

Sustainable Packaging - A full shift to Paper and Bioplastics is nether Viable nor Sustainable

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Abstracts

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SUMMARY

Investigating trends and misconceptions over packaging materials helps to understand the future of sustainable packaging. Sustainability has become an important affair for a growing number of consumers, who are concerned with environmental pollution, the depletion of natural resources and climate change. Consumer goods' packaging is particularly responsible for environmental pollution, also impacting natural resources and climate change; thus sustainable packaging is increasingly resonating with consumers' decisions. Paper and other plant-based packaging materials have seen growing popularity as a result given that they are highly recyclable or/and compostable. However, adopting new packaging solutions to address the issue of sustainability comes with a new set of challenges.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Paper-based packaging materials have posed as the most environmentally viable solution, supported by consumers' favorable sentiment based on its high recycling capacity. Surprisingly though, it is proven that consumers' attitudes are biased.

With brands and retailers aligning with false consumer attitudes, they miss two important points; paper packaging cannot be a fit-for-all packaging solution, having

significant functional drawbacks, while its supply cannot grow indefinitely to support sustainable packaging, especially when recycling rates are falling its production cost increases, driven by the strong expansion of online retail.

Misconceptions around the environment sustainability of bioplastics also exist, creating a false image of superiority against conventional plastic. Most importantly, bioplastics, especially those that are plant-based, cannot be viable at large scale as their competing with food crops, while their cost of development remains too high to allow further deployment.

The answer to which is the best sustainable packaging practice is more complex than it seems. First of all, there is no one fit-for-all approach to packaging solutions, as there is no such thing as most sustainable packaging material. The best approach should depend on the product itself, also taking into account the environmental impact of that choice. Secondly, the first short to mid-term step towards achieving packaging sustainability is the investment in redesigning and recovery systems for existing packaging materials to increase the potential of circular economy. Finally, the long-term goal of achieving sustainability in packaging is the replacement of the prevalent single-use packaging culture by a re-use culture, with brand owners and retailers having the potential to adopt new circular-use packaging models.

Sustainability has become an important affair for a growing number of consumers, who are concerned with environmental pollution, the depletion of natural resources and climate change. Consumer goods' packaging is significantly responsible for environmental pollution, also impacting natural resources and climate change, thus sustainable packaging is increasingly resonating with consumers' decisions.

SCOPE

Understand the major trends in sustainable packaging

See how companies are making adjustments to their offerings

Learn how sustainability is a complex topic and packaging material choice is not simple

See how some unexpected materials can be more sustainable than others

REASONS TO BUY

What materials are considered to be sustainable?

What packaging options should suppliers be choosing?

How can companies be sustainable?

What are the major packaging trends?

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