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A Quadpack expert's view: Wood's natural beauty

It's trending, it's distinctive, it's natural. The series of interviews with Quadpack's specialists continues and on this occasion it's on the subject of wood.

Jaume Ordeig, Product Specialist – Wood, explains just what wood can add to the packaging of cosmetics and perfumery products.

Quadpack: What is your role as Product Specialist – Wood at Quadpack?

Jaume Ordeig: Basically, I provide the knowledge that helps our sales teams present this material to our clients. Wood is a relatively new packaging material and educating the market is a big part of our remit.

I also work hand in hand with the product developers at Technotraf Wood Packaging, which is the wood manufacturing facility of Quadpack Group, and the place where all the 'magic' happens. There, we dream up new packaging concepts and create mostly bespoke components for beauty brands.

Q: Please tell us some more about Technotraf.

JO: Well, Technotraf is situated in Torelló, an area in Catalonia with a long tradition in wood craftsmanship. It started out as a woodturning factory, producing door handles and curtain rails. In 2001, it shifted its focus toward the luxury beauty market, when it created a wooden cap for Burberry Touch for Women, the first of its kind in this sector.

Since that time, Technotraf has exclusively geared its operations towards beauty packaging and has some of the industry's most prestigious brands, like Guerlain, Lalique, Rituals and Shiseido, as its clients. The acquisition by Quadpack Group in March 2013 has increased its international exposure, while giving Quadpack its first own manufacturing facility and adding something quite unique to the group's product portfolio.

Q: Where does Technotraf source its wood?

JO: It is sourced mainly from European forests. All of Technotraf's wood (beech, ash, pine, oak, maple, cherry, sapele and more) is certified on the PEFC Custody Chain. The PEFC is the world's largest forest certification system. This way, we ensure that our wood comes exclusively from sustainable forests.

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Q: Does that make wood an ecologically-friendly material?

JO: In our case, absolutely! When managed properly, wood is the only material that is – literally – endlessly renewable. What's more, at Technotraf, all waste products are 100% recycled into chipboard, animal bedding and combustible fuel. We aim to keep our processes as ecologically friendly as possible.

Q: How does wood compare with other packaging materials?

JO: Wood has so many attributes that make it special. To start with, it's so versatile. Whether a brand is modern, trendy, classic, feminine or masculine, wood can be shaped, worked and decorated to respond to any marketing brief, always adding sensory appeal, a satisfying 'touch and feel'.

On a more serious note, wood adds dignity to luxury brands. It is a natural, honest material that demands respect. The opposite of artificial, of anything synthetic. And as I explained before, it is endlessly renewable.

On a more practical note, tooling costs are insignificant compared to aluminium, plastic or zamak. A low investment and quick development time make it ideal for bespoke projects.

Q: What technical aspects need to be considered?

JO: Wood has its particularities, mainly because it is a 'living' material. However, Technotraf has perfected a proprietary treatment process over the years to render it suitable as a luxury packaging material. We can machine infinite shapes to very precise dimensions, maintaining the correct tolerances.

You also need to take into account that wood by itself has no functionality. In order to be used as a cap, it would need intermediate pieces like plastic inserts to fit onto different containers, or in other cases we use magnets to assemble components.

Q: Is wood only good for perfumery?

JO: No, not at all. We started in the perfumery sector with Burberry Touch, but over the last three years we have been introducing the wood into skin care with very good results. We believe that now it's make-up's turn. We have already developed beautiful projects such as the Terracotta compacts by Guerlain. Our Design & Engineering department has recently created some amazing concepts that we believe will push this emerging trend.

Q: What decoration techniques exist for wooden components?

JO: We can offer several techniques as silk screening, tampography, hot stamping, heat transfers and laser etching. We are about to offer a new decoration we're calling 'Groove', which involves milling a relief pattern in the wood.

Q: What future do you see for this material?

JO: Very exciting! After a concerted effort to promote this material in the market, wood is now better understood than ever as an option for beauty packaging.

Consumer demand for sustainable packaging materials is also boosting its use. Wood is starting to

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take the market by storm – and not just in our sector. Just take a look at other industries – architecture, interior design, fashion – and you'll see that wood is trending everywhere. Our aim is that wood is always among the materials considered by packaging designers.

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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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