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NEWS

Official Magazine of Indian Flexible Packaging And Folding Carton Manufacturers Association



Talent in the Packaging Industry

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Editorial

By the time you read IFCA news editorial, another year has gone by! In retrospect an eventful year for the world, industry and trade. The western world continued to be indirectly engaged in the military operations in Ukraine. We saw a new flash points in Sudan, South China Sea, Yemen and Gaza. The slowdown in China, the increased sensitivity in US for trading with China added to the overall problems of global trade. If not anything the volatility index for 2023 was higher than previous year.

While India was in a better place compared to many other countries, we cannot afford to blink and start believing that "it is life as usual". The rising volatility will not abate and we need to learn to manage in these circumstances.

For the Indian packaging industry, challenges continued. The fragmentation of the packaging on the supply side, continued to add pressure on pricing and margins. The changing customer trends, the shift towards e-commerce and the demand for a more convenient packaging lead to a constant need to innovate and improve. The tighter regulatory framework on specific areas like packaging waste, newer standards for materials added and compounded the problems.

Over the years packaging companies have learned to become increasingly nimble, fleet footed and adapt to changes. This has helped the industry to be stay one step ahead. The open question is- how long as an industry we will be able to continue on the cycle of low returns and margins. We are now entering a phase where disruption is a reality and a new normal. We need to learn how to respond and cope with this new scenario.

One of the biggest game changers for our industry is going to be artificial intelligence -AI. The last decade the industry has seen the increased use of IOT, machine intelligence, remote monitoring and interventions in our converting machines. This has created a huge database on the performance and failures of the machines. We have only scratched the surface of this data. With a good AI tool, we will be able to get into a more productive mode. AI will help us to sequence and plan machine loading for better productivity and optimize the performance. As our customers increasingly use AI tools, our supply chain will get more closely integrated and will further help us to remove cost from the chain. As an industry we need to start thinking, on how we will learn to ride this new paradigm called AI.

While talking to many of you, increasingly I get a sense, that as an industry we are facing genuine shortage of good skilled people. Packaging industry does not have the glamour quotient like the IT or IT enable services to attract the best talent. Our ability to pay is also restricted due to our low margins. Every year 12 million Indian Indians enter the workforce. As per the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) the total demand was around 103 million workforce in 2022. The Indian skilled labor shortfall was around 29 million people. Huge gap!

This explains the shortage of skilled and unskilled labor we face in our industry. There are many reasons why this shortage is there. We have large unorganized sector which absorbs a lot of labor, Government programs like MNEGRA with affect the supply of labor. There are perception and social stigma issues associated with manufacturing sectors.

As a country, we are racing towards the USD 5 trillion economy and packaging as an industry will continue to see a double-digit growth in the coming years. We need to start seriously think about a sustainable solution to our people problem, As a part of the 'knowledge series' in February third week, we will be a half day seminar on different topics. More details will be announced in the coming weeks.

On behalf of IFCA and my team we wish each one of you a very Happy and Prosperous 2024!

Chandrasekhar Rajagopalan
Editor

Bridging the Talent Gap in the Packaging Industry

Atul Baijal

Whole Time Director - Ecoplast Limited



The packaging industry in India has undergone significant transformations over the past five decades, adapting to consumer demands through advancements in raw materials, machinery, and substrates. This evolution has been propelled by a steady supply of skilled manpower from prestigious institutions like IIT, HBTI, CIPET, and UDCT. However, a concerning trend has emerged in recent years - a shortage of skilled talent in the packaging industry.

The rise of the IT industry in the mid-90s brought about a paradigm shift in career choices for students. The allure of higher income, early career growth, and a more comfortable work environment drew more students towards IT roles. Consequently, a noticeable gap has widened between the demand for IT professionals and the number of students pursuing careers in manufacturing and packaging.

In addressing this challenge, the packaging industry needs to collaboratively work with higher educational institutes. The following actionable steps can serve as a roadmap to attract and retain top-tier talent for the industry's sustainable growth:

1. Financial Support for Educational Upgrades:

Corporates in the packaging sector should extend financial aid to colleges, facilitating the enhancement

of labs and infrastructure. This will ensure that educational institutions stay abreast of industry advancements and equip students with relevant, real-world skills.

2. Incentivizing Quality Education:

Offering incentives to attract proficient teaching talent to higher educational institutes is crucial. The collaboration between industry leaders and educational institutions will enrich the learning experience, providing students with practical insights and fostering a passion for the field.

3. Industry Knowledge Sharing Initiatives:

Leaders in the packaging sector can contribute to knowledge-sharing sessions as part of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. These sessions would expose students to real-world challenges and opportunities, igniting their interest in pursuing careers within the industry.

4. Engaging Retired Industry Experts:

Retired professionals can be valuable assets to educational institutes, serving as visiting faculty or career counsellors. Their wealth of experience can guide students, offering them a realistic perspective on the industry and helping them make informed career choices.

5. Promoting Internship Programs and Practical Experiences:

Institutions and companies should collaborate to establish more internship programs. Practical experiences, such as senior design projects, can provide students with hands-on exposure, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

6. Leveraging Alumni Networks:

Alumni play a crucial role in promoting these efforts. Their success stories and experiences can serve as inspiration for current students. Establishing mentorship programs and alumni-led initiatives can create a strong support system, encouraging students to explore opportunities within the packaging industry.

By implementing these strategies, the packaging industry aims not only to attract but also to retain top talent. Encouraging practical experiences through internship programs and design projects will empower students to apply their knowledge innovatively to address pressing issues like automation, recycling, and minimizing environmental impact.

As the Indian economy gallops ahead, a collective effort is required to ensure that the packaging industry continues to evolve and thrive with a skilled and passionate workforce. The synergy between educational institutions, industry leaders, and proactive alumni will be pivotal in shaping the future of the packaging sector in India. ■

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Availability of Skilled Manpower for Packaging Industry

Why we all need to come together to solve for the future

Hersh Lulla, Marketing Manager – Asia Pacific, Miraclon

The packaging industry is witnessing strong growth globally, brought on by an increasing demand for packaged foods, pharma. Flexible packaging printers also push the boundaries of innovation while exploring the versatility of flexible printing to create packaging that is sustainable, practical, cost-effective and lightweight, but without any compromise on shelf appeal.

With this as the background, the flexible printing market size is growing at a CAGR of 6.6% and is slated to grow at a CAGR of 5.6% for the next 5 years. The Asia Pacific region is the leading provider globally of flexible packaging printing, of which India is amongst the highest growth markets. Testament to this growth are the investments in packaging printing presses across print processes and segments. This, combined with the innovations in pre-press, on-press and further downstream, have enabled flexography to prove its cost-effectiveness and sustainability benefits in short, medium and long run applications.

With a slew of new investments and innovations comes ease and speed in packaging print production. But to realize the full potential of these investments and innovations, there is a dual need:

1. to understand the basic principles of technologies, be it flexo, gravure or digital
2. to follow best practices laid down by application experts

The formal education curriculum at technical institutes that offer print and packaging courses have very strong foundational learnings on conventional printing processes such as offset and digital, but there are noticeable gaps when teaching and training future flexographers or packaging print specialists about modern processes and

innovations. Younger people who get an education in printing and packaging look for perceived greener pastures in other industries since 'getting ink under the nails' on a printing press is not seen as a great opportunity to learn and grow, and is also seen as being uncool.

There is high labour supply in India, but at the same time a skills crunch at the entry level further amplified by mostly informal on-the-job training that doesn't enable new operators with a full set of skills who need to get upto speed on processes. To sum it up, there is high labour demand for trained press operators and low supply. Due to this, packaging business owners are limited in their ability to explore the full value of their technologies.

Due to fewer experienced and skilled operators on press and in pre-press, there are major challenges for every business to keep up the same levels of productivity, knowledge and training during staff change-overs. This is further made complex by operators not just wanting a high and steady pay, but also the right work environment to learn and grow.

Process improvements, such as reducing manual steps and better equipment interfaces, can help improve how attractive the work and workplace seems. Younger workers are excited by new technology. When you can deploy high quality machinery that has automated elements, they want to see it, want to learn and interact with that. Press manufacturers are working on this area, with modern interfaces more familiar for younger people, used to smartphones and digital applications. On the pre-press side, there is the use of automation tools that not only simplifies operations but also speeds up production significantly. The adoption of modern and simpler process has helped a lower skilled workforce as the learning curve for

setting up modern flexible packaging presses is much quicker and easier. With greater standardization, they know what to expect every single time, so it's just much easier to manage the entire production cycle versus running a process with more uncertainties. With simpler processes, better working environments and faster training, the flexo industry can better manage some the skills pressures it currently faces. While these process improvements and industry growth opportunities could help build a pipeline of new recruits.

What the industry needs as we enter 2024 and beyond, and as the industry reaches greater heights, is recognition of these challenges and a concerted effort to provide career growth opportunities to budding packaging print experts entering the industry. In addition, there is a need to educate early in the curriculum and also spread the message, on the importance of flexible packaging and the role it plays in world food security and to view sustainability from a holistic lens. Lastly, it is also important to address gender bias and provide equal opportunity as well as accessibility.

The role of institutes and leading industry bodies such as IFCA to be catalysts for change can not be stated enough. Miraclon is committed to working in close partnership with packaging value chain stakeholders to help realize efficiency, sustainability and quality goals. Openness to collaborate and a focus on innovation to transform the technology landscape is important to achieve this. Packaging companies and industry suppliers alike need to come together to address these needs jointly and create an environment of learning, growth and success, which will surely help to build the skilled workforce of tomorrow to meet the growing demand for sustainability, quality and cost-effective packaging. ■



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Brimming with opportunities: How India's packaging industry can attract the best talents

Pankaj Poddar

Group CEO, Cosmo First Limited

The Indian packaging industry has displayed remarkable resilience over the years and has achieved significant progress. A burgeoning economy, and growing consumption in sectors such as food and beverages, healthcare, and others are leading to rising demand, constantly pushing this industry on an uphill climb. A recent report in Packaging Gateway further mirrors this growth, and predicts that India's packaging market size, which was at 413 billion units in 2022, is anticipated to register a CAGR of more than 6% by 2027. This is significant as this crucial industry not only supports economic growth but plays a vital role in the creation of huge employment opportunities as well.

Since this industry has a promising future ahead, it becomes imperative to link the opportunities and the talented minds who are seeking successful career avenues for growth. The packaging industry is experiencing a rising need to attract the best talents who not only meet the workplace demands but are also equipped with the right skills and are future-ready to contribute to its growth in the long run. The demand for talent especially in areas such as manufacturing of packaging solutions, shops, and even technical functions, necessitates efforts so that the existing opportunities are utilized, meeting the employment

needs of a growing workforce, and the demands of the industry.

Looking at challenges behind talent shortage, some of them can be attributed to a lack of awareness of the existing job opportunities in the packaging industry, perceptions related to physically demanding tasks, a lack of a glamour quotient, the need for more industry-academia collaborations for talent development and outreach initiatives. However, with automation, integration of cutting-edge digital solutions, growing partnerships, and the coming of skilling and practical training programs, these challenges can be addressed, paving the way for talented minds to join the industry.

Automation alleviates physically demanding tasks

A key reason that has hindered the best talents from joining the packaging industry is that they believe the processes require human intervention, which can be physically demanding. But thanks to automation, it has become possible to automate processes and tasks, easing the pressure on human resources. Additionally, the automation tools which can be handled easily, can take care of repetitive processes which earlier consumed a lot of time to complete. Most importantly, the integration of technology has made manufacturing processes completely



safe with better monitoring tools, enhanced visibility and control, along with adherence to safety protocols, making the overall work ecosystem conducive to well-being and growth.

Cutting-edge digital solutions for building attractive workplaces

The modern workforce is led by millennial and Gen Z talents who are tech-savvy and prefer working in smart office environments. The integration of digital tools backed by cutting-edge technologies such as AI and IoT is completely transforming the packaging industry, building an attractive workplace for them. The coming of smart digital tools which are easy to operate, touchscreen devices, and AI-based applications to handle machine operations, predictive and remote-controlled maintenance, backed by IoT, etc. are enabling them to achieve enhanced results and easier workflows. Moreover, in the era of communication and collaboration, digital tools, supported by cloud computing let them remotely access data, exchange information, and collaborate better, greatly beneficial

in managing complex processes easily.

Talent development programs, practical training to bridge skill gaps

At present, the packaging industry is constantly integrating the latest technologies, advanced processes, and systems to cater to the growing demands, making it essential for job seekers to equip themselves with the necessary skills to handle them. The availability of internal or external talent development programs, online or short-term skill-based programs, and practical training offered by educational institutes, is making it easier for them to acquire the relevant skills and benefit from the immense career opportunities this industry offers. Learning the know-how of technologies, machine learning, and data analytics can bridge the gap between them and workplace demands. Moreover, with on-the-job practical training, the aspirants can become job-

ready, making it easier for them to transition into new roles or in-demand positions to achieve desired career success.

Role of industry-academia partnerships

With brimming career opportunities in the packaging industry, the role of both academia and industry gets elevated to foster collaborations and guide talents to a successful career path. Partnerships between industry and educational institutes are essential as it helps the former to acquire the best talents, and the latter to understand industry needs and impart education and training accordingly. It is also necessary to help job seekers understand industry expectations, workplace demands, and requirements so they can prepare, learn the practical aspects, and develop new skills, benefitting both talents and the industry.

At Cosmo First, we firmly embrace the potential of young talent. To harness their skills, we conduct

campus placement programs, providing job opportunities to Graduate Engineer Learners (GEL) and Management Trainees (MT). Additionally, we offer internship programs ranging from 2 to 6 months based on project size. Furthermore, we have ongoing projects aimed at involving a diverse workforce in our systems.

As India's economy maintains its stellar progress, the packaging industry is set to witness a domino effect, leading to the generation of revenue and the creation of new career avenues. At this pivotal point, it is necessary to open the door of job opportunities for talented people who can come forward and contribute to accelerating the growth the industry has achieved. Moreover, industry, educational institutions, and policymakers must join hands, and work in partnership to address existing challenges. The packaging industry is ripe with career opportunities and by utilizing them, the best minds can build successful careers and a promising future. ■



Feel the flow and be the change you want to see

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If the industry needs talent, so does the academia. Choosing a branch or a career option depends on the individual, interests, likes, aptitude, and the company's and self's growth potential. The most influential part of our lives is that our peers deeply impact us. More often than not, we get influenced by them, and the same happens in the case of students who tend to compare themselves to their peers. Here's an overview of the scenario from education, jobs, and challenges in the Printing and Packaging field.

Engineering education:

Engineering education has paved a path to Industry 4.0. The engineering education program is more comprehensive than a few core courses. Still, it is an entire curriculum dealing with core, interdisciplinary, and multi-disciplinary courses, field visits, practical knowledge, project management, and leadership skills. Some core branches gradually transformed with the help of this human civilization, and today, we can see a fast-moving, engaging, vibrant, energetic world with improved Communication.

Printing engineering, or printing and packaging technology, is one branch of engineering with an interdisciplinary approach that evolved to meet the growing needs and demands in the field. Written

Communication was one of the most potent tools for spreading information, knowledge, and preachings. Today, technology has evolved into the face of many engineering branches. The once sought-after civil branch is taken over by branches such as Computer engineering, Information Technology, Electronics, and Telecommunication. The post-pandemic industry is becoming vulnerable to intelligent automation, and this groundbreaking technology is being used well in the Printing and Packaging industry.

Why students might prefer computer science or other IT-related fields over core branches like Mechanical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Printing, and what do they see on the horizon. Here are some of the reasons:

In the last two decades, the computer science fields have often offered a more comprehensive range of job opportunities, especially in software development, data science, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence. The demand for skilled professionals in these fields has been consistently high. There is a high salary potential in this field. Careers in computer science often come with attractive salary packages, which is a significant

motivating factor for students when choosing a field of study. Due to the easy access to information and an overall market scenario, earning potential in technology-related roles is often higher than in some core engineering fields. We have all seen and experienced rapid technological advancements. The fast-paced nature of technological advances in the IT industry makes it an exciting and dynamic field. Students might be drawn to highly challenging roles and the constant innovation with the opportunities to work on cutting-edge technologies. This branch of computer science, information technology, artificial intelligence, and data science is often perceived as an easy entry due to the increasing number of academic institutes offering these engineering programs. Some students perceive it as having more access to knowledge and skills with many books, data, and knowledge centres available in IT and data science than core engineering branches, which might involve more complex theoretical concepts or hands-on practical work. We all know that the Printing and Packaging field demands physical involvement on the shopfloor with a deeper understanding of the operations of the process. Technology fields often

provide a platform for innovation and entrepreneurship. This point of attraction has the potential to create startups or develop their tech products or services. The flexible work options are trendy and desirable and are looked forward to by employees. IT-related careers often offer more flexibility regarding remote work opportunities, freelance work, and flexible hours, which can appeal to students seeking a better work-life balance. In today's world of the internet and generative AI, popular culture and media influence also play a crucial role in choosing a career. The portrayal of technology and computer-related fields in popular culture, movies, and media also influences students' perceptions and preferences, making these fields seem more exciting.

And what has the current Printing and Packaging industry to offer to attract individuals seeking opportunities:

Diverse job roles: The Print and Packaging industry encompasses various roles, including graphic design, prepress technicians, printing machine operators, quality control specialists, packaging engineers, sales and marketing professionals, and more. This diversity opens up new job and entrepreneurship opportunities for talented manpower with passion and interests. Yes, but it is essential to acquire these necessary skill sets.

Constant demand: A fortunate industry in which Printing and packaging are essential components across numerous sectors, such as white goods, food and beverage, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, consumer goods, and more. This consistent demand ensures a steady need for skilled professionals in this field.

Technological advancements: In recent times, especially in the last

decade, the printing and packaging industry has evolved significantly with technological advances. Digital Printing, 3D Printing, innovative packaging, sustainable packaging solutions, and automation have revolutionized the sector, creating opportunities for innovation and specialization.

Sustainable initiatives: Using various materials required in the print and packaging industries, there is an increasing awareness of the environment and a growing emphasis on sustainable and eco-friendly packaging solutions. This shift has led to the development of new materials, designs, and production methods that are more promising in sustainability and also help create opportunities for those interested in environmentally conscious practices.

Entrepreneurial opportunities: Since I joined this industry 29 years ago, I have seen the printing and packaging industry provide opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures. Startups can focus on niche areas such as specialty packaging, personalized Printing, innovative packaging materials, or even consultancy services for optimizing packaging processes for businesses. Contributors to packaging requirements such as food and pharmaceutical, consumer and industrial goods, customized luxury goods such as perfumes, bags, leather work, and book manufacturing have put medium to high demand in print and packaging needs.

International markets: The globalization of markets has increased the demand for Packaging and Printing that meets international standards and preferences. This opens doors for professionals and businesses to cater to a global clientele.

Creativity: The field offers room for creativity and innovation, especially in packaging design, where aesthetics, functionality, and branding play crucial roles.

Functional Printing: More than just adding ink on paper: We have seen simple, commercially available, readable products with ink on the substrate, such as paper or plastic. However, due to the rapidly changing technologies, the core idea of print has evolved, diversifying print products and repurposing the core concept of print. Today, new print possibilities have opened up further, giving opportunities in functional Printing. Functional Printing includes Printing of various components and features such as resistors or antennas and also Printing of sensors for various industrial applications in health care, sports, and garments. The same print method used for transferring ink on paper, such as screen, rotogravure, flexo, digital, and 3D Printing, is also envisaged for such functional Printing.

The academia, industry, and Gen Z:

The global technological change seen in our country demands more robust and continuous connections between education and employment. The time has come to believe and pay close attention to serious industry-institute interaction. Also, knowing what this generation wants from academia and industry is essential. Flexibility and the option to work remotely will surely be on their list. This has severe implications for the industry, such as Printing and packaging, that cannot be done from home and are falling back in the choice list of students. Another option for Print graduates is that they gravitate towards government sector jobs, which is natural for job security reasons. How much and how far will the companies entice the new generation to join and retain and moreover make them happy is the question. Because as they say, what do you need – “gyan” or money? This generation needs money as there are many to give the “gyan” and very few to give money. ■



Nurturing Talent in the Packaging Industry: Bridging the Skilled Manpower Gap

Mr B S Jolly

Managing Director & CEO - Edelman India



High Q Packaging



From the zing of chewing gum to the brilliance of a smartphone, the convenience of a coffee capsule to the entertainment of a TV set – the packaging industry wraps up every part of our consumer journey. Furthermore, millions of individuals worldwide actively participate in the packaging experience through

their daily transactions in the realm of industrial goods and in the intricate web of the global supply chain, the packaging industry emerges as a silent hero. However, a substantial challenge persists within the packaging industry — the scarcity of skilled manpower. Insights from industry insiders, packaging schools, and printing-centric colleges underscore a shared concern: the uphill battle to attract top-tier talent, especially for shop floor and technical roles.

The Glamour Quotient Challenge

The packaging industry grapples with an age-old dilemma — the perceived lack of glamour. While industries like technology and finance bask in the limelight,

packaging, despite its pivotal role in ensuring the integrity and appeal of products, often operates in the shadows. To counter this, the industry must embark on a multifaceted approach. Hosting industry events that showcase cutting-edge innovations, emphasizing the industry's role in sustainability efforts, and elucidating the profound impact of packaging on daily life are essential strategies. Additionally, collaborations with design schools and art institutions can infuse a creative flair into the packaging narrative, making it more attractive to prospective employees.

Compensation and Its Role

Competitive compensation is the cornerstone of attracting and

retaining skilled professionals. A comprehensive evaluation of current pay scales is imperative, aligning them with the intricate skills demanded by the industry. Packaging industry is highly fragmented with more than 5Mn players in MSME sector with low turnovers. However, the challenge extends beyond mere numbers. The packaging industry needs to position itself as not just a job but a career destination. Collaborative efforts between industry stakeholders, policymakers, and professional associations are necessary to establish a fair and sustainable compensation structure. This includes advocating for industry-specific incentives, acknowledging the specialized skill set required in packaging roles.

Perception vs. Reality: Changing the Narrative

Misperceptions about the packaging industry act as barriers to talent acquisition. While the industry may seem traditional or unglamorous from an outsider's perspective, the reality is a dynamic tapestry of innovation. Packaging professionals are at the forefront of developing solutions that impact product safety, environmental sustainability, and consumer experience. To rectify this narrative gap, targeted communication strategies are essential. Social media campaigns, industry showcases, and educational outreach initiatives can collectively

illuminate the industry's dynamic and influential nature, making it a more attractive career option.

Recruitment Challenges in Educational Institutions

Packaging schools and colleges find themselves at a pivotal crossroads. Convincing students to enroll in packaging programs and ensuring that these programs align with industry needs are dual challenges. Collaborative efforts between educational institutions and industry players are indispensable. Establishing robust industry-academia partnerships, providing immersive hands-on experiences through internships, and hosting interactive sessions with industry experts can demystify the packaging sector. This not only makes it a more appealing career option but also ensures that emerging talents are equipped with practical skills sought by the industry.

Grooming Internal Talent: Past Success and Future Needs

While the packaging industry has historically thrived on grooming internal talent through on-the-job experience, the intensifying demand for skilled professionals demands a proactive approach. Investment in comprehensive training programs, mentorship initiatives, and upskilling opportunities is paramount. Creating a culture of continuous learning and professional development is

essential. This involves not only technical training but also leadership development programs to cultivate a pool of internal talent capable of steering the industry through future challenges.

Industry-Wide Collaboration for Future Success

The journey to address the skilled manpower gap requires unity across the packaging industry. Establishing mentorship programs connecting seasoned professionals with emerging talents, creating networking opportunities through industry conferences, and sharing best practices across organizations are essential components. Active participation in career fairs, industry events, and educational outreach programs fosters a sense of community. It presents the packaging industry as a dynamic and collaborative field with ample opportunities for growth, reinforcing the idea that the industry's success is a collective endeavour.

Conclusion

In the dynamic landscape of a rapidly evolving economy, the packaging industry must proactively address the challenge of attracting skilled manpower. By meticulously addressing the glamour quotient, aligning compensation with industry standards, changing perceptions, fostering collaboration with educational institutions, and proactively grooming internal talent, the packaging industry can position itself as a vibrant and rewarding sector for aspiring professionals. Through collective wisdom, collaborative efforts, and a commitment to continuous improvement, the industry can not only bridge the current skilled manpower gap but also thrive, playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of global supply chains. ■



Can the Packaging Industry attract best Men & Women?

What attracts the best talent?

The question begs the answer!!

Jayaram Ramachandran

Ex-Huhtamaki-PPL- Human Resources

The czars of the Packaging industry were a single-man army until 10 years ago with few tying up with MNCs. For now, the industry is consolidating; some, following shakeouts from Mergers Acquisition Divestments and a few trying to stabilize on their competitive pricing!

Volumes run the business model of the packaging industry. They are governed by a price sensitive market. Raw Material pricing accounts for a significant portion of their profitability. Suppliers are difficult to be arm-twisted. B2B customers recognize the importance of packaging but are unwilling to pay for the wrapper or a label but demand the best quality packaging. It's like the percussion being hit from both sides! To the end user the glamour of the wrapper ends when it is torn, unwrapped, and thrown off

before use. The big-time competitors are grabbing a large piece of cake with a large presence of unorganized players in this industry. Add to it, this damp squib: complete lack of glamour quotient of the packaging industry that appears unattractive to Gen Z.

It's not the availability of Manpower – skilled or otherwise. There is abundance of college trained Engineering graduates passing out each year and available for employment. Sadly, the Industry is positioned as "Packaging"!! It doesn't sound inviting either. What do you do when the sheen of the industry itself is low? Make some noise and rename the curriculum as **"Printing Packaging Innovations & Sustainability."** The industry should necessarily reflect the 4 key aspects that goes into making what packaging technology is about:



Here's what and why it should be done

1. Communicating the exciting and impactful aspects of the industry can help attract talent from colleges and institutions. Packaging companies are verily involved today in circular economy, go green initiatives, environmental protection, sustainability concerns, waste reduction; all these driven by increasing global awareness. As the current trends indicate, demand for sustainable solutions in packaging is galloping. Companies need to 'up' their





<p>employer branding antennas to project what they are doing viz. embracing environmentally conscious packaging strategies and solutions. Gen Z is fully conscious and values sustainability.</p>	<p>4. Does the packaging Industry visualize promos, advertisements, social media as a medium for promotion, employer branding and product awareness? Yes, the presence of Packaging companies on the Social Media platform has been visible in recent times showcasing achievements and awards they win!</p>	<p>thinkers whose circle of influence would be refreshing and perhaps, wider! Meagre recruitment from other industrial sector, frequent in-house breeding from within packaging companies and deliberate binge pinching between competitors, allies and related industry are reasons enough for the packaging industry, clamping and enmeshing itself into its own tentacles. Consequently, the industry's ability to influence and bring in awareness about the packaging industry and its achievements, suffers.</p>
<p>2. Packaging Industry is best-known for Innovation & Creativity. Significant pie of its business blooms from Creativity and New Product Development. Innovation is their sustenance. It's survival. It's must to have, not nice to have! How many packaging companies have attracted Graduates with this #tag of "Innovation & Creativity"? You need new ideas to reach out to the set of millennium's young minds, more effectively.</p>	<p>5. Engaging in partnerships with educational institutions, establishing Govt-Industry participation in financing and administration of the Packaging institutes will help in narrowing the skills gap and inviting better quality resources wanting to make a career. Sustained influencing with educational institutions & government agencies to include "Printing Packaging Innovations & Sustainability" as a career choice or subject matter of the curriculum is essential.</p>	<p>7. There is no dearth of brilliant talent in packaging today. Retention is as much as challenge here as it is for the whole universe of Manufacturing segment. The reasons could be as wide as you can guess: Remuneration, challenging work environment, bad boss, no growth, need exposure to other segments.....and more! Like other industries this will self-evolve as the industry grows. ■</p>
<p>3. Packaging industry abounds in Printing Technology. It's as technical as a complex machine, has precision set of operations, requires knowledge of ink technology, plastics, foils, paper, polymers, engineering, chemicals, safety and requires skilled resources and an R&D to support it at every count! An asking career and an Engineer's delight!</p>	<p>6. Talent hirings - Technical, Shop-floor, Sales & Marketing, R&D - should be sourced from outside the packaging industry. Besides bringing in cross talents there will be induction of lateral</p>	



Shaping the Future of Packaging Through Skilled Manpower

Gaurav Talwar

Managing Director, Brilliant Polymers Pvt. Ltd.



At Brilliant Polymers, our people are at the heart of our business and are one of our biggest assets. We believe successful teams are built on the principles of ownership, communication and teamwork. In order to attract and retain talented manpower, it is essential to create a safe, healthy and inclusive work environment and a strong company culture. In addition a strong working culture, there are several other tools that are required to attract talent to companies including in the packaging industry:



Employee Engagement:

People like to work in companies where they feel engaged and part of the community. In order to foster this we have set up an Employee Engagement Committee consisting of a panel of employees. Participation is voluntary and rotational so that interested employees can participate

In today's interconnected world, the packaging industry plays a pivotal role in the supply chain, safeguarding products as they traverse from manufacturers to consumers. From innovative designs to sustainable materials, the sector has seen an evolution driven by technological advancements and changing consumer preferences. However, amidst this progress, one crucial aspect that remains foundational to the industry's success is the availability of skilled manpower.

The packaging industry is a multifaceted domain requiring a diverse skill set, encompassing design,

engineering, material science, and technological expertise. The demand for skilled professionals in this sector has been on the rise, propelled by various factors such as the expansion of e-commerce, increasing environmental concerns, and the continuous quest for more efficient and innovative packaging solutions.



and can work together to create events and activities to foster a sense of community. These can be related to sports like cricket, festivals like Diwali, birthday celebrations, company milestone celebrations, world cup cricket matches or anything the employee engagement committee recommends.

Communication:

Employees like working in organisations where they are aware of the vision, goals and the direction ahead. At Brilliant Polymers we have a clearly stated corporate vision which is shared with our team. Further to this our leadership team conducts an annual 3 Year Strategy workshop which details our strategy for the next 3 years. This strategy is then shared with all employees so that we are all united and aware of the direction ahead.

Further to this, an internal company newsletter is put together monthly and shares updates from various departments thereby keeping everyone updated. Lastly, we have active social media feeds which keep employees, customers, and partners aware of all our activities. Through this sort of robust communication, we can keep employees engaged.

Corporate Social Responsibility:

Successful and sustainable organisations are those that make the planet a better place in terms of the environment and society at large. We believe that organisations that exhibit strong care for their people,

the environment and society can attract HR talent. We have a strong focus on CSR and have a committee that coordinates our activities. Additionally, at regular intervals we visit the projects that we fund and open such visits to employees. This makes employees brand ambassadors of the work we are doing and gives them a chance to be involved and support our actions. This fosters a sense of community and pride.

Career Development and Growth Opportunities: Skilled individuals seek roles that offer not just a job but a chance to grow. At Brilliant we provide avenues for learning, skill development, mentorship, and clear paths for career progression which can all be highly attractive.

HR Processes, Systems & Policies:

A vital factor in achieving excellence is creating HR policies such as a strong remuneration structure, variable pay schemes across levels and benefits tailored to meet the need of employees. At Brilliant Polymers we believe in excellence on all these aspects and gauge our success by considering metrics including employee retention, benchmarking of benefits and compensation with industry and also by conducting employee surveys to get feedback on further points for development.

Gender Diversity:

We believe in a balanced gender diversity ratio and have been tracking this metric over time. We have been working to balance our



gender diversity ratio and in addition to a strong female team in several departments in recent times have broken the barrier of having female teams on the production floor as well. This has started with teams for packing in the general shift.

Education & Training

Addressing the skills dilemma requires a multi-pronged approach. Education and training programs tailored to the specific needs of the packaging industry are essential. Academic programs focusing on packaging, industry-specific training initiatives, and certification programs play a vital role in shaping the professionals of tomorrow. Moreover, collaboration between industry stakeholders and educational institutions is paramount, fostering internship programs, industry advisory boards, and scholarship opportunities. Keeping this thing in mind and for shaping tomorrow's skilled workforce Brilliant Polymers have partnered with multiple educational institutes throughout India in which the we provide guest lectures, safety trainings, industry visits to those who wish to carve their career in this dynamic industry.

Conclusion:

In the packaging industry, the availability of skilled manpower is not merely a necessity—it is the key to unlocking the potential of an industry that stands at the nexus of innovation, sustainability, and consumer experience. As the demand for skilled professionals continues to rise, the packaging industry must proactively invest in education, training, and collaboration to ensure a workforce ready to meet the challenges of tomorrow. In doing so, the packaging industry can not only safeguard the products it houses but also secure its place as an essential pillar of global commerce. ■





IFCA STAR AWARDS 2023

October 27, 2023 at Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA)







Packaging Round Up!

Editor: Will request all members to send us any interesting news item in packaging and we will be happy to include. All the articles are reproduced from Packaging Digest

Nestle Puts Resources into Plastic Recycling-The CPG giant is investing \$8.8 million in the facility.

A new plastic recycling plant is set to open in Durham, North England, with a significant investment from Nestlé UK and Ireland.

Impact Recycling will open the new facility to process hard-to-recycle flexible plastics, typically used in food packaging, into pellets which can be used to make new flexible products such as postbags and refuse bags.

Nestlé will provide Impact Recycling with a £7 million (\$8.8 million) loan to get its process off the ground, and with a grant from Innovate UK, the site is set to be operational in late summer 2024. The innovative process, known as Baffled Oscillation Separation System, or BOSS, sorts the waste plastics by spinning them in water, meaning that different materials either sink or float, depending on their density. This makes it easier to take the correct materials to be recycled.

When open, the site will have the capacity to take 25,000 tonnes of the plastic and produce the pellets, which can be used to replace virgin plastic films in construction and agriculture, as well as or to make bin bags. This means the facility has the potential to recycle more than the amount of flexible plastic packaging Nestlé UK and Ireland places on the market.

Packaging such as KitKat wrappers, Purina pet food pouches, Rowntree confectionery sharing bags, and Nestlé Cereal bags will be collected from major supermarket collection points so they can be recycled.

Recycling Expanded for Multilayer Polyamide Films

BASF's third-party studies prove broad portfolio of polyethylene/polyamide food packaging structures support "Design for Recycling" guidelines.

A broader range of high-barrier, multilayer flexible packaging used for foods including meat and cheese has achieved a milestone for polyethylene

film recycling compatibility.

The independent Institute Cyclo-HTP GmbH, which specializes in the classification, assessment, and certification of the recyclability of packaging and goods, has completed further extensive investigations into the recyclability of multilayer films containing 6 (PA6) and ethyl vinyl alcohol (EVOH) copolymer. These studies follow those conducted in 2021 on the recyclability of coextruded polyethylene/polyamide (PE/PA) multilayer films.

The subjects of the new studies commissioned by BASF are coextruded PE/PA6/EVOH high-barrier films and laminated PA6/PE films in household packaging waste. It has been demonstrated that these two film types are also compatible for recycling in the polyethylene film stream.

"The results show that PE film waste streams containing PA can be processed without significant adjustments to the recycling process," says Dr. Matthias Zorn, senior manager market development polyamides for extrusion applications

at BASF. “The certification confirms the standard market practice of PA-containing film waste already being recycled by film manufacturers today.”

Compatibilizer enables packaging recyclability.

The compatibilizer, which is incorporated additionally into laminated structures to enable distribution of the PA component in the PE matrix, plays an important role. In coextruded structures, the already present tie layer used to bond PA and PE in the film becomes an effective compatibilizer during the recycling process.

“If additional functionalized polyethylene (PE-g-MAH) is also added as a compatibilizer during primary film production, the polyamide is even recognized as a valuable material in the polyethylene recycle by cyclo-HTP,” Zorn explains.

Due to their unique property profile, polyamides reduce the amount of material used in packaging applications and therefore help to reduce packaging waste. They also improve the mechanical, thermal, and processing properties of the packaging.

Last year, the German minimum standard for determining the recyclability of packaging subject to system participation pursuant to Section 21 (3) VerpackG already recognized the recyclability of coextruded PE/PA films. The

certification is another important fundament for a fact-based classification of polyamides in packaging. The results are made available both to the CEN standardization group, which is developing a “Design for Recycling” guideline at European level, and to the Central Agency Packaging Register, which sets the German minimum standard for assessing recyclability every year.

Further information can be found on BASF’s Mechanical Recycling page.

Neonatal and Pediatric Medical-Device Maker Picks Tree-Free Cartons

New medical packaging from Neotech Products replaces conventional paperboard with packaging made from sugarcane fiber.

Kate Bertrand Connolly

Neotech opts for paperboard substrate made of bagasse, a sugarcane byproduct, for cartons holding its NeoBar endotracheal tube holder.

Neotech Products, a neonatal and pediatric medical-device manufacturer and Certified B Corporation, is committed to sustainability in all aspects of its business. That includes packaging made from renewable, plant-based material that spares trees.

In 2021, the Valencia, CA-based company switched from conventional

tree-based paperboard packaging to folding cartons made from bagasse, a sugarcane byproduct, for its NeoBar endotracheal tube holder.

The NeoBar cartons, made of virgin Tree-Free Paperboard, are compostable; biodegradable; and free of chemicals, bleach, chlorine, bisphenol-A (BPA), and dyes. Neotech previously used solid bleached sulfate (SBS) cartons, coated on one side. NeoBar is the first product for which the company is using Tree-Free Paperboard packaging.

When Food Packaging Fails: The Rise in Recalls

How fine-tuned packaging processes play a critical role in curbing the sharp rise in food recalls by brand owners that include Kraft Heinz, Nestlé, and ConAgra.

Overall product recalls in the US are on track to reach a five-year high, according to Sedgewick, a risk and benefit assessment firm.

USDA food recalls represented the only category across all the industries that increased from Q2 to Q3 in terms of recall events and impacted units. There were 18 USDA recalls in Q3 2023, up from 17 in Q2 2023. The number of units rose to 467,811 pounds, an increase of 27.9%.

On the FDA side, the total number of food recalls fell by 14.4% in Q3 2023 compared to the previous quarter. The number of units decreased even more, falling from 114.06 million units in Q2 to 40.20 million in Q3, a decline of 64.8%.

While the lion’s share of food and beverage recalls are due to the inclusion of undeclared/unlabeled ingredients and allergens, and bacterial contamination that could trigger foodborne illnesses, a small but noteworthy amount have been attributed to faulty packaging.

In September, Kraft Heinz voluntarily recalled nearly 84,000 select cases of its Kraft Singles





American processed cheese slices, citing a packaging defect that caused the potential for film to remain adhered to the cheese slice after the wrapper has been removed.

According to a statement from the megabrand, the recall was “a precaution after a temporary issue developed on one of its wrapping machines, making it possible that a thin strip of the individual film may remain on the slice after the wrapper has been removed.”

More than just an unpleasant inconvenience, the issue was discovered after the company received several consumer complaints about finding the plastic stuck to a slice, including six complaints of consumers saying they choked or gagged in connection with the issue. No injuries or serious health issues have been reported, according to the company, and the wrapping machine associated with the affected slices, as well as all other processing machines, were thoroughly inspected and fixed.

Foreign contaminants were also a red flag recall factor. Nestlé’s voluntary recall of Nestlé Toll House Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough “Break and Bake” Bar products centered on the potential presence of wood fragments. And plastic matter was the culprit for Banquet brand frozen chicken strips from ConAgra and Jay Robb’s vanilla egg white protein product.

Recalls are triggered more by external factors than by the packaging.

Why is the packaging to blame? The onus lies less on the part of

packaging and more on the part of external factors, says Claire Sand, owner of Packaging Technology and Research, which focuses on packaging science and value chain solutions that ensure food safety.

“Food packaging is required to comply with GFSI (Global Food Safety Initiative) and HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) processes [and] one can argue the food is as well,” she says. “We are finding Listeria, eColi, and Salmonella in places where it has not been before.”

And while the root cause of these contaminations is usually unrelated to packaging, proximity can mean everything. “Packaging is typically produced, nested (in the case of rigid packaging), or wound so that the inner direct food contact layer is not exposed until just prior to use,” Sand says. “Most are related to the proximity of feedlots to where crops are grown, contamination during washing, cross contamination, and high initial microbial counts.”

However, don’t underestimate packaging’s role in preventing a recall.

“Packaging has a critical role to play in providing antimicrobials and the means to use modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) to serve as the last line of defense and withstand sterilization temperatures,” Sand explains.

“Packaging technologies are constantly being fine-tuned for improved efficiencies to help eliminate the far-reaching effects of recalls. In addition to GFSI and HACCP compliance, food and

beverage producers are putting other measures into practice too.

“Most packaging suppliers submit a COA (certificate of analysis) with TBC (Total Bacterial Counts) and other critical measurements with each load [and] reinforcing the use of COA measurements as related to pathogens such as Listeria, eColi, and Salmonella is likely to expand,” Sand continues. “Food manufacturers [also] have policies in place such as no corrugated in food processing areas.”

She notes that one area that could be helpful going forward is the sterilization of packaging prior to use with options like UV light, with or without hydrogen peroxide.

“We often sterilize packaging and product at the same time as well as with MATS (Microwave Assisted Thermal Sterilization) and retort processing,” Sand says.

Looking ahead, Sedgewick advises manufacturers to keep an eye out for changes to the FDA’s foods program in 2024. At the beginning of 2023, the FDA announced it was planning a major overhaul to address what it claims are “identified deficiencies,” though the timeline and specifics have yet to be specified.

For now, the firm suggested manufacturers pay close attention to the FDA’s Hazard Analysis and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food: Guidance for Industry Draft Guidance. Issued in September 2023, the guidance is intended to, among many things, help companies understand the physical hazards that are commonly of concern in manufacturing, processing, packing

and holding of FDA regulated food products.

A Reality Check on the Future of AI and Machine Learning for Packaging

We see six ways artificial intelligence and machine learning can help you improve your supply chain. But four obstacles stand in the way.

What is ChatGPT and why does it matter?

For those living under a rock: OpenAI's ChatGPT (generative pre-trained transformer) is an advanced chatbot that uses the massive repository of text on the internet to attempt to communicate like a human. Its inception has rocked an enormous number of fields — writers, designers, historians, educators. Everyone is nervous about how this technology can potentially change creative and educational landscapes.

A recent article in Fortune, "ChatGPT Creates an AI Frenzy," quoted one professor who cautioned, "AI poses a real and imminent threat to the fabric of society. By lowering the cost of producing bogus information to merely zero, systems like ChatGPT are likely to unleash a tidal wave of disinformation." In fact, school districts throughout the US and Australia have blocked school-administered networks from accessing chatbots. Australia has gone as far as to revert to "using only proctored, paper-based exams to assess students."

By the way, according to a recent story, "ChatGPT has been banned in its entirety in China. They are calling the tool an instrument of Western propaganda."

Other considerations:

- ChatGPT can only produce data from before 2021.
- The latest version "still has many known limitations, such as social biases, hallucinations, and adversarial prompts."

Filters are not currently effective enough to catch inappropriate content.

- ChatGPT does not currently link to sources.
- Intellectual property rights are up for grabs: "When an AI platform exposes a new product design or concept, who owns it? What if it plagiarizes based on its data model?"
- ChatGPT is a serious threat to education. Consider what future generations stand to lose, such as the ability to problem solve, write a thesis, and argue its merits and flaws, or the ability to create a business strategy that redefines the marketplace.

Regardless of its hiccups, this type of AI is blowing up, and competition is rising.

ChatGPT is all the rage.

The investment dollars going into it are mind blowing. Microsoft has committed to making a "multibillion dollar" contribution to the originator of ChatGPT, OpenAI. Add to that all the major players who are elbowing their way into the category with rival platforms, such as Amazon, Apple, and Google (called Bard).

Reality check: In its promotional video, Bard gave an incorrect answer, disappointed investors, and immediately lost \$100 billion in value from parent Alphabet. Oops.

According to the New York Post,

"One major shortcoming — salvation for reporters and copy editors — at least for now, is the tool's inability to fact-check efficiently. You can ask it to provide an essay, to produce a story with citations, but more often than not, the citations are just made up. That's a known failure of ChatGPT and honestly we do not know how to fix that."

I do have to say, because I lead a design team: ChatGPT spits out some amazing images. But every client is seeking to stand out on shelf, online, and in people's hearts. ChatGPT is up against human talent, experience, and deep knowledge of the client's business.

"... human ingenuity is what created ChatGPT. My hope is that this type of platform will take on the more routine tasks and serve as the helpmate and not the master."

So before you take a sledge hammer to your career, know that human ingenuity is what created ChatGPT. My hope is that this type of platform will take on the more routine tasks and serve as the helpmate and not the master.

Beyond ChatGPT, AI and ML are making waves in the supply chain, but not without issues.

Amazing leaps forward with machine learning.

Following conversations with executives across the supply chain industry, Forbes attempted to separate myth from reality. It begins



with this definition: “Any device that can perceive its environment and takes actions that maximize its chance of success at a goal is some form of AI.”

But in the supply chain realm, machine learning (ML), or how AI uses data points and algorithms to “learn” without the help of humans, is where AI finds its true importance.

Where is ML breaking new ground?

We see six ways machine learning can aid product manufacturers:

1. Updating data, such as lead times for deliveries, is seeing advancements thanks to companies like AspenTech. Its process simulator performs thousands of actions to create large data sets where AI algorithms can be applied. The result? Its “first principles” model allows users to see improved accuracy up to 99+%.
2. **ML for demand forecasting has advanced dramatically.** **One example:** Forecasting how a product will sell in a particular area is only possible due to the latest version of ML. A cautionary note: Getting brands and retailers to enter this data has not met with much success.
3. **ML and sustainability goals:** Supply Chain Planning (SCP) can calculate the carbon footprint of every element in the supply chain, by machine, factory, distribution center (DC), mode of transportation, supplier, product material, and more. This type of feedback loop is possible as a result of using ML to embed self-correcting algorithms, taking the guesswork out of sustainability goals.
4. **ML can predict machine breakdowns:** Once again AspenTech is leading in this area. Using predictive analytics, users will be alerted to when vital machines in a refinery will break down and provide alternative

production schedules.

5. **Natural language processing (NLP):** Suppose there’s a social media post saying that a company is about to “go belly up?” A machine can’t translate that kind of “unstructured” information. But using AI in supply chain applications, such as NLP, means that companies can flag this data before and help to mitigate it early.
6. **AI helps predict order and inventory shortages:** Turning a planning system into an execution aid and suggesting courses of action for demand/supply disruptions. For instance: A transportation system can apply ML to predict how long it will take a truck to make a delivery. A warehouse management system can predict what ecommerce customers are likely to purchase and assign correct work orders at the right time to the warehouse floor. And that’s just the start.

Reality Check: Although we’re seeing the design of new ML algorithms that amp up computing power, deliver big data analytics, and are being embraced by industry leaders, AI only fixed supply chains to a degree. It’s not a magic wand that makes supply chain issues disappear.

What’s holding us back?

Although AI is predicted to be a major tool in the supply chain armory, adoption has been hindered by four things:

1. **Technology:** Demystifying AI is still a problem for many organizations. The right tools are required to achieve enterprise-wide use. Many still suffer from data silos, which can result in missed opportunities and leave the company vulnerable to Black Swan events, such as COVID-19.
2. **Processes:** Data models are critical to a more seamless supply chain. And many supply chain groups have yet to step up with a plan. By leveraging the right

technologies, processes can be put in place to enable clean, consistent, usable data. This is vital to any successful machine learning initiative.

3. **People:** Hiring the best talent is less a problem than removing barriers to cross-departmental collaboration. Teams need to understand the potential gains that are reachable through AI and ML to tie advances to the organization’s business goals.
4. **Money:** Of course, it goes without saying that investing in these innovative technologies is costly.

Applying AI and machine learning in the future.

Ask yourself, with all the advances in AI and machine learning, why are we still struggling with challenges that threaten the economy and human life?

- A train derailment that unleashes toxic chemicals, kills wildlife, and threatens people for decades to come?
- A fraudulent cryptocurrency business that collapses and loses billions.
- A bank failure that triggers similar failures in the financial markets setting off a global panic.

The above all happened in 2023! Could AI and ML have been applied to forecast such inherent dangers?

Time will tell.

About the Author(s)

Tom Newmaster has more than 25 years of experience in consumer packaged goods branding and package design. From 1998 to 2016, he led creative and won awards for The Hershey Co., Pfizer, Stoner Car Care, and Zippo. He has helped launch new products across multiple categories including fresh produce, frozen food, confectionery, household cleaning, and nutritional supplements, to name a few.

In 2017, Newmaster started FORCEpkg to take branding, design, and innovation to the next level. He has become a leading voice in the branding and packaging industry, writing for top trade and mainstream business publications. ■

Hoffmann Neopac AG produces high-quality packaging tubes

Danielle Stöckli, CHRO

Hoffmann Neopac AG is a Swiss family-owned company that produces high-quality packaging tubes at four locations: Oberdiessbach (Switzerland), Silvassa (India 3D Neopac), Debrecen (Hungary) and at Wilson (USA). Hoffmann Neopac also produces high quality tins at Thun (Switzerland) and Dronton (Netherlands). Our customers include well-known pharmaceutical, cosmetics and consumer goods manufacturers from all over the world.

The current state of the global economy and the associated challenges are presenting Hoffmann Neopac Human Resources, as a global company in the packaging industry, major changes. The upcoming generational change with the accompanying change in values, digitalisation and automation as well as new requirements in terms of agility and flexibility are shaping everyday life: therefore, we have faced with a pronounced shortage of qualified workers, especially in technical professions. At the same time, we have to address the need for sustainability and attractiveness as an employer.



This shortage of skilled labour is a bottleneck for the industry's growth and hinders its ability to meet increasing demands and effectively exploit technological progress. As the packaging industry continues to evolve with automation and advanced technologies, we are facing with the question of how to develop our labour force or find qualified workers.

At the same time, there is a need to increase the attractiveness of the packaging industry as an employer. The industry is facing an image problem that is affecting its ability to attract new talent and develop internally. Careers in the packaging industry are often perceived as less glamorous or innovative compared to other industries. To counteract this, Human Resources must strategically position the industry as an attractive and dynamic environment. This includes highlighting the commitment to sustainable solutions, which is a decision criterion for younger generations in particular, as well as technological innovation and its role in global supply chains.

In summary, this means that comprehensive training programs are essential. This ensures that existing employees are qualified for the technological requirements. At the same time, new talents are attracted



by the sustainability of our products, innovations in technology, safety in the workplace and, most importantly, a positive and value-orientated management culture.

In overcoming these challenges, cooperation between industry representatives, educational institutions and human resources in companies is of the utmost importance. Management and human resources play a central role in the competitive market for talent.

In Indian context, packaging industry is one of the few industries which has consistently grown in double digits without any downfall as was the case at times in hospitality, banking, dot.com or automotive industry to name a few. At the same time, enormous cost pressure does not permit attractive salaries. HR professionals need to promote the industry highlighting growth opportunities, stability, opportunity to interface with various user industries such as food, pharma, personal care, home care, medical and engineering and also opportunities within various functional areas. There are not many industries where product is an outcome of both skill and science! It is an industry where both product and service are the differentiators to win a customer! ■



UFlex exhibits its range of sustainable Tubes at COSMOPROF INDIA 2023

December 5, 2023, Noida, National Capital Region: FlexiTubes, the packaging tubes manufacturing business of UFlex, India's largest multinational flexible packaging and solutions company, is exhibiting its innovative and sustainable range of tubes designed for the beauty and cosmetics industry at K 30, Pavilion 2, at COSMOPROF INDIA 2023, scheduled to be held at Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai, India from December 7- 9, 2023.

The trend of sustainable and customized tube packaging is gaining momentum and UFlex's FlexiTubes

has established its market presence in developing bespoke solutions to enhance the consumer experience for brands in the beauty and cosmetics industry. The company will showcase a wide range of sustainable tubes at "COSMOPROF INDIA 2023," characterized by enhanced aesthetics and barrier properties.

FlexiTubes offers brands an option of high-definition graphics through a Gravure reverse printing process. It provides a premium touch with options for a matte finish and a metallic effect with matte finish. In line with its focus on developing environment-friendly and sustainable

products, FlexiTubes are inherently produced using less plastic at source without compromising on product integrity, MVTR and OTR properties and offer customized barrier solutions tailored to specific product requirements. FlexiTubes includes options such as paper-based tubes, recyclable tubes, and tubes made from PCR resin, aligning with UFlex's commitment to preserving the environment.

Visit the FlexiTubes booth at K 30, Pavilion 2, Jio World Convention Centre, to explore different options of sustainable tubes, including Earthika, Greenika, Kraftika, Remika, and other





brand enhancement and packaging solutions.

For queries: corpcomm@uflexltd.com

About UFlex Limited:

UFlex is India’s largest multinational flexible packaging and solutions company. Since its inception in 1985, UFlex has grown from strength to strength and has built a strong presence across all verticals of the packaging value chain - packaging films, chemicals, aseptic liquid packaging, flexible packaging, holography, engineering, and printing cylinders.

With a 10,000+ strong multicultural workforce across global regions that work toward developing innovative, value-added, and sustainable packaging solutions, the company has earned an irreproachable reputation for defining the contours of the ‘Packaging Industry’ in India and overseas. It provides end-to-end solutions to numerous Fortune 500 clients across various sectors such as FMCG, consumer product goods, pharmaceuticals, building materials, automobiles, and more, in more than 150 countries. Headquartered in

Noida, the National Capital Region, India, UFlex enjoys a global reach with advanced manufacturing facilities in India, UAE, Mexico, Egypt, USA, Poland, Russia, Nigeria, and Hungary.

A winner of various marquee global awards for product excellence, innovation, and sustainability, UFlex is the first company in the world to earn recognition at the Davos Recycle Forum in 1995 for conceptualizing the recycling of mixed plastic waste. For more details, please visit: www.uflexltd.com ■



Cosmo First
Ahead Always



Pankaj Poddar,
Group CEO, Cosmo First Limited

New Year, New Space: Cosmo First Moves to a New Corporate Headquarter

The move comes after freshening up the official logo and new business expansion.

New Delhi, 4th January 2024: Cosmo First Ltd., a four-decade global business leader, is pleased to announce its relocation to a new corporate office, marking a significant milestone in its journey of growth and success.

The new office, strategically located in Jasola District Centre, New Delhi. Effective immediately, the company's registered office and operations will be based at: Cosmo First Limited, 1st Floor, Uppal's Plaza, M-6, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi-110025.

Conveniently located near Pacific Mall, the office is accessible by the nearest public transport, including the metro, ensuring ease of commute for the team and visitors.

Pankaj Poddar, Group CEO, Cosmo First Limited expressed excitement about the transition, stating, "Our new corporate office signifies not only a physical expansion but also a symbol of our commitment to excellence and progress. We are confident that this move will empower our team and elevate our capabilities to better serve our clients and partners."

About Cosmo First Limited:

Established in 1981 and founded by Mr. Ashok Jaipuria, Cosmo First is a global leader in specialty films and an emerging player in specialty chemicals (Masterbatches, Adhesive, & Coating), Cosmo

Plastech and Cosmo Sunshield, along with a digital-first Omni channel Pet care business under the brand name 'Zigly'. With the engineering of innovative products and sustainability solutions, Cosmo First over the years has been partnering with the world's leading F&B and personal care brands and packaging & printing converters to enhance the end consumer experience. Its customer base is spread in more than 100+ countries with sales & manufacturing units in India and Korea and additional sales & distribution base in Japan, the USA, Canada, and Europe. www.cosmofirst.com

For more information, please write to us at: communication@cosmofirst.com ■



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UPCOMING EVENTS



07 - 09 MARCH 2024
INDIA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AND EXPO CENTRE (IICC)
DWARKA, NEW DELHI



14 - 17 March 2024
India Expo Centre, NCR Delhi



Drupa 2024
28 May - 7 June 2024
Dusseldorf, Germany



INDIA
31 May - 2 June, 2024
12th Edition
Chennai Trade Centre (New Halls) | Chennai

- **MYANMAR**
16 - 18, May, 2024
7th Edition
Yangon Convention Centre
Yangon
- **NIGERIA**
16 - 18, July, 2024
2nd Edition
Landmark Centre, Lagos
- **SRI LANKA**
30 Aug - 01 Sept, 2024
8th Edition
BMICH, Colombo
- **KENYA**
25 - 27, Sept, 2024
9th Edition
KICC, Nairobi



**Premier Technology Supplier Fair for
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24 - 26 JULY 2024
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Factory & Head Office

Plant 1, C / Alemania 18-22, PI Pla de Llerona, 08520 Las Franquesas del Valles
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Plant 2, Fontanar, Guadalajara, Spain.

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Design Centre at Chennai

We provide an unmatched look and feel packaging through a combination of a world-class Design Centre, an in-house pre press that's fully equipped with the latest technology, contemporary plate making and cylinder making facilities for Offset & Gravure and cutting-edge printing and packaging equipments.

At our Design Centre, experienced designers, reproduction experts and an accomplished product development team assist brand teams with prototyping, packaging development for new brand launches. Need not talk about rigorous colour management again, we ensure colors are reproduced precisely in Offset, Gravure, Flexo Processes.

As an illustration of our customer orientation, we also offer design consultancy and wide range of anti counterfeit solutions, integrate Overt & Covert security elements in to printed packaging for an outstanding brand protection.



- Sales & Marketing Offices**
- Chennai
 - Mumbai
 - Bangalore
 - New Delhi
 - Kolkata

- Manufacturing Locations**
- Chennai
 - Haridwar
 - Munger
 - Gujarat



Contact us

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