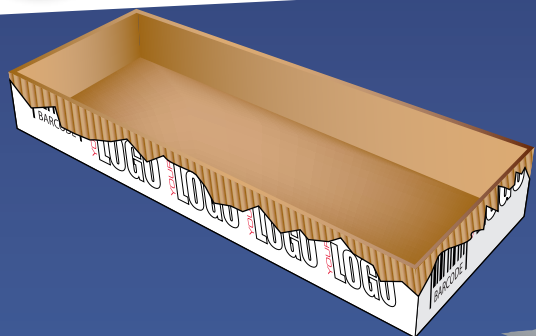
Duane Reade has responded by creating the Look Boutique. It's an in-store clinic that appears in some Duane Reade stores. The department welcomes shoppers to brightly colored aisles and a clinical feel. The store design works holistically with the design for packaging and collateral materials to position Duane Reade as a distinctively New York City brand.

Look Boutique offers unique, imported beauty items and private-label products, and upon purchasing them shoppers carry them home in eye-catching, coated paper bags that resemble those offered at high-end department stores and boutiques. In addition, Look Boutique is staffed by registered cosmetologists to create holistic solutions for shoppers' beauty needs.

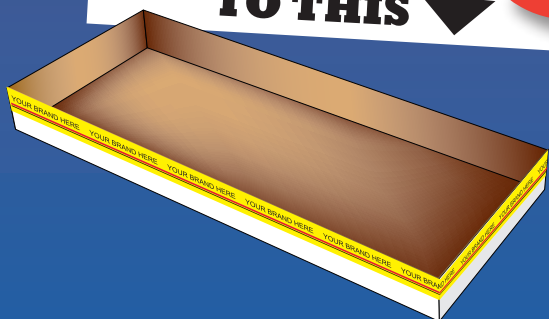


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Two-tiered branding. Duane Reade's private-label approach creates two quality tiers for food and beverage items. DR Delish is on the high end and the value brand is called Cityscape. Value brands are notable for UPC code-style depictions of landmarks around New York City.



design oozes with the character of New York City. Labels on cans of Delish Deluxe nuts, for example, spotlight color photography of the nuts whimsically positioned on bar stools and park benches, and in taxicabs, in scenes shot in black and white.

In contrast, the Cityscape family of products emphasizes UPC code-style illustrations of the Statue of Liberty, Brooklyn Bridge, and other local landmarks on the front-of-pack artwork. These designs appear on some food products, as well as on packages of frequently purchased items like bottled water and bath tissue.

"It's not about the attributes, but more about clear communication of value," Maute says.

### Repositioning in household

Elsewhere in the store, Duane Reade's Apt 5 brand has relocated from cosmetics to household products, where it has been repositioned with an apartment-living motif. "We thought it was a perfect match for how many New Yorkers live," Tiberio says.

Dish soap, toilet bowl cleaner, and other products appear in bright, color packages where photography again takes center stage. Apt 5 toilet paper packages feature an image of an empty roll on a tiled bathroom wall in a typical New York City apartment.

Apt 5 is further segmented with a green product lineup. Eco-friendly cleaning products feature bright-green labels and interior photography of bathrooms, kitchens, and living rooms from New York apartments.

"We repositioned the Apt 5 brand name out of cosmetics and into household, which we thought was a perfect match for how many New Yorkers live," Tiberio says.

The new look at Duane Reade seems to be working. Not only have private-brand sales improved, but anecdotally New Yorkers are talking more positively about Duane Reade today.

"Bottom line," Tiberio concludes, "we believe that the very positive reception that consumers have given us at the cash register is a direct result of category and design strategies supporting our 'New York Living Made Easy' corporate mission statement." **{SI}**



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# INNOVATION SURVEY | ShelfImpact! DRAGON ROUGE

## Taking innovation to the extreme

Product concept and package structure remain strong companions, and some recent packages take it further through waste minimization or added convenience.

By Eric Zeitoun

### Survey draws strong response

For the third consecutive year, *Shelf Impact!* and **Dragon Rouge** are partnering and asking branding and packaging professionals to help us identify packaging innovation through our exclusive quarterly survey. We asked *Shelf Impact!* readers to evaluate packages for 15 recent product introductions, and received more than 220 responses. Readers evaluated the packages through the lens of five distinct criteria:

- The product concept's ability to provoke new ways of thinking about a category.
- The product structure's ability to present new ways of interacting with a product type.
- The packaging graphics' innovative cues that help bring the product positioning to life.
- The packaging's use of innovative materials.
- The relative effectiveness of the packaging production process.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the designs on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 signified that the packaging innovation delivered poorly and 5 signified that it delivered extremely well. The resulting scores are meant to analyze what factors drive perceived innovation, and to identify trends in design innovation.

Consistent with the past couple of years, a strong correlation continues between perceived product concept innovation and packaging structure innovation. A few consumer packaged goods companies are putting a twist on it, however.

A new *Shelf Impact! / Dragon Rouge* ([www.dragonrouge-usa.com](http://www.dragonrouge-usa.com)) survey of innovative packages detected a strong preference for innovative choices in production and materials that either minimize waste or enhance user convenience. Expanding into a totally new realm, new recent package introductions that are particularly notable for innovation include make-up kits that talk to you, storage containers that have more lives than a cat, and portable wine barrels. Packaging sci-fi is just a round the corner!

### Structure is king (redux)...

With a composite score ranging 3.6 to 3.9 on a five-point scale, the five package innovations that rose to the top of our quarterly survey list are Planet People's IQ household cleaners line, gift boxes from Greek winemaker Ktima Gerovassilou, and new introductions from Truvia (sweetener dispenser), Stila Cosmetics (container) and Sunkist (dispensing pouch). See the sidebar for how our survey was conducted.

To view an image and brief description of each of the 15 packages reviewed during the first quarter, go to [www.shelfimpact.com/go/9](http://www.shelfimpact.com/go/9).

Unknown to many of us until a few months ago, Greek winemakers made a big splash in the U.S. by introducing stacked wine containers that double as wine racks. The containers are made from oak plywood, inspired by the barrels in which the wine matures. The shape of the containers conforms to the shape of the wine bottles, while a handle die-cut into the container enables the package to be carried easily. As a further enhancement, each wine container can be stacked to create a virtual wine rack. Forget the wine cooler. Get the cool portable version!

Meanwhile, Truvia helps consumers save an extra step in their day-to-day chores while doing away with an antiquated sugar dispenser. While natural sweeteners often are found in sachets, and sugar is sold in spillage-prone bags and cartons, Cargill's Truvia redefines convenience by introducing a wide-mouth PET container that enables consumers to spoon the sugar substitute right out of the package. The jar's softly curved shoulder and flip-top closure allows easy access to the product.

As an added benefit, when the shrink-sleeve label is removed, the empty jar offers a second life as a handy storage container.

Stila Cosmetics, a brand known for its whimsical tone, really assists its consumers in mastering the art of applying makeup. The brand released a smart package that talks directly to consumers on shelf. The talking eye shadow palette packs both show and tell consumers how to use the product to achieve a "smokey eye" look. A lenticular image on the front panel changes



Talking palette. SI readers who reviewed 15 new packages were drawn to those that made product use easier, and one of them was Stila Cosmetics' talking eye shadow palette. This "smart" package guides consumers on achieving a "smokey eye" look.



Fine for wine. Greek winemakers made a big splash in the U.S. by introducing stacked wine containers that double as wine racks. The containers are made from oak plywood, inspired by the barrels in which the wine matures. The shape of the containers conforms to the shape of the wine bottles.

to reveal a visual representation of the look when the case is turned at different angles. The inside of the package itself becomes a virtual makeup artist: by pushing a button, an audio recording guides the user through the steps to achieve the desired effect.

### Smart materials and convenience

The new survey also was notable for two packages in which smart materials deliver greater convenience to consumers.

One of these packages is for Planet People's IQ household products, which introduced a cleaner cartridge that allows for a guilt-free cleaning experience. Recognizing that household cleaner bottles typically end up in landfill, the brand developed a user and environmentally friendly cleaning solution (made of chemical and toxin-free, plant based water) that is packaged in a cartridge inserted inside the bottle. The outer package is entirely recyclable (both the sprayer and the bottle), and the user only needs to replace the cartridge and mix it with additional water.



Gallon-size pouch. Sunkist Protein's one-gallon hot-fill standup pouch, with a patented dispensing feature, holds up to 48 servings of highly concentrated protein drink.



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Sunkist Protein, the brand that wants to make sure you get enough fat-free and carbohydrate-free protein in your body, introduced a one-gallon hot-fill standup pouch with a patented dispensing feature. Because the pouch can hold up to 48 servings of highly concentrated protein drink, shelf stability and product preservation are critical. The pouch material structure includes a gas-barrier foil that gives the package a two-year shelf life, with no need for refrigeration. Think about the retailing and logistical gains for retailers and consumers alike!

Sometimes, though, materials overload can backfire. For example, although Sargento's new fridge pack gets high marks on its product concept and structure, our survey respondents gave it a somewhat lower overall score because of the perception that choice of materials conveys the idea that the package is low on recyclability.

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Time-saving package. A wide-mouth PET container for Cargill's Truvia brand redefines convenience by enabling consumers to spoon the sugar substitute from the package, a time-saving option to other sugar bags and cartons.

The good news is the brand developed a compelling innovation built on a clear insight. The product answers a need for adults, 18 and older, to have convenient access to healthful snacks. The package structure brings that insight to life, as individual cheese sticks are visible through the pack while on display in the fridge. But somehow, in the view of our survey respondents, the choice of materials (a paperboard carton with a perforated carton top, along with film wrap for each individual stick) sends a message of low recyclability and too much packaging.

As you think about starting 2011 with a fresh perspective on packaging innovation, keep in mind that:

- Package structure can go a long way in showcasing how distinctive and innovative your product concept really is.
- Smart materials act as solid proof points to great package structure.
- No matter how clever your choice of materials, the structure needs to speak to a tangible benefit.
- If you can't afford a really new package structure, think about how graphics and smarter production can make you look different and align better with your value proposition. **{SIN}**

The author, Eric Zeitoun, is president of Dragon Rouge USA, an international brand and design consultancy. Contact him at [eric@dragonrouge-usa.com](mailto:eric@dragonrouge-usa.com) or 212/367-8800.





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If you're looking for package design and branding ideas, or even inspiration for your creative team, this year's FUSE: Design & Culture | Branding Identity & Packaging conference will provide a variety of topics to meet your needs. The conference, produced by the Institute for International Research ([www.iirusa.com](http://www.iirusa.com)), will be April 11-13 at the Westin River North in Chicago.

*Shelf Impact!* again is a media partner of this year's event.

This year's featured keynote speakers and topics are:

• Jonathan Harris, anthropologist and co-creator of We Feel Fine, "Humans + Technology = ?"

• Michio Kaku, futurist, physicist, and TV personality, "What's Next in Business, Commerce and Finance as Indicated by the Latest Research in Science?"

• Karim Rashid, designer, "The Importance of Design in a New Era."

• Ian Schrager, chairman & CEO, Ian Schrager Co., "On Design and Inspiration."

This year, PROOF: Market Research for Packaging & Innovation has been integrated as preconference



Michio Kaku

symposia. PROOF and a preconference workshop are scheduled for April 11 at the Art Institute. FUSE begins April 12, and will be divided into the following tracks: creative and design, brand strategy, cultural anthropology and trends, and social media. These topic areas will include speakers from Coca-Cola North America, Kimberly-Clark, Bath & Body Works, Target Stores, Procter & Gamble, Frito-Lay/Pepsico, Coty, and Benjamin Moore.

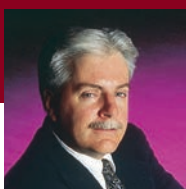
In addition, the Creative & Design track will include "champagne roundtables" holding discussions on private label, app design, and iRetail design.

Complete registration and program agenda information is at [www.iirusa.com/fuse](http://www.iirusa.com/fuse). **{S!}**



Ian Schrager





Jim George, Marketing &amp; Design Editor

## Fifth-panel carton spotlights Microsoft's mouse innovation

Microsoft is synonymous with product innovation. Now the company is innovating through packaging as well by integrating product development with package development. A great recent example is the December 2010 introduction of the Arc Touch Mouse.

The premium, wireless mouse pops up into a curved shape for comfort during use and flattens for storage and portability. It features Microsoft's first touch-scroll strip for easy navigation by moving a finger slowly for controlled scrolling or flicking it for hyperfast scrolling.

Microsoft Corp., Redmond, WA, wanted a package that supports these advanced features—and the mouse's \$70 price point. It opted for a carton that spotlights the



mouse during package opening, with a graphic design that communicates the mouse's folding and arching mechanism on the carton's outer top spine.

"We solicited feedback from our subsidiaries around the world about our potential package designs," says Cathy Moya, Microsoft user experience manager. "We also went into people's homes in the Seattle area and watched them open the box and use the mouse."

From that research comes a fifth-panel carton, provided by **Starlite Holdings Ltd.** ([www.hkstarlite.com](http://www.hkstarlite.com)) and designed with assistance from **MeadWestvaco** ([www.mwv.com](http://www.mwv.com)), that showcases product benefits and boasts 30% post-consumer recycled water bottle flaps in the plastic packaging components. The other 70% is virgin APET.

The mouse and accessories nestle in a tray in the primary carton. The carton is screen-printed in six colors plus a UV coating. The mouse is less than 15 mm thick, and it lies flat inside the package.

The molded-pulp tray, from **Sun Union Environmental Packaging** ([www.sununion.com](http://www.sununion.com)), slips inside a fifth-panel carton that contains a film-covered, die-cut window. The mouse is positioned in the tray so it clearly is the center of attention when the user opens the package. In addition, a photograph of the mouse is embossed on the carton's outer fifth panel, and the inner panel features a photograph of a desktop in which the mouse is displayed in "working" position.

"The goal behind the Arc Touch Mouse packaging was to 'bend the rules' on a reduced-size package, and to design it in a way that conveys the thin profile of this unique product, blending a compact design with convenience and logic," says Jill Geurts, Microsoft structural packaging engineer. "It pushes us to use less materials and fewer words to communicate the value proposition of the product. It offers versatile assortment options at retail, including a hang-tab, yet a design that stands on shelves or in P-O-P displays more easily." **[SII]**

## Graphics, smaller cups bring Greek yogurt to kids

A brand extension can make sense in a hot category when the objective is to find new consumers and build sales. This is happening in Greek (strained) yogurt, where Agro Farma Brands, New Berlin, NY, has created a new subcategory to court kids in a segment that previously has focused on health-conscious adults.

Agro Farma's Chobani is the No. 1 yogurt brand in the Northeast, and claims half of the Greek yogurt market, which accounts for 17% of all yogurt sales, up from less than 5% two years ago. Agro Farma is looking to improve its stronghold in Greek yogurt with Chobani Champions, for 4- to 12-year-olds.

Chobani Champions is marketed in four-packs. The 3.5-oz high-density polyethylene cups are sized for children's appetites.

It's the graphics on both the cups and the sleeves, printed offset in six colors, that deliver the kid-centric message, says Niel Sandfort, Chobani brand manager. The art elements consist of photo-realistic fruit illustrations combined with a graphic depiction of the yogurt product and cup. They appear on the shrink-sleeve labels that

decorate the polypropylene cups and also on the sleeves, which are made with a poly-coated paper from **The Mid-York Press** ([www.midYorkpress.com](http://www.midYorkpress.com)).

The package design, created by **Ceradini Brand Design** ([www.ceradini.com](http://www.ceradini.com)), portrays the yogurt in a fun, playful, and charming way, communicating the potential of children to become champions in their own lives. In addition, the on-pack communications build parents' trust about the product as a healthful snack.

"The packaging was designed to stand out in a sea of vivid colors and imagery now popular in the kids' section of the yogurt case," Sandfort says. "While many other yogurt brands speak directly to children, we designed our packaging to first appeal to moms." **[SII]**



### → Co M p A n i e s

**Spee-Dee Packaging Machinery** expanded its Canadian presence by entering into a partnership with Markham, Ontario-based **MD Packaging**.

**AlliedFlex** entered into a multiyear agreement with **Robert's Packaging** to continue as the exclusive sales and marketing partner for Robert's Packaging's stand-up pouch machinery.

**Bosch Packaging Technology** changed the company names of its subsidiaries. **Sigpack Systems AG**, based in Beringen, Switzerland, will become **Bosch Packaging Systems AG**, and **Paal Verpackungsmaschinen GmbH** in Remshalden, Germany, will become **Bosch Packaging Systems GmbH**.

**DAK Americas LLC** is proceeding with the acquisition of the integrated PET and PTA business of **Eastman Chemical Co.**

**Menasha Packaging Co.** announced a \$4.2 million planned expansion to its facility in Hartford, WI.

Bill Zito formed **Zito Induction Technology Options (ZITO)**, a packaging consulting service that will concentrate on induction sealing and related issues as well as induction sealing equipment, induction liner recommendations, and closure technology.

**Rockwell Automation, Inc.** agreed to purchase South Africa-based **Hiprom**, a process control and automation systems integrator.

**Toray Plastics (America)** announced a plan to begin construction in the second quarter of 2011 on a \$2 million, 446-kW solar photovoltaic field on its 70-acre campus in North Kingstown, RI.

**Bway Holding Co.** has acquired **Phoenix Container, Inc.**

**DDL** announced the expansion of its testing lab in Edison, NJ.

**Praxis Packaging** has been recognized by the Safety Quality Food Institute and certified under the SQF 2000CM Code as a Level Three, Comprehensive Food Safety and Quality Management System.

### → people

Oystar GmbH formed **Oystar North America** and chose **Barry Shoulders**, president of Oystar Packaging Technologies, to lead Oystar North America. Other management positions include: **Tom Riggins**, sales; **Gordon Bonfield**, transition officer; **Jeff Wierenga**, service; and **Susan Awadalla**, finance.

**Cezary Mroz** was named director of engineering and development for Morrison Container Handling Solutions.

**Louis Weiner** joined A+ Secure Packaging, LLC as vice president of sales and LLC member.

### → AChieveMent s

**McDowell Label** celebrated its 30th year in business with a visit from the Honorable Sam Johnson, member of Congress.

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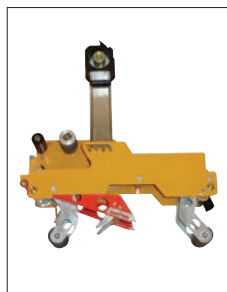
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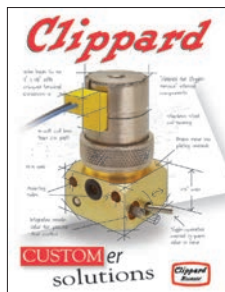




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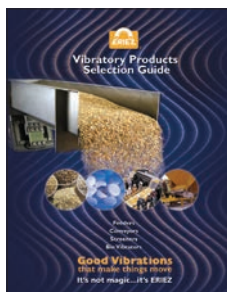
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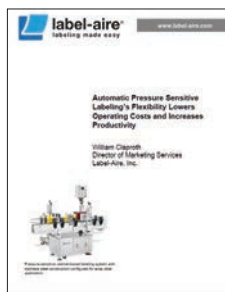
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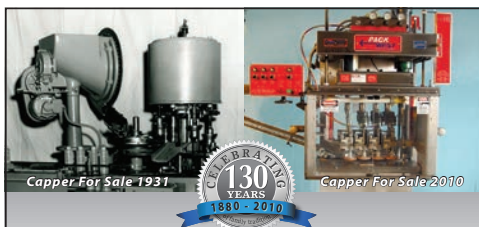
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# Brazil's Rising Star

Pat Farrey

The Chinese packaging market is projected to surpass the U.S. packaging market volume by 2015. With the attention this news has attracted, packaging manufacturers may be overlooking equally attractive opportunities in another BRIC country, Brazil.

A 60 Minutes story in January (<http://bit.ly/gAy5kf>) confirms the potential of this rising market. Noting that Brazil was the last market to be affected by the recent economic crisis and the first to successfully emerge, U.S. companies should consider the opportunities to export to, start new businesses in, or partner with Brazil's market of nearly 200 million people.

"Brazil's production of packaging grew at an astonishing 16.3% in the first half of 2010 and will likely close the year with cumulative growth of about 10%," according to Salomão Quadros, Coordinator of Economic Analyses of Fundação Getúlio Vargas, an economic statistics research center. This growth creates a Brazilian packaging industry valued at \$23.9 billion in 2010, reports the Brazilian Packaging Association (ABRE).

While the Brazilian market has long been self-sufficient, with rich natural resources and growing manufacturing operations, recent trends indicate a significant shift.

According to Mauricio Groke, President of ABRE, there have been dramatic changes in both packaging imports and exports. Brazil's packaging exports grew at almost 16% in 2010 (\$185 million), while imports grew almost 57%, reaching about \$320 million. Flexible packaging (mostly films) represents the highest percent of both imports and exports, while metal packaging remained the most imported Brazilian packaging material.

Brazilian growth industries for packaging include beverages (+16%), pharmaceuticals (+9.3%) and foods (+5.3%). And in the food category, fruit juices have experienced 20.61% growth, followed by sugar with 15.49%, pet food with 11.22%, preserves and sauces with 8.05% and milk and dairies with 7.02%. Among other packaging users, agricultural chemicals registered an increase of 37% in the first half of 2010, followed by inks and varnishes with 26.5% growth.

To be successful in Brazil—and of course in any other market around the world—one must understand the local reality and closely follow the current trends. The most important packaging event in Brazil, the Brazilian Packaging Congress, held in late 2010, unveiled a new reality to national and international companies that want to succeed in this market: every product and market strategy must be aligned to the

sustainability issue across the entire value chain, from the product to the final consumer.

Consider the retail chain Grupo Pão de Açúcar, which has about 15% of market share in Brazil. They were the first to operate a "green" distribution center and a "green" store model in the country. With these initiatives they have reduced by 38% their consumption of energy, by 27% their consumption of water and send only 7% of its garbage to landfills. The company also heads the first private recycling program in Brazil, in partnership with Unilever; it operates today two hundred collection centers in the state of São Paulo. The program is responsible for collecting the equivalent of 20% of all the material collected in São Paulo, which results in more than 39 thousand tons of recycled materials.

According to a recent Nielsen research, the model of Pão de Açúcar's stores is one of the macro trends that will most influence Brazilian retail in the future. Beyond sustainability, other positive trends to consider, and

to capitalize upon, in the Brazilian market are the increased corporate appetite for acquisitions, the growing number of retail stores, geographic expansion, and multi-channel retail strategy. In the latter, the cash & carry format has special prominence, and in all of

*"Brazil's production of packaging grew at an astonishing 16.3% in the first half of 2010 and will likely close the year with cumulative growth of about 10%."*

them a well-planned packaging strategy is required.

In terms of business opportunities, an understanding of Brazilian cultural trends is the best way to expand business beyond the US frontier. In practical terms, more packaging (and of course machinery, equipment, etc.) will be needed to develop new categories of products to meet the increasing demand of Brazil's new consumers and their purchasing power, including greater demand for better package functionality and convenience, healthier products and more luxury, "indulgent" product experiences. Sophistication, newness and innovation, driven largely by packaging improvements, have new-found consumer demand.

A report in the February 12th *Wall Street Journal* noted that Brazil was the 16th largest export market for U.S. product in 1990. By 2000, Brazil moved to #13, and #8 in 2010, making Brazil second only to China in export growth.

Most, if not all, of the new demands of the emerging Brazilian market are trends U.S. companies have been experiencing for years. Our experience, and the products and strategies now well-developed, are easily exportable. Coupled with a strong, stable economy, growing consumer demand and untapped potential, Brazil may well be the next great partner for U.S. expansion. **PW**

**About the Author:** Pat Farrey is the Executive Director of the Institute of Packaging Professionals. Contact him at [pfarrey@iopp.org](mailto:pfarrey@iopp.org). For information about IoPP, visit [www.iopp.org](http://www.iopp.org).





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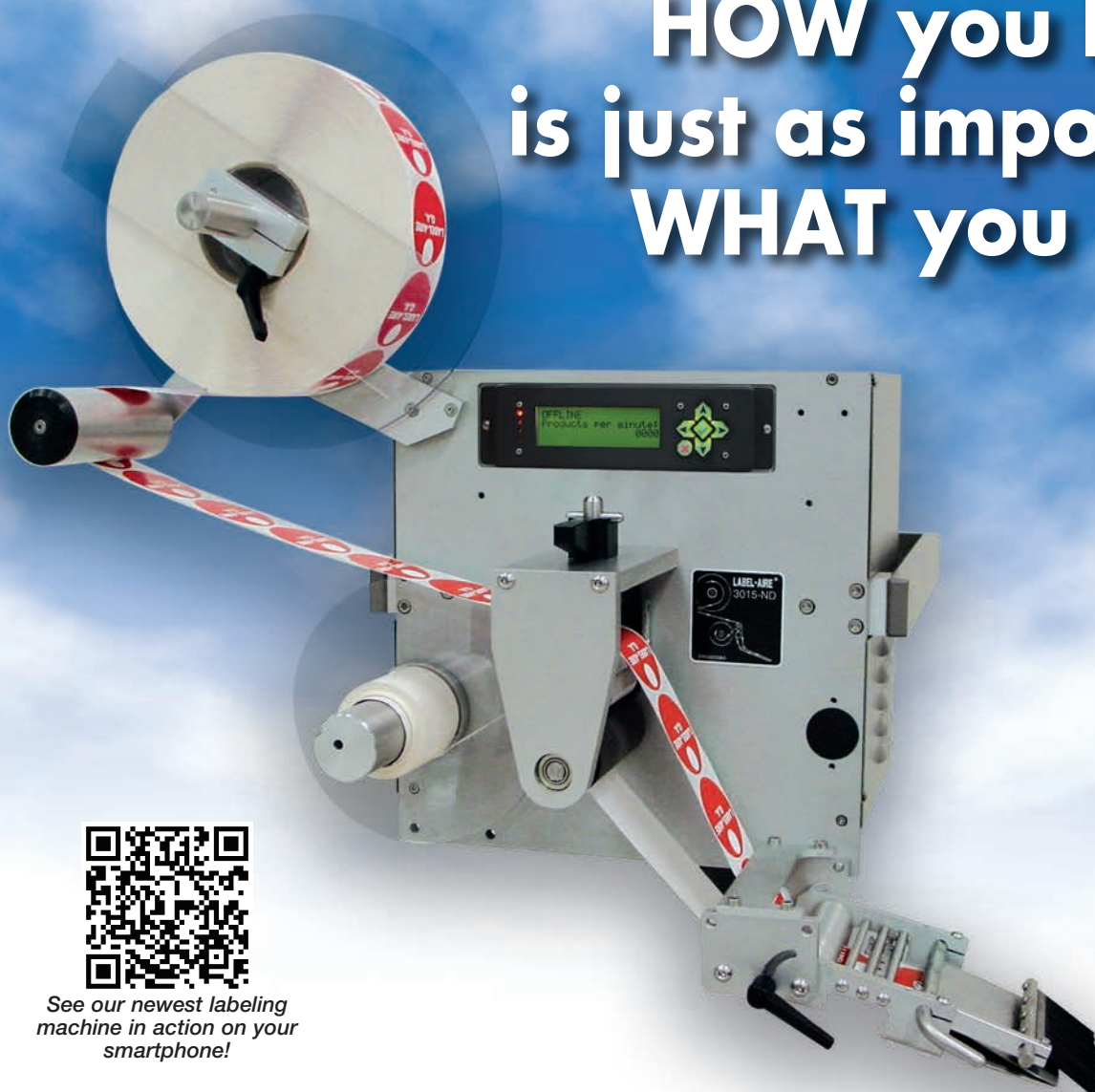
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