

Drinks Packaging: Making it more environmentally responsible

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Abstracts

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SUMMARY

Some major new trends are sweeping through the beverage industry and they are having a major impact on both manufacturers and consumers. For the soft drinks industry sugar has now become a dirty word and sugar taxes have forced companies to create new formulas and diversify away from carbonates as that segment begins to decline. For the enhanced water segment new opportunities are developing as consumers are moving towards bottled water and away from sugar and this means a great deal of innovation is happening with new enhanced water healthy ingredients. For the hot drinks industry convenience and premiumization is changing the landscape and new types of on the go products are becoming the main consumer choice. Packaging up these products is becoming a major headache for beverage manufacturers however, as environmental challenges and consumer behaviors are forcing companies to look for new solutions to old problems.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Despite some major gains in the industry, in terms of reducing the weight of products, improving the recycling process and increasing reusable materials, plastic bottles have become a major environmental news story which is harming the soft drink industry. Throughout 2017 and 2018, plastics making their way to the ocean and causing litter pollution in cities have been in multiple media stories and this is a problem for the beverage industry, because not only is it the best material for many soft drink product types, there are no ideal new packing

solutions to change to. Furthermore, the use of PET plastics in bottle packaging is increasing rather than decreasing as the bottled water boom continues to grow.

The war on plastic is already underway in Europe. In January, the EU announced a multipronged plan to clamp down on plastic pollution. The initiative calls for making all plastic sold in Europe either reusable or recyclable by 2030. However, the manufacturers themselves are already aiming to beat this goal regardless, with Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and Danone all announcing substantial plans to make their products more recyclable. In late January 2018, Coca-Cola announced that it plans to help collect and recycle 100% of its bottles and cans by 2030 with its bottles containing 50% recycled content. PepsiCo is moving in a similar direction, announcing plans in 2017 to make 100% of its packaging recyclable or recoverable by 2025. Danone has promised that its Evian brand will use 100% recycled plastic in its bottles by 2025. Other companies have also been experimenting with higher recycling rates including bottled water manufacturers such as Highland Spring and washing up liquid manufacturer Ecover.

Despite the impressive claims made by soft drinks manufacturers as to their plans to dramatically increase recycling, one of the major problems is that consumers themselves are not recycling enough of their products. Plastic bottles, aluminum cans and glass bottles are today all highly recyclable products but this doesn't mean that consumers are responsibly dealing with them, or that governments have effective collection and recycling plants in place. Recycling logos have been on drinks packages for many years, but global recycling rates are very poor when considering that the vast majority of packaging products can be recycled today. Estimates vary but globally some reports suggest around 91% of plastics are not being recycled by consumers and this is leading to the considerable environmental problems that we are seeing today with plastic making its way into oceans and ending as litter or in landfill. The reality of the situation is that the packaged drinks industry may not be able to help the problem significantly just by increasing its own recycling of material when producing new products. Recycling deposit schemes are a potential solution to this problem, they force consumers to pay a small amount when purchasing the product, which is returned when the packaging is returned.

SCOPE

Examine the major trends in the drinks and beverage industry and what companies are doing to exploit them

See why the latest sugar coverage is having such a big effect on the industry

Explore the reasons behind the rise of bottled water and the new opportunities in that segment

Examine the problems the industry faces with packaging

REASONS TO BUY

What are the key changes happening in the non alcoholic drinks industry?

What players are making significant new moves in the industry?

Are there any opportunities arising out of major industry trends?

What new products are starting to gain traction with consumers?

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Catalyst

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Plastic bottle use in the beverage industry is a major environmental problem

Europe shuns single-use packs in favor of sustainable solutions

Soft drinks manufacturers will be battling against human nature

The three main packaging varieties all have positive and negative attributes for reuse

Glass versus cans, perhaps neither is a good solution to replace plastic

Clever can toppers help solve hygiene concerns in the can industry, but not environmental ones

More unusual and exotic solutions are being developed by start-ups

Refillable containers are being explored, in combination with drinks machines

Pepsi Co purchases Soda Stream to improve health and environmental product line

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