



Five Reasons to Slash Plastics in Packaging

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Hard plastic packaging – clam shells and blister packs – have risen in popularity because they provide a high level of product protection. Over time, both producers and consumers have also found significant disadvantages.

The seemingly simple task of opening a clam shell or blister pack is significantly more difficult than with traditional packaging and can even be hazardous to consumers. For packaging manufacturers and retailers, the volume of plastics that has been added to the supply chain has come into direct conflict with sustainability goals.

Estimates are that product packaging accounts for something like 60% of all plastics waste by weight. This immense volume of plastics waste is now on the radar of individuals, corporations, lawmakers and regulators, who are increasingly aware that supply chains must become sustainable. Sourcing practices must change.

Plastics packaging, in fact, is losing its luster with consumers, and instead can place producers and retailers at a competitive disadvantage when practical and affordable alternatives are introduced into the market.

A recent study by Wunderman Thompson provides insights into how attitudes have changed. The study found that 77% of U.S. and European consumers surveyed are more likely to buy products if they could be sure they were packaged sustainably.

Cutting packaging waste reduces costs and helps companies achieve sustainability goals. Here are five primary reasons why cutting plastics in packaging has become necessary, and desirable:

1 Plastic Packaging Generates More Waste Than Any Other Industry

In Europe, plastics packaging accounts for 59% of all plastics by weight, and that number is closer to 65% in the U.S. according to a National Geographic report. Clam shells and blister packs are single-use plastics that can technically be recycled, though few of these plastics are being recycled in the U.S. The report notes that only 50% of U.S. households have curbside collection and less than 5% of plastics are recycled here.

Worse, much of the unrecycled plastics waste is burned and produces CO2 emissions along with other toxins.

By another important measure of waste, plastics packaging is also bad for a business's bottom line. As an example, in the case of one major brand, elimination of single-use plastics has resulted in material, labor, time and energy savings that together produced savings per unit of 50%.

2 The Costs of Switching to Sustainable Packaging Concern 43% of Brands

A survey of brands published in Raconteur magazine revealed that there are significant concerns about the costs of meeting consumer preferences for sustainable packaging.

The report notes that while it's true that the initial costs are often higher, "these costs tend to come down when volume increases, and the original investment is recovered."

Further, the report says, "sustainability often goes hand in hand with cost reductions if it is implemented at the design stage to reduce package size and material use."

The costs of reducing plastics in packaging can also be put into perspective when viewed compared with the costs of not making the conversion, including the potential loss of customers, regulatory penalties and taxes, and even damage to brand reputation.

3 Global Regulators and Lawmakers are Starting to Penalize Single-Use Plastics

In March 2022 all 193 UN Member States agreed to end plastics pollution. While it's true that putting the agreement into action is another matter, governments are moving to restrict the use of plastic.

Regulations such as the U.K. Single-Use Plastic Tax and similar legislation in Italy, Spain and elsewhere are examples of how the regulatory burden is increasing. Global Plastics Laws currently documents 1,246 such laws around the world.

In addition, some of the biggest consumer retailers have set

requirements for reducing the plastic content in products they carry.

4 Suboptimal Solutions Like Cable Ties Can Cut Throughput by Up to 400%

As pressure mounts to cut plastics use, quick fixes can bring relief, but often at a significant cost.

For example, cable ties — or even twist ties — can be employed to secure products to cardboard product display material as a simple way to nearly eliminate plastics in packaging. Unfortunately, these alternatives require significant manual labor resulting in increased cost. They can also cut throughput by as much as 400% when compared

with automatic or semi-automatic plastics packaging processes.

This dilemma further illustrates the need for a strategic approach that incorporates sustainability into the initial product design process. Though that means spending more time at the outset reducing or eliminating plastics, it will ultimately deliver a solution that is an optimal blend of responsible and profitable production and distribution.

5 Clam Shell Packaging Causes Some 6,000 Emergency Room Visits Annually

Not to be ignored are the very real hazards created by the use of clam shell packaging, in particular:

The phenomenon known as “wrap rage” can cause impatient consumers to resort to the use of knives and other dangerous implements to cut through clam shell packaging that is a barrier to easy opening.

Each year some 6,000 people visit emergency rooms with injuries and puncture wounds caused by hard plastic clam shells.

No brand wants to be associated with these injuries, much less responsible for the legal liability they can cause.

Avery Dennison Elastic Staple System to The Rescue

Fortunately, there is a ready-to-use (and simple) solution that can virtually eliminate the use of plastics in many types of packaging.

The unique design of the Avery Dennison IndES Elastic Staple System secures items to flat card systems or multi-level card packaging designs. It's an elegant solution to a complex problem.

While there are product categories that need significant protection (i.e. medical, food and fragile, for example), there are a wide range of consumer goods that are well suited to the system. It can lower costs and it often reduces plastic packaging content by 99%.

Use of this system also reduces the cubic volume of many packaged products, allowing more products to be

shipped in a carton, pallet or truck, as well as displayed on retail shelves and racks. Plus, it permits consumers to touch products that have previously been encased in hard plastic packages. For products that involve touch or physical interaction, this can encourage customers to make a purchase more readily.

Once in the consumer's hands, the cardboard packaging will easily be recycled when they dispose of it.

CPG brands switch to the Avery Dennison IndES Elastic Staple System because it provides:

- Quantifiable plastics savings
- Reduced unit cost
- Increased production throughput
- Enhanced customer experience
- Proven degradability
- Versatility (suits a wide range of industries/applications)

If you are using clam shells, blister packs, or cable ties, making the switch to the IndES Elastic Staple System will result in substantial plastics savings that you can easily quantify, report and take credit for. Better yet, the adoption of this system will likely reduce and improve sustainability performance.

Getting started can be as easy as contacting Avery Dennison. Their technicians are ready to provide mock-up samples of your product packaged plastics-free, and they will provide recommendations for converting your production process to include the Industrial Elastic Stable System.