



PACKAGING GIVES VALUE TO PRODUCTS THANKS TO ECO-SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

SENSITIVITY TO THE ENVIRONMENT IS A FACTOR THAT PUSHES MORE AND MORE CONSUMERS TO MAKE RESPONSIBLE PURCHASING CHOICES, FOCUSED ON PRODUCTS AND BRANDS THAT CONCRETELY DEMONSTRATE THEIR GREEN VOCATION AND THAT USE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, ECO-FRIENDLY PACKAGING SOLUTIONS.

Sustainable packaging is packaging developed and manufactured in such a way as to reduce the environmental impact and carbon footprint of operators in the sector, without losing sight of the original functions of protecting products, informing about their characteristics and attracting the consumer's attention at the points of sale.

SMI invests in R&D activities to offer a wide range of machinery capable of processing 'green' materials: recycled

shrink film, rPET, corrugated cardboard or light kraft cardboard. Depending on their production, marketing, storage or transport needs, every business in the sector can now choose the most suitable packaging solution between paper and plastic, i.e. between the two most widely used materials.

In recent years, issues related to the use of plastic, and especially its post-use disposal, have become increasingly debated topics at all levels and has led

many companies to look for alternative packaging solutions to plastic, opting for materials such as corrugated cardboard or kraft cardboard. In reality, this trend has been mainly dictated by the need to intercept the increased sensitivity of consumers to these issues, since accurate studies on the production, disposal and recycling processes of paper and plastic show that both materials have a very similar impact on the environment, much less than in the

past thanks to the new technologies for recyclability introduced in the sector in the last decade.

Respect the Environment by Choosing Paper

There are different types of paper and board used in the 'packaging' sector; Among them, lightweight kraft cardboard is growing strongly among operators who aim for packaging solutions that make sustainability a strength, thanks to the lower amount of material used in packaging. The features that distinguish this type of packaging are:

Resistance: protects bottles or more delicate products while on the move. The German term 'kraft' means 'resistance, strength', aesthetics: it offers the possibility of using impactful graphics and printing QR codes and personalised information, rapid biodegradability and a fairly simple manufacturing process and savings: it can have different weights, allowing you to save on material. Further savings are possible by making minimal packages (such as the top pad).

By contrast, paper and cardboard packages require a significant amount of energy to produce; On the other hand, the production of recycled material requires up to 60% less energy and up to 70% less water than virgin material. However, paper and cardboard can be recycled for a maximum of 5-7 times, as their fibers lose in length and quality with each process, making it necessary to constantly add new wood fibers.

SMI Solutions for Eco-Sustainable Paper Packaging

With **Kraft** board it is possible to create resistant and lighter packaging, using less material, and consequently save on the production and purchase costs of cardboard. Kraft cardboard packages can be made using the following SMI machines:

- WP series wrap-around case packers and CM series combination machines to obtain a completely closed box

- Multipack packaging machines of the MP and TPP series to produce packs in wrap-around cardboard bands for products with neck in (OTT) or neck out (NT) or packs with top flap of cardboard.

Arcwise® paperboard developed by the Swedish company SCA Forest Products uses a raw material entirely derived from renewable sources. Thanks to the special bevelled design that distinguishes it, this package offers the advantage of being able to reduce the amount of material used by about 30% compared to a traditional box; In addition, the perfect adherence of the package to the packaged product guarantees greater strength. This type of cardboard can be used on:

- the wrap-around case packers of the WP series
- the combined machines of the CM series.

Respecting the Environment by Choosing Plastic

Plastic packaging has excellent protective properties and can be recycled, in theory an unlimited number of times. Compared to paper, plastics require less energy in both production and recycling processes. The features that distinguish this type of packaging are:

- **Impermeability:** a Fundamental Factor in Preserving Food and Avoiding Waste
- **Resistance:** during the transport and storage phases of the packages
- **Aesthetics:** for example, the neutral film allows you to easily identify the products inside while the printed one enhances them
- **Savings:** with the same technical characteristics, it is common to use film reels with a lower thickness, to reduce the energy consumption of shrink wrapping.

On the other hand, the raw material is obtained from oil, a limited and non-renewable resource, and is not

biodegradable; for these reasons, it is important to choose packaging made of 100% post-consumer recycled PET (so-called rPET). It is in fact important to distinguish between recyclable plastic and recycled plastic: the former is composed of virgin material, just introduced into the production cycle, while the latter is material from recycled sources, therefore already used in previous productions, collected and reused. From a sustainability perspective, the latter is undoubtedly preferable.

SMI Solutions for Eco-Sustainable Plastic Packaging

The recycled film material reduces the production and dispersion of virgin plastic material and can be used with the following SMI machines:

- Automatic shrink wrapping machines of the LSK, CSK, SK, ASW series
- Combined shrink film + carton box packaging machines of the LCM, CM and AFCW series.

The stretch film allows you to reduce energy consumption during the packaging process for film-only packaging thanks to the elimination of the shrink tunnel. It is used to make packs on SMI SFP series packaging machines.

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