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Quadpack demonstrates forward-thinking in eco friendly beauty packaging

Think about eco packaging and the three Rs immediately spring to mind. Reuse. Recycle. Reduce. Earth-friendly containers help save resources, energy, money and, of course, the environment. For cosmetics brands, however, such words may conjure up images of low-quality bottles, jars and tubes, that look cheap and perform accordingly.

Now more than ever, this could not be farther from the truth. Today's reality is that sustainable packaging can look and perform as well as concepts devised without the planet in mind, while tying in with a rising public awareness.

A brand's eco credentials are an increasingly important factor in purchasing decisions. So how can cosmetic companies ensure that their environmentally-friendly pack lives up to their brand's aesthetics?

Reuse

In the beauty sector, tentative in-roads have been made into resuable concepts. Stores such as Equivalenza in Spain have been successful in offering proprietary fragrances in reusable bottles (30, 50 and 100ml on a descending price scale). Of course, this kind of reuse has limited prospects in the luxury segment which, by its very nature, adores exclusivity and abhors bulk sales.

On the other hand, reuse has real potential across the board where a pack can continue life in a different role. PET kilner jars used for body scrubs or bath salts can be reused to store trinkets. A wooden perfume box can be reused as a jewellery case. The great benefit for beauty companies is that the visibility of the brand is lengthened by extension.

Recycle

Packaging made of recycled materials is almost commonplace nowadays. In the beauty sector, natural materials are trending. Glass, aluminium, cardboard and, more recently, wood, are being integrated into sophisticated and even surprising packaging concepts.

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Plastic materials like PP, PET and HDPE can all be recycled, each offering different properties. Polypropylene is known for its excellent compatibility with cosmetic formulas. Its relatively low price tag makes it a good candidate for masstige OTC formulas. PET lends itself to all kinds of packaging where a degree of flexibility is required. It can be completely transparent for a 'looks-like-glass' appearance without the risk of breaking. Typically used for detergents, HDPE is more suited for aggressive formulas like nail polish remover.

Recycled plastics can also be included in a plastic pack from the start. Quadpack has products in its range that allow cosmetics brands to choose the percentage of recycled content. The Eco Foamer from Quadpack's Q-Line range, for example, comes with a choice of 50 or 100 per cent recycled PET, topped with a high-end foam pump from Korean manufacturer Apollo.

Recycled plastics used for beauty packaging typically come from used water bottles. The recycling process produces a yellowish tinge to the material; the greater the recycled content, the more pronounced the effect. However, Quadpack's decoration service renders this unnoticeable. In fact, rPET can be colour-matched to meet the most sophisticated brand requirements.

Glass is a time-honoured green material. Popular throughout the ages, its properties have made it perfect for perfumery and cosmetics. Aesthetically, its look, feel and weight add substance to a pack. Practically, it can withstand almost any formula without concerns for compatibility. Environmentally, it is totally natural and recyclable – and, of course, glass packs are often reused.

Wood deserves a special mention for being the only material which is 100% renewable. Provided it is sourced from sustainable forests, wood becomes an unlimited resource. The wood used at Technotraf Wood Packaging (at Quadpack's Manufacturing Division in Torelló) is certified on the PEFC custody chain. The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification tracks wood from its origin to the finished product.

The tactile appeal of wood has made it popular in perfumery, not only for caps, but also for bottles and fragrance boxes. Wood adds something special to a pack, gifting a piece of nature, with its own grain pattern, unique in the world. It offers a sensory experience you can touch and feel that satisfies at a very basic level.

Reduce

The third R is only just taking hold in the beauty sector, with body care leading the way. Here, too, it is the masstige and mass market brands who can best take advantage of the cost savings involved in reducing material content. The knock-on effect on the environment is a happy consequence.

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Quadpack is consciously introducing standard packs into its range that offer reduced content without compromising on aesthetics. The newly-launched 50ml Acrylic Jar from Quadpack's Q-Line family offers a premium-look container but with thinner walls (6.5mm instead of the usual 10mm). The look and performance are identical to a standard luxury jar, with the combined benefit of a lower price tag and reduced environmental impact.

Of course, one surefire way to reduce packaging is to split the pack into an outer container and an interior one holding the formula. This should be the fourth R: refill. Refill concepts effectively reduce the material used in producing packaging. And this is where the beauty industry has seen real progress across all market segments.

Quadpack's range has a large number of refillable packs for skin care and perfumery. Yonwoo's Ampoule Program and 10ml Syringe are two refillable concepts that protect the formula with patented airless technology. Technotraf is preparing a range of refillable travel purse sprays in maple wood, with easily detachable components to facilitate recycling.
Sustainable processes
Reuse. Recycle. Reduce. There are myriad opportunities throughout a product's development to minimize its environmental footprint. Finding the right balance between aesthetic requirements and ecological sustainability is something that each brand needs to determine. A good packaging partner will help navigate the options, bearing in mind that these go beyond the packaging itself.

Beauty companies can also choose to work with packaging partners that demonstrate sustainable processes, after all, the way in which a company conducts its business has an impact on the environment, too. To use Technotraf as an example, its PEFC certification enables it to prove the sustainable nature of its raw materials from the forest to the final product. Moreover, Technotraf recycles 100 per cent of the waste products in its factory. All by-products are reused as animal bedding, chipboard and combustible fuels.

Ethical and environmental audits are an increasing requirement of multinationals when selecting their suppliers. They, in turn, are being driven by consumer demand for earth-friendly products and fair and sustainable practices. Step by step, the beauty industry is becoming a market where environmental needs and commercial goals are converging. That is good news for everyone – including the planet.

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About Quadpack Industries SA

Quadpack Industries is an international manufacturer and a provider of enhanced packaging solutions for beauty brand owners and contract fillers. With offices and production facilities in Europe, North America, and the Asia Pacific region and a strategic network of manufacturing partners, Quadpack develops bespoke and customised packs for prestige, masstige and mass market customers. For more information, please visit www.quadpack.com.



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