



Resealable packaging goes a long way towards preventing food waste.

Reclose call

With packaging taking a beating on the environmental front at present, it's timely to be reminded of the important role it can play in protecting products and reducing food waste. Michael Dossor expounds on the merits of resealability, citing examples of solutions supplied by his company.

MANY studies have proven packaging to be an environmentally advantageous and cost-effective strategy to reduce in-home and in-store food waste. While there's a great deal of media attention focused on profile of the challenges posed by plastics packaging waste, food loss and waste are an even bigger environmental problem than the perceived problem of plastics used in packaging.

One of the very useful features available in modern packaging is resealable packaging. While not new, resealable packaging has become a most effective tool in reducing food waste. Attention to shelf-life extension and reducing waste while showcasing produce at its best has led to the development of various types of resealable packaging formats.

The design challenge is building a reclose feature into the pack to protect the product from spoilage after multi-use occasions, while doing it without adding more packaging material, specifically plastics. Although zip-lock closures are relatively widely used for resealability, depending on the application, there are other options to consider, as the following examples attest.

RESEALABLE LIDDING FILMS

Grape N' Go is an innovation in shelf ready packaging for fresh fruit snacks, which extends shelf life without the addition of any preservatives or additives.

The Grape N' Go product is packed under controlled atmosphere in the punnet. The structure of the lidding material (branded as Fresh Lid) comprises two laminated layers with perforated laser holes on the

surface of the lid to allow for optimal oxygen permeability. These holes (invisible to the naked eye) allow product respiration and support an extended shelf life.

The lidding material employs a special, uncured adhesive layer that is exposed when the consumer first opens the multi-layered reclosable lid. Once exposed, the layer maintains its adhesive properties for up to 20 uses, even under challenging cold conditions of refrigerated storage. This resealable function enables the grapes to stay fresh twice as long as they would in a standard open-pouch bag format, leading to less waste.

RESEALABLE TAPES AND LABELS

The SunRice Pour and Seal and Mission Foods Wraps packs are examples of clever packaging designs that deliver maximum effect to the consumer via a re-closable packaging format that enables portion control.

The SunRice Pour and Seal rice packs are enabled with a peel and reseal 'tab', which can be opened and reclosed without affecting product quality. The resealability function prevents the rice from

spilling once the bag has been opened. The structural function is a perforated die-cut placed into the flexible packaging and a self-adhesive label applied over the tamper-evident opening. The label is applied just like any other label but has been developed to open and close without removal from the pack. It's a simple and easy-to-use system that can be delivered either on the wrapping machine or offline and pre-applied as a raw material input.

In the case of the Mission Food packs, the consumer simply peels back the tape strip, removes the number of wraps required, and presses the tape back down. The package can be returned to the pantry or fridge, and the wraps will remain fresh and ready to be used at a later time. Delivery to pack is done by fitting a device to the wrapper that places perforated slits to act as an opening in the film and then applies a finger-lift tape directly over that created opening. In effect, it's like an adhesive 'zipper' without the additional waste of the plastic extension (pull tabs) above it. In fact, by switching from a zipper to resealable tape, a 68 per cent reduction in plastic can be achieved.

Ultimately, smart resealable packaging formats that address the management of food spoilage and the resulting food waste can substantially and successfully reduce in-store and in-home food waste while reducing the environmental footprint for the brand owner.

Resealable packs are now an important part of the Save Food Packaging design guidelines that need to be considered by all food manufacturers to assist in minimising food spoilage and the resulting food waste. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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TOP TO BOTTOM: Resealable packaging is an important part of the Save Food Packaging design guidelines.

The Grape N' Go 100% recyclable PET-based resealable Fresh Lid by Result Packaging won a High Commendation in the 2018 Packaging Design Innovation of the Year Award – Food Category, an award recognising organisations that have designed innovative packaging and processing materials for food products.

The resealable tab on the Mission pack acts like an adhesive zipper.



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