

Packaging for Convenience: On-the-Go's the Way to Go

PMMI

PACK EXPO spotlights new technologies to create the convenience consumers demand

Whether they want portion control, quick-step cooking or easy handling, consumers are increasingly seeking out food and beverage products that cater to their on-the-go lifestyles. For brand owners, that means investing in the equipment and materials that enable new package formats. Enabling it all are the equipment manufacturers and suppliers responding to consumer trends by offering brand managers innovative new packaging designs and options.

These are the convenience-enhancing solutions showcased in The Brand Zone at [PACK EXPO International 2014 \(November 2-5, 2014; McCormick Place, Chicago\)](#). [1] owned and produced by PMMI, The Association for Packaging and Processing Technologies. Together with the co-located Pharma EXPO, produced in partnership by PMMI and the International Society of Pharmaceutical Engineering (ISPE), PACK EXPO will be North America's largest event of the year for processing and packaging innovation. PMMI and ISPE anticipate 1.15 million net square feet of exhibit space, 2,000 exhibitors and over 50,000 attendees.



A New Approach to Fast Food

"People today have limited time to cook, but they still want satisfying food," says Milan Moscaritolo, senior director of sales, Toray Plastics (America) (Booth #N-5467). One trend he points to is strong demand for ovenable lidding films for the increasing variety of prepared meals and side-dish foods available to consumers. Concurrently, Toray is seeing a demand for solvent-free lidding films and formats in which food products are displayed more clearly.

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Toray manufactures extruded and co-extruded polypropylene, polyester, bio-based and metallized packaging and lidding films that offer oxygen- and moisture-barrier properties. Its solvent-free LumiLid® polyester lidding films are FDA-compliant for oven temperatures of up to 400°F for 30 minutes.

Kerri Boyens, product manager in the Torayfan® polypropylene division at Toray, noting increasing calls for PVdC-free, clear, high-barrier OPP films that are more environmentally sustainable, while offering excellent barrier durability.

“We are also seeing growing demand for stand-up pouches and directional-tear sealant films for retort and non-retort gusseted and non-gusseted pouches,” she says.

At PACK EXPO International, Toray will showcase new coating capabilities and new films, including Torayfan® CBS2 BOPP clear high-barrier, PVdC-free film, and new bio-based and metallized PET films.

From Freezer to Oven

Sealed Air's (Booth #S-2939) new products respond to the results of a consumer research study commissioned jointly by the American Meat Institute and the Food Marketing Institute, and sponsored by Sealed Air's Cryovac® food packaging brand. The report showed less than a third of consumers registering “high confidence” in their knowledge of how to prepare fish and seafood. In 2013, Sealed Air launched Cryovac® Oven Ease® packaging for frozen seafood.

This year, at PACK EXPO International 2014, Sealed Air will showcase new convenience-enhancing technologies to satisfy consumer demand for easy, one-step cooking options for frozen food. The company's Cryovac® Oven Ease® line of ovenable packaging allows consumers to store and cook raw products in the same packaging.

“Our technology makes sure material bonds are tight, and that seals retain their integrity throughout cooking,” says Don Smith, director of marketing-poultry and seafood packaging for Sealed Air's Food Care division. “This is a big concern for consumers since a key motivation for purchasing frozen seafood items in ovenable packaging is more convenient meal preparation.”

The Oven Ease® material runs on most traditional thermoform rollstock equipment, minimizing the need for new equipment costs.

Improving the Consumer Experience

A leader in creative packaging, Ampac (Booth #S-3483) focuses on developing packaging design and engineered films and laminates for challenging packaging applications. According to Sal Pellingra, vice president of innovation and technology at Ampac, packaging that opens and re-closes easily continues to be a top demand for consumers.

“After purchasing a product, consumer interaction with the packaging becomes

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integral in shaping their brand experience. If this experience is positive, or more importantly not negative, there's a much higher probability for repeat purchases," Pellingra says.

He adds that pouches designed for convenience and one-handed operation for opening and dispensing are desirable. Flip-top fitments are in high demand for busy consumers seeking convenience-enhancing packaging, citing new moms and dads as good examples.

"They usually have a baby in one arm and appreciate the convenience of being able to open and close a package with one hand," Pellingra says.

At this year's PACK EXPO, Ampac will exhibit the new E-Z SnackPak™, a flexible pouch package designed to open up like a tray. It allows consumers to eat snacks without having to dig deep into packages.

"It's designed to boost shelf impact and stand out from the sea of sameness in the snack food aisle. It also uses less material than standard snack bags for greater sustainability," Pellingra says.



Shaping Up

New packaging shapes, particularly in the breakfast cereal category, are enhancing aesthetics along with convenience.

"The industry seems to be stepping away from traditional square containers for cereal in favor of rounded cups," says James Wearley, general manager of FEMC (Booth #S-2862), which specializes in custom filling, sealing and denesting packaging systems. FEMC dedicates about 70 percent of its operations to food packaging equipment.

Wearley notes that the cup shape for cereal is not only more attractive to consumers, but also reduces shipping costs. However, the growing usage of cups in the cereal category isn't the only trend transforming the landscape of store shelves. FEMC has retrofitted the older machine lines of customers to accommodate new

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shapes for prepared foods such as individual cheese cake slices, varied cup shapes for products such as frozen and dry soups, yogurts, salsas and puddings, and multi-compartment containers for frozen entrees.

At PACK EXPO, FEMC will introduce new technologies that enable customers to make programming changes remotely to their manufacturing lines. These technologies will include new reporting software to enable programming changes directly from smartphones or tablets. The company also plans to have liquid filling machines on the show floor and is inviting attendees to bring products for demonstrations of its de-nesting capabilities.

Expanding the Single-Serve Concept

Single-serve or portion-controlled packaging formats continue to gain momentum, according to Matt Malott, vice president of sales and marketing for MULTIVAC US (Booth #N-4928). MULTIVAC develops integrated packaging equipment and solutions for numerous industries, including food, medical, consumer and beverage manufacturers.

Malott notes that beyond larger volume packages with resealability, consumers are looking for single-serve portions in convenience-ready packaging.

“Consumers want pre-portioned meal or snack components in a hermetically sealed package to ensure safety, quality and freshness,” he says. MULTIVAC will display a recent example of the lunchbox concept in which four unique snack food items are sealed and perforated for individual consumption, all within a single package.

“From the brand or product marketing management aspect, the lunch box package provides reduced cost and expanded point of purchase marketing messages through the use of flexible films in a stand-up on the shelf package with essentially four billboards for presenting unique marketing and product promotional information.”

MULTIVAC will also unveil a single-serve food service packaging product at PACK EXPO. Launched in partnership with Snapsil Corporation, the Snapsil™ package allows for simple one-handed opening and dispensing of any portioned product. The product application range is wide, from beverage enhancers and additives to liquid or granular cleaning.

Single-serve and portion-controlled packaging has been one of the driving forces behind product development at Plastic Technologies, Inc. (Booth #E-6827). PTI designs and engineers plastic packaging containers for major consumer product brands, taking projects from the concept stage all the way through to commercialization. Over the past few years, PTI's research and development has focused on packaging that enhances functionality and convenience.

One example is the Smiler™ two-compartment technology, which allows for single servings of two compatible products within one portable container. Another, PTI's Deep Grip™ handleware bottle, provides a convenient package for transporting and dispensing larger volume products. These two examples are part of a much wider

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range of possibilities as product manufacturers look to meet growing consumer demand for greater convenience, portion-control and on-the-go options.

“Recently we have seen a rise in single-serve wine containers for those consumers who do not want to open and dispense from a heavy glass bottle,” says Scott Steele, PTI’s president. “This packaging fits the on-the-go society we see more and more today, with hectic schedules and the need for controlled caloric intake.”

In addition to the Smiler™ and Deep Grip™ products, PTI will showcase at PACK EXPO new technologies aimed at enhancing shelf appeal with cost-effective color additions to packages; tools for reducing costs for in-line blow molding; and enhanced predictive modeling and simulation technologies to speed time to market.

Protecting Products, Reducing Waste

While consumers value convenience-enhancing features in packaging, they are also increasingly eco-conscious — especially when it comes to food waste.

“Food waste is a huge problem in America, and each year \$10 to \$15 billion in produce is unsold,” says Ben Blankenhorn, national sales manager for Desiccare, Inc. (Booth #E-6631). Desiccare works with food manufacturers to extend product life by using blends of different active ingredients.

To combat food waste, Desiccare is launching the Ethylene Eliminator Pak which is placed in packaging with fruits and vegetables to help slow the ripening process.

“This product not only helps grocers extend product shelf life, but it also helps consumers extend the lifetime of the product at home to minimize food waste,” Blankenhorn says.

Desiccare is also launching a new iron-free oxygen absorber, designed to remove oxygen from within sealed packages. The absorber prevents oxidation and food spoilage, and helps increase shelf life of foods such as dried meat, plants, baked goods and other products. Blankenhorn notes that an iron-free absorber will result in few product rejects for manufacturers using metal detection systems.

Prolonging the lifetime of food products is the impetus for a variety of new packaging formats. According to LaserSharp FlexPak Services (Booth #E-8430), resealable packaging is a significant marketplace trend.

“Consumers are looking for easy-to-use packaging that extends the life of products inside, from easy-open zipper and slider bags to peel/reseal features, lids, and spouts,” says Juan Carlos Tinoco, general manager of FlexPak. “These resealable applications add value to a product by making the contents easy to access use after use, increasing satisfaction with the product.”

FlexPak specializes in laser converting services for flexible packaging, using controlled and precise laser scoring, microperforating and etching services for a variety of easy-open and breathable packaging. The company will be showcasing its new PrimePeel™ peel and reseal packaging solution, which uses laser scoring for

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easy opening and resealing of foods while maintaining the integrity and sustainability of contents. PrimePeel™ applications include trays, pillow and stand-up pouches, with an easy-open pull tab.

To register for PACK EXPO International 2014, visit packexpo.com [2]. Registration is \$30 prior to October 3, 2014 and \$60 thereafter.

About PMMI

PMMI, The Association for Packaging and Processing Technologies, is a trade association representing over 650 packaging and processing supply chain companies that provide a full range of packaging and processing machinery, materials, components and containers. PMMI actively brings buyers and sellers together through programs and events such as The PACK EXPO family of trade shows, packexpo.com [3], PMT Magazine, PACK EXPO Show Daily, networking events and educational programs.

PMMI organizes the PACK EXPO trade shows: PACK EXPO International, Pharma EXPO, co-located with PACK EXPO International and presented jointly with the International Society for Pharmaceutical Engineering (ISPE); PACK EXPO Las Vegas, PACK EXPO East, EXPO PACK México and EXPO PACK Guadalajara, connecting participants in the packaging and processing supply chain with their customers around the world. Coming Up: EXPO PACK México 2014, June 17-20 (Mexico City, Mexico); PACK EXPO International 2014, Nov. 2-5 (McCormick Place, Chicago); Pharma EXPO, co-located with PACK EXPO International 2014; PACK EXPO East, debuting Feb. 16-18, 2015 (Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia); EXPO PACK Guadalajara 2015, March 10-12, 2015 (Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico).

Learn more about PMMI and the PACK EXPO trade shows at PMMI.org [4] and Packexpo.com [3].

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