

Food and Drink Packaging Trends - UK - February 2013

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“The food and drink industry suffers a bad reputation for excessive packaging. There is scope for manufacturers to overturn this negative perception by communicating to consumers the positive impact packaging can have on the environment by extending shelf life and reducing waste – particularly with technological advancements.”

– Emma Clifford, Senior Food Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- Does the food and drink packaging industry need to do more to react to the UK's ageing population?
- How can manufacturers change consumers' negative attitudes towards packaging?
- How can package design be used to heighten engagement with customers?
- How can cross-category influences inject excitement into packaging NPD?

Packaging is a fundamental element of the food and drink market, providing an important signpost to the products within. It can serve a variety of functions, including: protecting products from damage in the supply chain, extending shelf life, heightening convenience for the user and increasing shelf standout.

However, despite the industry's progress in reducing the amount of packaging used, a negative attitude towards packaging prevails and most Britons perceive a lot of it to be unnecessary. This puts the onus on manufacturers to more effectively communicate to consumers the myriad benefits of packaging, and the key role it can play in reducing food waste by keeping food fresher for longer.

While the overarching green trend has seen awareness of environmental issues rise, the shaky economic climate and squeezed disposable incomes have seen consumers adopt a more apathetic attitude towards ethical matters such as recycling. As such, consumers prioritise practical packaging features, such as keeping food fresh and being resealable, easy to open and stackable over recyclability.

Packaging innovation continues at a rapid pace, with manufacturers keen to give their products a competitive edge in an increasingly cluttered marketplace. To capitalise on key demographic growth areas, manufacturers should focus on packaging solutions which cater for the burgeoning number of older consumers and the shift towards smaller households.

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