



THE FUTURE OF PACKAGING & LABELLING

How the local packaging industry is adjusting to evolving consumer demands and safety needs

With the expansion of e-commerce that involves delivery of products to consumers in far locations, a lot needs to be done to ensure packaging is just right for that purpose

BY EVANS ONGWAE

Packaging is evolving. Today's packaging products may not survive the next decade as manufacturers juggle shifting consumer needs and the global push for sustainability.

The war against counterfeits and the need to counter aggressive competition is also exerting pressure on manufacturers of packaging materials to innovate and deliver what their customers want.

As a result, more efficient practices and the use of sustainable materials are the emerging trends in general.

Kunal Chandaria, a packaging expert who is also the founder and Sales and Innovation Director at DPI Holdings, confirms that the landscape of the industry is indeed changing.

He says future packaging will be characterised by "less quantities, more sustainable material, more recyclable and better product design".

Mr Chandaria adds that given the importance of packaging in marketing, it has to be right. "Your brand can be excellent,



Mr Kunal Chandaria, packaging expert and founder of DPI Holdings.

but if the packaging is substandard, the product will be perceived as substandard," he explains.

Cheap packaging, he stresses, is sometimes expensive, so it is better to spend some money on good packaging, "which will help sell your products faster".

To establish sustainable solutions, Kenyan manufacturers of packaging products are working closely with the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), which helped set up the Kenya Producer Responsibility Organisation (KEPRO).

As members of KEPRO, manufacturers such as DPI Holdings have begun addressing the challenge of how to deal with packaging wastes, for example.

"We are already members of KEPRO, which helps recycle our plastic waste and fund the circular economy," says Mr Chandaria. He continues: "KEPRO uses our funds to pay the waste collectors and recycling companies to keep our country and world clean. We also try to be more efficient in production."

Various companies are already recycling packaging materials. However, the circular economy concept is yet to be widely embraced in the country.

More companies are joining KEPRO and

funding it, says Mr Chandaria. Therefore, it is gaining traction.

Mr Chandaria says DPI is one of the few companies that have already embarked on the sustainable packaging journey "in terms of producing only what the customer needs (less waste) and also getting into sustainable packaging".

"For counterfeits, we are one of the few that can personalise, serialise and provide anti-counterfeit options on labels, pouches and laminated rolls for our customers, saving millions of shillings," he adds.

With the expansion of e-commerce that involves delivery of products to consumers in far locations, a lot needs to be done to ensure packaging is just right for that purpose.

Mr Chandaria says there is a need to connect to your customer by personalising items and having interactivity within the packaging. "It is also important to use the correct materials to safeguard the product inside."

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New technologies shaping the packaging of products

BY EVANS ONGWAE

The Covid-19 pandemic has made consumers more safety conscious, with others embracing online shopping to minimise the need to shop physically. Packaging for food and pharmaceuticals is particularly critical because of such safety concerns.

Post-Covid-19 packaging should thus be able to withstand the rigours of shipping and retain brand authenticity, while also remaining aesthetically appealing.

Samarth Shah, Sales Manager at Pressmaster Africa Limited, says this explains the growing popularity of aseptic packaging. This kind of packaging gives products a longer shelf life without refrigeration.

Mr Shah says with aseptic packaging technology, eco-friendly or reusable packs, and use of micro-film, the packaging industry has transformed to some mind-blowing innovations in the past few years.

“ Safety, storage and brand visibility is an important factor of packaging

to our customers. We offer customised products based on client preference in order to enhance brand name and to ensure the product is durable and convenient for the end user

- Samarth Shah, Sales Manager at Pressmaster Africa Limited

With e-commerce, packaging has become even more critical as processors target to sell and distribute their products online to the customer's beyond the retail stores and also increase the shelf life.

Europe and America banning single use plastics will boost the paper packaging industry.

Pressmaster Africa Ltd works closely with overseas clients who import Kenyan agricultural and industrial products.

"Right from source to consumer destination, packaging is critical in maintaining products' safety during processing, packaging, storage, and logistics, until the final stage of sale," says Mr Shah.

He adds that packaging can also be a game changer in enhancing brand visibility and marketing, hence the choice of quality and customisation is key for every manufacturer or distributor.

Mr Shah says: "Safety, storage and brand visibility is an important factor of packaging to our customers. We offer customised products based on client preference in order to enhance brand name and to ensure the product is durable and convenient for the end user."

Pressmaster Africa is one of the leading print and packaging companies in East Africa, offering over 1,000 different types of packaging products for clients to choose from. The clientele varies from large to medium sized businesses to restaurants and cafes.

The company manufactures packaging boxes for major Pizza outlets in the country.

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