PRO CARTON magazine

PRO CARTON
PACKAGING FOR A BETTER WORLD

Packaging Trends: **Time for cartons to seize the day**
Consumer Study: **Consumers call for change**
Sustainability: **Sustainability in the spotlight**
European Carton Excellence Award: **Without equal**
Pro Carton Young Designers Award: **Captivating**
Responsible Packaging: **The 5Rs**

Tony Hitchin,
General Manager, Pro Carton

A warm welcome to this edition of the occasional Pro Carton magazine.

Pro Carton is the voice of the folding carton industry promoting cartons and cartonboard as the most sustainable of packaging materials. Our website www.procarton.com is an extensive source of facts and figures explaining the unrivalled environmental credentials of cartonboard. We now get around 150,000 visits to our website every year so please take a look next time you are browsing the internet or need some information about cartonboard or just want to see the latest winners of our long established award schemes.

As you may know, Pro Carton is the promotional arm of CEPI Cartonboard. As well as providing detailed services for its members, CEPI Cartonboard also provides background and information for interested parties, data on the markets in which it operates, and other facts, figures and related items.

The packaging market is in a time of much change and it's appropriate that we include a variety of independently written features in this journal looking at not only the changes we've already experienced but also what the future might hold.

I hope the magazine informs and, hopefully, stimulates thought but more than anything helps to explain why the role of Pro Carton is so important in supporting our members and helping to share our story not only for the benefit of the industry but also for the environment.

Happy reading.

INTRODUCTION

TIME FOR CARTONS TO SEIZE THE DAY ?

by Neil Osment, NOA-PRISM

There was a time when turning on the news and NOT hearing an anti-plastic story was the norm. The media frenzy has grown in momentum with television programmes such as Sir David Attenborough's Blue Planet II (seen in over 80 countries when it was first broadcast) leading the way, meant that at every turn plastic has been taking a pounding ever since.

The reaction over a 12 to 18 month period has seen the Chinese refusing to import plastic waste; seen retailers getting on board and advocating a "no plastic packaging pledge" (famously led by the UK retailer, Iceland); seen an increasing number of countries introducing plastic bottle deposit schemes to change consumers' waste disposal habits; and seen a growing band of European governments promising to eradicate unnecessary plastic waste… the fate of single use plastic appears to be sealed.

Stepping into that gap could and should be the opportunity for cartons. In fact, this could be a case of cartons getting the last laugh, because for the past several years, cartons have had minimal growth, losing out to flexible plastic packaging. Where consumers once bought their teabags and confectionery such as Tetley Tea and M&M's (two well-known European brands) in a carton, in recent years plastic has become the packaging material of choice. So now really should be the ideal opportunity to kick-start a growth curve for cartons in Europe once more.

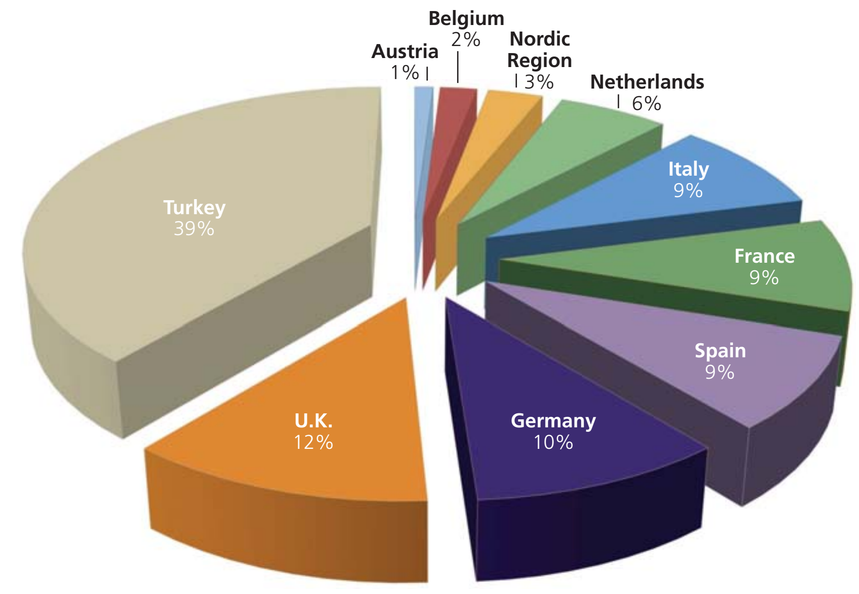
So, before all this plastic frenzy, how has the world of carton-converting been doing over the last few years? More importantly, what are the prospects for cartons as we look at the future?

If we look at recent market data we can see that carton-making actually stood still in 2016 (a trend that saw 3 previous years with modest volume growth in 2012 to 2014 and nil sales value growth over the same period) reflecting the tough market conditions for cartons over the last few years. Looking at the scene on a country level, we can see where the large volumes of carton converting are currently situated. The migration of carton-converting volumes are also in a period of flux, with a growing trend for volumes to migrate further east to the emerging rising stars of Poland and the other central and Eastern European countries, and the scene hasn't been spread evenly across these different countries of Western Europe either. There have been winners as well as losers during this period of commercially difficult trading times; Turkey leading the field in terms of year-on-year growth and showing no sign of losing that premier position anytime soon.

So what does this say about cartons and the future view? There are fewer and fewer niches where cartons seem able to offer a distinct advantage and to add real value, so now, surely, it's a case of carpe diem for carton producers: seize the day, grab the bull by the horns, fill the gap…

But – to use yet another cliché – the latest opportunity that plastic suggests is by no means a shoo-in for cartons. Single use plastic may be on its way out, but will cartons be able to fill the void?

Forecast of Incremental Carton Output to 2021



Estimates & Forecasts of Carton Production and Sales Value – 11 ECMA Countries – 2011 to 2021 – 000 Tonnes, € Million, % Change, Index 2011 = 100

	Carton Production			Carton Sales Value		
Year	000 Tonnes	% chg	Index 2011=100	€M	% chg	Index 2011=100
2011	4210	1.3	100	8853	3.6	100
2012	4182	-0.7	99	8783	-0.8	99
2013	4202	0.5	100	8866	0.9	100
2014	4278	1.8	102	8862	0.0	100
2015	4381	2.4	104	9216	4.0	104
2016	4381	0.0	104	9022	-2.1	102
2017	4435	1.2	105	9106	0.9	103
2018	4488	1.2	107	9197	1.0	104
2019	4550	1.4	108	9292	1.0	105
2020	4619	1.5	110	9401	1.2	106
2021	4690	1.5	111	9520	1.3	108

LET'S FIRST TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT PRESSURES EUROPEAN CARTON MAKERS ARE FACING:

• 'Bricks and mortar' retailers are struggling against the backdrop of ecommerce sourced goods taking some of their market share, and so retailers respond by pressing on the cost button. This cost pressure is passed on to brand owners, who in turn pass the commercial pressures down the line. The effect is a squeeze on carton prices.

• With this commercial pressure, producers in lower cost economies - Eastern and Southern Europe and even further afield in the Far East - begin to gain volumes, offering cartons at marginally lower prices and able to service supply requirements. We predict 41 percent of the growth coming from Turkey in particular.

• Finally, despite public opinion, plastic is favoured over more expensive packaging formats (in some instances, a plastic orientated solution can be less than half the cost of a carton solution).

As we've said, times are changing. The European Commission has launched the first-ever Europewide strategy on plastics, with a focus on reducing waste and moving towards a more circular economy. As Commission vice president Frans Timmermans said, "If we don't change the way we produce and use plastics, there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans by 2050."

Short Term Trends in Carton Output Analysed by Country 2015, 2016 and 2017 – 000 Tonnes

	000 Tonnes			% Annual Change		
Country	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**
Austria	122	122	123	-3.2	0.0	0.6
Belgium	115	114	115	-0.1	-1.3	0.5
France	522	528	533	1.0	1.0	1.0
Germany	1045	1025	1025	2.3	-1.9	0.0
Italy	646	650	658	4.5	07	1.2
Netherlands	270	275	279	1.9	1.9	1.6
Spain	336	342	351	3.5	1.9	2.4
Switzerland	100	93	90	2.1	-7.0	-3.3
Turkey	473	490	511	5.1	3.6	4.3
U.K.	593	582	589	1.0	-1.9	1.1
Nordic Region	158	160	162	1.7	1.3	1.1
Total	**4381**	**4381**	**4435**	**2.4**	**0.0**	**1.2**

There is a real opportunity presented by the move away from single use plastic, but is corrugated a potential rival for the plastic crown and likely to wrestle the opportunity away from cartons?

The corrugate industry has been growing by as much as 4 percent year-on-year. Within that figure there are some interesting trends. Traditional format SRP (standard format shelf-ready packaging) is falling out of favour, as consumers lose faith with out-of-town retailing. While it's true that the large display format SRP is favoured by the limited list discounters such as Aldi or Lidl, overall the growth of SRPs is gradually slowing. At the same time, the much smaller SFSRP (single facing shelf ready packaging) is growing with the rise of smaller, metro-style supermarkets.

This in turn is likely to lead to white paper volumes levelling off. This is due as much to the march of ecommerce as to increasing activity in convenience retail. The impact of this, we believe, will be felt around 2020/21.

Ecommerce packaging has been growing hugely and has contributed significantly towards high demand levels for brown corrugated papers, which is up by 3.6 percent.

With the focus on light weighting, 'right sizing', sustainability and an overall drive for a reduction in packaging, the pressure for reducing paper packaging will lead to an overall slowing in the growth of paper volumes (both by area as well as tonnage).

In the long-term, both white and (more significantly) brown or unbleached papers are likely to slow in growth from the heady days of 2017/2018, faltering by around 2020/21.

So which will be champion for the plastic crown – corrugated or carton or can both win? There are barriers to entry for both materials.

For corrugated, the switch is complicated and is a very long-term and extended proposition. It will take around ten years for corrugated to penetrate plastic volumes, mainly because expensive machinery that automatically packs products using plastic packaging solutions will only gradually be replaced by brand owners.

As Sainsbury's CEO Mike Coupe said: "Many of our suppliers have a lot of embedded capital in machinery that they have invested in over decades. To change the substrate of plastic packaging will require a huge amount of investment over time. It could take decades."

Cartons have an advantage over corrugated; they are much more closely seen as primary pack solutions. The design skills are certainly there to help capitalise on the many low-hanging fruit on hand, as too are the innovation skills. And, after all, teabags and confectionery more often used to come in cartons – surely they can be packaged in cartons again?

But here is the rub: does the sector have the consultative skills, conceptual skills or persuasive/selling skills to move ahead and take advantage of the plastic opportunity? Is the carton world really innovative enough? Tackling the complex situation, namely wrestling the favoured state position that plastic currently occupies is a huge challenge. After 5+ years taking the knocks that substitution and volume migration has wrought on Western European carton making, is the carton industry ready and equipped for the fight?

My own view is, having had the opportunity to meet some of the leaders of the industry, the talent and skills are evidently there. This is the time for cartons to stand up and be counted…

…and this could prove to be the turning point for the industry. I look forward to reporting on the good news soon!

Neil Osment is the owner of NOA-PRISM, a European market research consultancy specialised in the European paper packaging market.

CON-SUMERS CALL FOR CHANGE

Following on from Pro Carton's survey on packaging sustainability among trade buyers, an extensive project has now been conducted with consumers across seven European countries to gauge the public's views and to see how their attitudes to packaging sustainability have changed.

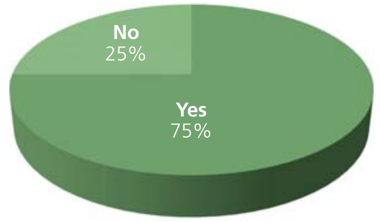
There is clear evidence of a period of change in the packaging industries, with consumers increasingly looking to reduce waste and make more environmentally-conscious choices. However, we wanted to dive deeper into the debate and assess the importance of packaging sustainability on consumers' purchasing habits.

The European Consumer Packaging Perceptions study was conducted in France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom – with a total of 7,000 respondents taking part.

The study was aimed at not only investigating the views and attitudes of consumers on sustainability in packaging, but its impact on their purchasing decisions. For example, does the environmental impact of a product's packaging affect a consumer's purchasing decision? And, If the same product was packaged in plastic and cartonboard, which one would a consumer choose?

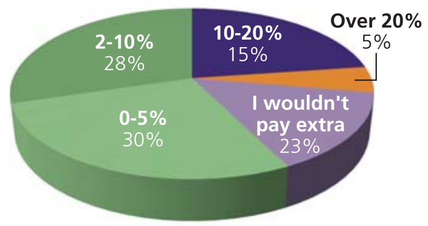
Overall, the importance of making environmentally-friendly choices is evident across all the countries polled, with 68% confirming that it has become more important over the last five years. And three in four people said that, when shopping, the environmental impact of the packaging now affects their purchasing decision.

When shopping, does the environmental impact of a product's packaging affect your purchasing decisions?



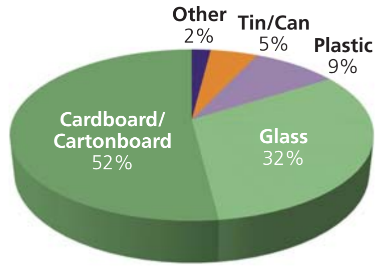
While consumers are clearly keen to make more environmentally-friendly decisions - conscious of their impact on the planet and its resources - the big question is whether they are willing to pay more? Overwhelmingly, 77% of respondents would be prepared to pay extra for a product if the packaging had less effect on the environment!

How much extra would you pay for a product if it meant that the packaging of your desired product had less impact on the environment?

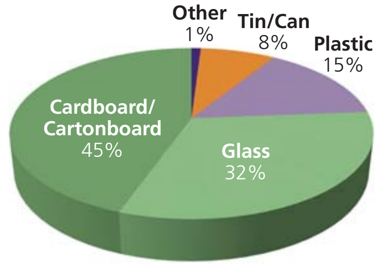


Encouragingly for the cartonboard industry, consumers recognised the environmental credentials of paper-based packaging. When compared against the other major packaging materials, cartonboard was clearly felt to be the most environmentally friendly and also the most recyclable packaging format.

What would you say is the most environmentally friendly form of packaging?



What would you say is the most recyclable form of packaging?



However, consumers clearly believe that more can be done. 64% said that retailers and brand owners are not doing enough to introduce more environmentally-friendly packaging. Perhaps surprisingly, more than half (58%) felt a tax should be introduced to force brands and retailers to adopt more environmentally-friendly forms of packaging, with a further 24% non-committal.

Consumers are also calling for more information about the packaging, with an incredible 90% wanting more on-pack information to show how environmentally-friendly the packaging format is.

While the headlines from the study make very encouraging reading for the carton industry, there's no room for complacency. Just 46% positively agree that cartonboard comes from sustainably managed forests, although a further 36% were unsure on this point, with only one in five believing the forests aren't sustainably managed.

Our European Consumer Packaging Perceptions study, coupled with many industry reports, act as an important reminder that the environment continues to be high on the consumer agenda. We know that brand owners and retailers mirror this attitude from our trade research, in which 96% viewed packaging sustainability as an important issue for their business. Clearly, the feelings are strong, and cartonboard is well positioned to continue to feel the benefit.

SUSTAIN-ABILITY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

By Tim Barker, Truffula Ltd

When the EU launched its Plastics Strategy in January 2018, it was amongst a wave of anti-plastic sentiment. There had been grumblings for years by environmentalists, pointing out that the industry was based on finite fossil fuels, its products were difficult to recycle and its waste stuck around for centuries.

Plastic packaging was the number one target, with its short-lived use and long-term impacts. Nevertheless, the proponents of plastic packaging were able to largely fend off the criticisms of green groups. They boasted of the superior food-protecting properties of their products and its light weight benefits in cutting carbon emissions. But the problem with plastics couldn't be swept away forever.

Global production of plastics had grown twentyfold since the 1960s, with packaging accounting for about 40% of European consumption (roughly 20 million tonnes) by 2015. It had a lot of advantages for retailers and brand owners, such as superior barrier properties, flexibility, transparency, low weight and of course cost savings. For many applications, other packaging materials just couldn't compete. Plastic was the wonderkind – so long as the environmental impacts were ignored. But there was a growing awareness that the traditional linear model of 'take, make, dispose', for which single-use plastics were the poster boy, just couldn't be sustained. As catalysed by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, it had become clear that there needed to be a new circular economy; one based on renewable raw materials, renewable energy, less harmful chemicals, greater reuse and better recycling. Yet, while the complexities of these big-picture concepts may have been beyond the general public, what they saw on the small screen hit home. The BBC's Blue Planet 2 documentary showed the impact discarded plastic packaging was having on the oceans and a stream of press reports highlighted the potential for microplastics to affect human health too. Plastics, especially single-use packaging, had gone from prodigy to pariah.

„THERE NEEDS TO BE A NEW CIRCULAR ECONOMY BASED ON RENEWABLE MATERIALS"

Tim Barker

This continues to present an opportunity for paper-based packaging such as cartons. The EU's Plastics Strategy recognises that nearly 26 million tonnes of plastic waste is generated in Europe every year and that less than 30% of it is collected for recycling (specifically for plastic packaging the recycling rate is 40%, compared to nearly 83% for paper and cardboard). Very little of it gets recycled back into similar products – demand for recycled plastics is low, at about 6% – and a lot leaks out of the waste management system, contributing to the 150,000 to 500,000 tonnes of plastic waste that enters the EU's seas every year. In response, the EU has declared that all plastic packaging on the EU market will be recyclable by 2030 and the consumption of single-use plastics will be reduced.

Retailers and brand owners, whether in pursuit of sustainability or merely fearful of tarnished reputations, have made similar commitments: '100% of plastic packaging ready for recycling or composting by 2025', 'eliminate difficult or unnecessary single use plastic packaging through better design' and 'remove plastic packaging from own label products' are just some of the pledges announced. Paper and cardboard packaging, being based on renewable wood fibre, with a high use of recycled fibre (about 46%), extensive use of renewable biomass for energy production and a high recycling rate at end of life, can be the sustainable alternative to plastic. Yet the carton sector, and its other paper-based cousins, cannot afford to be complacent. Today, being based on renewable wood fibre is a sustainability strength and a selling point. But it wasn't that long ago that the paper industry was the pariah, shamed for having (or merely, being perceived to have) a poor record on forest stewardship. There will always remain potential for the paper industry to be tripped-up by green issues, as the concern over paper cup recycling demonstrates. Likewise, the circular economy demands that plastic packaging has to become more sustainable. The EU wants to see 'a strong and sustainable European plastics industry' and its €100 million investment into scaled-up collection and recycling facilities will help make it so. Consequently, carton makers can't let the window of opportunity close before their product's natural benefits have been re-established and the whole sector needs to keep focused on sustainability in order to remain at the centre of the circular economy.

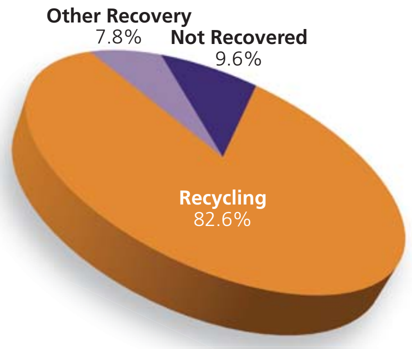
By 2030, the retailer's shelves and website pack-shots could look very different. The pressure on plastics should have enabled cartons to push back into areas where they have been challenged (difficult to recycle plastic pouches will be hard to justify, for example). Some types of plastics may have disappeared altogether, as end of life considerations demand simpler, more recyclable materials.

A shift in perspective, from what is advantageous for the brand owner, to what is best for the consumer, could mean that light weight is no longer the deciding factor, with cartonboard potentially outscoring shrink wrap in holistic assessments. If effective barrier properties have been made to work, without compromising sustainability characteristics, paper-based packaging could be the first choice for many more foodstuffs. Complementary solutions, such as moulded fibre or even nanocellulose, may have opened up whole new applications. Demand for an enjoyable unboxing experience could provide opportunities for a carton's graphic quality and touch of luxury. But the future can't be taken for granted. The plastic packaging sector will fight back – and effectively, if it consolidates around the most sustainable solutions. Credible bioplastics may emerge and grow, countering cartons' renewable-resource arguments. Recycling infrastructure will improve, potentially perfecting chemical recycling, using enzymes to dramatically increase the recycling rate (and use of recycled material) to levels near that of paper. Even more radically, new designs and consumer solutions could spell the end for some single-use packaging, of whatever kind. Plastic is unlikely to be a pariah forever.

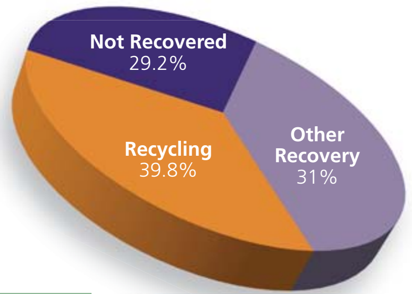
So, act now to seize the opportunity and displace plastics where the application allows. Work in cooperation with the wider fibre-based packaging sector to deliver compatible, easily recyclable solutions. Understand and minimise your environmental impacts, being transparent and clear with customers to maintain their trust. Most of all, embed sustainability into your business strategy so that you can anticipate future challenges and support your customers' transition to the circular economy of the future.

Tim Barker is a specialist sustainability consultant.

PAPER & CARDBOARD PACKAGING RECOVERY



PLASTIC PACKAGING RECOVERY



WITH-OUT EQUAL:

THE EUROPEAN CARTON EXCELLENCE AWARD

The European Carton Excellence Award is quite simply the showcase for the European cartonboard and carton industry. This is where you can best see the great variety and increasing range of possible applications of cartonboard. As the most sustainable of packaging solutions, cartonboard is also one of the most versatile materials with an almost limitless range of shapes, designs, finishes and special effects which is clearly demonstrated each year by the quality and diversity of the entries.

The competition was started in 1997 under the name Pro Carton/ECMA Award. The aim was clear from the outset as this quote taken from the founding year demonstrates: "The objective of the competition is to demonstrate outstanding examples of cartons which fulfil one or more of the following packaging requirements: design, point-of-sale communication, product information, product protection, convenience, machinability and logistics."

A SUCCESS STORY

The European Carton Excellence Award reflects the current trends in the packaging market. The technical possibilities of production have multiplied greatly since its foundation. The technical, tactile as well as graphic options for packaging have been increasing dramatically every year. The Award supports the packaging industry in expanding know-how. It amply demonstrates that cartonboard can do so much more than ever before.

You can follow the development of the competition over the years on the award pages of the Pro Carton website where you can find a gallery of successful packaging. "The design, structure and functionality of the submitted solutions show what is possible with cartonboard. Europe's ultimate award for carton packaging provides tremendous benefits for the participating companies both in terms of positive publicity but also in the motivation it generates amongst the workforce", said ECMA President Jean François Roche.

In 2017 the Public Award ran for the first time. This is where consumers can vote online for one of the shortlisted solutions that are published each year in August. This and the other awards are presented at the Award Gala in September.

DYNAMIC DEVELOPMENT

Today, packaging has developed far beyond its original functionality with new challenges and opportunities accelerating the market's development. It has become the Number One marketing instrument. In recent years, multi-channel retailing, in particular, has yet again turned the role of packaging upside down; purchasing behaviour, retailing logistics and transport have changed dramatically.

1. Today, the Point of Sale is practically everywhere there is a mobile device. Packaging must therefore take on additional tasks, especially in the area of information and communication. Contact with consumers is increasingly driven via packaging and its message. This requires packaging to look good on any screen, including the interactive options – from straightforward Internet links to Augmented Reality.

2. More and more packaging now has the task of promoting the brand to consumers at home. This begins with the experience of unpacking and extends from information on the features, storage and use of the product to a discreet reminder of the follow-up purchase. The findings of Pro Carton's studies (which can be found at www.procarton.com under "Publications") can be seen in practice every year among the finalists and prize winners of the award.

3. Plastic in the oceans has raised consumer awareness of packaging sustainability. Cartons can help solve the problems as they are a perfect example of the circular recycling economy. Every major consumer goods or retail brand will have to demonstrate that their packaging is environmentally-friendly, a challenge that cartonboard packaging meets today and will continue to do so in the future.

Horst Bittermann, President of Pro Carton, is therefore very optimistic: "I am convinced that cartonboard and cartons will become the most widely used packaging medium in the next decade and that Pro Carton can play an important role in achieving this success. The range of creative and sustainable solutions that cartons can offer is also clearly demonstrated by the winners and finalists of the European Carton Excellence Award."

CAPTI-VATING: THE PRO CARTON YOUNG DESIGNERS AWARD

PRO CARTON YOUNG DESIGNERS AWARD '18

Europe's leading student competition for carton design has really come of age. Every year, young design stars of tomorrow are honoured for thinking about solutions made of cartonboard that no one has ever seen before. Every year the number of entries rises steeply. Numerous design universities from all over Europe now participate in the international award and the national editions.

It all began soon after the turn of the millennium in Belgium, Austria and Spain. Today, the Pro Carton Young Designers Award is one of the most important European design competitions for students. The awards are clearly sustainable too and each year the finalists are rewarded with an invitation to network at the Award Gala in September and the winners with practical training at some of the leading European companies in the industry.

The demand is enormous. Nowadays, the award reaches out to all European countries, and every year there are more countries entering. Currently there are national spin-offs in Germany, Great Britain, Austria and Spain and their number will also increase in the coming years. The #pcyda already gives young designers the opportunity to prepare for their future career as students under competitive conditions.

The competition gives young designers exposure to leaders in the industry – a first step into the business world and a professional career including vital networking opportunities. "The Pro Carton Young Designers Award is a fantastic opportunity to meet great people from all over Europe from the Packaging and Carton industry", said Isabel Laugerud Tabarini, winner in 2016.

IMPORTANT STEPS ...

Of course, success at #pcyda requires an irresistible new idea, but it also requires a perfect presentation, including observations and reflections on market needs, product communication, manufacturing techniques and much more.

The jury consists of designers, brand owners, retailers as well as manufacturers of cartonboard and cartons. This ensures that the needs of the entire Supply Chain are taken into consideration. The feedback of the jurors is a decisive help for the further career.

The award has created an international marketing platform for all interested parties: for students, teachers and universities as well as for the cartonboard and carton industry. Almost every year, more participants of the #pcyda find a position with partners and members of Pro Carton.

Pro Carton also works closely with the student competitions of its members – such as Iggesund, Metsä Board and Stora Enso – so that one entry offers several chances of winning.

For all these reasons, the #pcyda is already part of many European universities' annual curriculum. Pro Carton offers extensive support here: this includes publications and information about cartons and cartonboard, but above all, complimentary cartonboard for the design work. On request, Pro Carton members will even come to the school or university and hold workshops on the numerous options that cartonboard and cartons offer (design, technology, production, marketing …) The objective is a forward-looking, sustainable cooperation with the training centres for as many excellently trained designers as possible.

... ON THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

For four months each year, the award is presented to a broader audience: the shortlist goes online at the beginning of July for the public vote. It is promoted extensively on the social media channels Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and LinkedIn throughout Europe. Everyone can vote for their favourite entries and decide who will win the Public Award.

The finalists and each of their lecturers are invited each year to the Award Gala in September. This is not only a fantastic gala event but also a get-together of the international students and lecturers as well as networking with the leading folding carton and cartonboard manufacturers.

The main prize for the category winners is a visit to a European board mill and practical training at an international carton producer. Training is supported by rotating sponsors from the cartonboard and carton industry who are always keen to welcome the students into their businesses.

The prize winners and finalists, as well as the experiences of the prize winners during their practical days, are promoted to a broad professional audience each year via the Pro Carton E-News as well as through the trade media. The winning entries are also featured at trade shows across Europe.

Two-time finalist Magdalena Witkowicz is one of many who have found a job in design through the award. She shared her opinion: "All I can say is: TRY! Send your work to the competitions, especially the international ones such as the Pro Carton Young Designers Award. Even though entering the competition needs some sacrifice and it's a lot of hard work, it's all worth it. It's a great chance for you and it's a lot of fun and great experience in the end."

5Rs OR MAYBE IT'S SIX!?

By Tony Hitchin, Pro Carton

When I was a young marketer I remember learning about the 4Ps – product, promotion, price and place – which make up the fundamentals of the marketing mix. I wondered though if there ought to be a fifth category – packaging? In those days "packaging" was grouped under "product" but now it is more fully appreciated that packaging plays a much wider role than just protecting the product, often operating as an essential vehicle for communicating brand values. So clearly packaging is a key promotional tool too that can create and be inextricably linked to a brand. And I'm not just talking about truly iconic packaging such as the Toblerone carton or the Coca Cola bottle. Any successful Brand Manager understands the importance of differentiating their product through the graphic and structural pack design; indeed this is sometimes even more important than differentiating the product itself!

So staying with this alphabet theme we've now moved on to the letter R. And again in it's connected to packaging. But this time there are three of them. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. The 3Rs of Recycling as they are sometimes known – which is a bit strange in itself, as one of the three is actually "Recycle". Maybe that's because it's the most important one or the 3Rs of Recycling just sounds better than the other options?

I'm of the view, however, that the people who think these things up have once again fallen short. Because I reckon there ought to be 5Rs not three. Given the 3Rs are meant to be a motto that summarises how society can act in a more environmentally friendly way I believe that we should add two new Rs - Renew and Replace.

"Renew" because unless the materials we are using are renewable then we are quite simply deplenishing the earth of its resources. True circularity can only be achieved if we are able to renew the materials that we use. Indeed, according to the dictionary, materials are not sustainable unless they are renewable. Cartons of course are, but that can't be said of all packaging materials.

The fifth R is "Replace". By this I mean we should be looking to replace materials that harm the environment with ones that cause less damage. This is easier to do in the packaging industry than many might think as there are plenty of examples of products that could be packed in more environmentally friendly solutions without affecting the brand values I talked about earlier.

So that's my 5Rs. But I needed a catchy title for them and then it all became clear. It is everybody's responsibility – consumers, brand owners, retailers, manufacturers, governments to do the right thing to rectify the environmental problems that we have all created over the past 50 years.

We need to act responsibly. So there you have it. The 5Rs of Responsibility. Or does that one make 6?

Tony Hitchin is General Manager for Pro Carton.

PRESIDENT´S STATEMENT

Horst Bittermann, President Pro Carton

It's a privilege to be writing this message as the President of Pro Carton. Our mission is to clearly explain the advantages that cartonboard offers with the aim of increasing our share of the packaging market.

The concerns about marine pollution have resulted in packaging materials being scrutinised ever more closely and cartonboard performs particularly well on virtually every dimension. But the industry is far from complacent, looking to further reduce its carbon footprint and increase the use of bio-energy through investment. New product innovations in improved functionalities and designs to meet changing and extended market requirements are in our DNA.

Quite simply, cartonboard "The Natural Choice!" is the most sustainable packaging material. It is Renewable (European forests are continuing to expand), Biodegradable (unlike some other materials, it leaves no scars on the environment) and Recyclable (Eurostat reported that over 82% of European paper and board packaging is already sent for recycling) all attributes which epitomise the circular economy that we should be striving for. Folding cartons are an extremely eye-catching packaging medium promoting the product itself and preserving it by reducing product damage and food waste.

About 50% of cartonboard volumes are produced from virgin fibre with the other 50% being produced from recycled fibre. This is the real beauty of the carton industry. We reuse cartons to make more cartons! What can be environmentally better than that?

STATEMENT

MEMBERS

PATRONS

PARTNER

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www.procarton.com | info@procarton.com

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