

Reduce, reuse, recycle—rethinking packaging

Companies large and small are starting to address the impacts of their packaging, looking not only at packaging materials but the entire product life cycle. Innovations with an eye to sustainability include product ingredients, packaging materials, packaging recyclability and the entire shipping footprint.

Sustainable packaging is a fast-growing segment of the global packaging industry and will grow to 32% of the total market by 2014, up from just 21% in 2009.

—Pike Research study, "Sustainable Packaging"

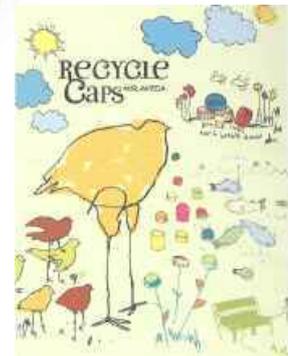


Wal-Mart challenged suppliers to reduce environmental impacts in packaging and HP responded with a solution for its Pavilion notebook—the computer and accessories come in a protective messenger bag made of 100% recycled fabrics.

Frito-Lay's SunChips current packaging is made of 33% renewable, plant-based material, but by 2010 the chips will come in a fully compostable bag, that will decompose in less than 3 months.



Aveda's Caps Recycling Program educates students about the plastics crisis in our oceans and challenges them to collect bottle caps for drop off at any Aveda salon. The company recycles them into new, 100% recycled plastic caps for their shampoo bottles.



Sustainable Packaging Coalition's COMPASS™ software application lets users change parameters—such as materials, quantities and concentrated vs. non-concentrated products—to compare the environmental impacts of their package designs using a life-cycle approach, www.design-compass.org

CA Queries Creatives

Where do you see the next innovations in sustainable packaging?

Cheryl Heller, Heller Communication Design, New York, NY. "Let's not use words unless we mean them. Sustainable? Innovation? The only truly sustainable packaging would be a dazzling feat of protection and containment using only renewable energy, and when discarded, would become dinner for some other lucky creature in the food chain. Only that can be called sustainable, or innovative. When humans design the next banana peel or clam shell, then we can pat ourselves on the back."



Daniel Imhoff, Watershed Media, Healdsburg, CA. "How can we get beyond our addiction to single-use disposable containers—bags, cups, bottles and wraps thrown away everyday by the hundreds of millions? Innovation will start with leadership: consumers (eliminating them whenever possible), designers (creating reusable and nontoxic alternatives) and government agencies (setting standards and fees to shift behavior). We are talking about a shift in consciousness from convenience to responsibility, from disposability to reuse, from externalized to true costs."

LauraLee Alben, Alben Design LLC and Sea Change Design Consortium, Santa Cruz, CA. "A sea change will occur when we design packaging that respects life. Imagine sustainable packaging that ensures the future, organic packaging that nurtures nature, equitable packaging that encourages partnership and inspired packaging that reveres the sacred. This kind of packaging begins with looking deep inside ourselves and asking if the products we produce and use bring us more alive—or not."

