

FIVE WAYS THE PANDEMIC IS AFFECTING PACKAGING

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INTRODUCTION

It's no secret the pandemic has drastically changed the packaging landscape.

From supply chain issues to an increased need for single-use items, this is an area of rapid change for many consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies.

In this article, we break down five major ways the pandemic has impacted packaging.

ABOUT US

Corbus delivers transformational global supply chain management, information technology, digital media, print management services and business process management consulting solutions to an ever-evolving business marketplace.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Claudia Hawkins is an accomplished business professional with over twenty years in the graphics industry, leading people, projects, design, production, P&L and vendor relationships. She has a proven track record of delivering strategic solutions that meet business objectives through building and maintaining strong, customer focused relationships and is an experienced organizational workflow expert.



AN INCREASED NEED FOR SINGLE-USE PACKAGED ITEMS

"It is absolutely clear that the future will be a new balance between responsible reuse and sensible single use. However, this pandemic showed us that we will need a certain percentage of single-use-packaging," -Roberta Colotta, main coordinator of 360° Foodservice

From PPE to sanitizing wipes to carryout food containers—single-use items reigned supreme out of necessity. While it has become evident that single-use isn't going anywhere, it is clear that companies will need to consider the long-term impacts and opt for sustainable choices.

Corbus can help you source eco-friendly materials to produce sustainable packaging that will have a positive impact on the environment.

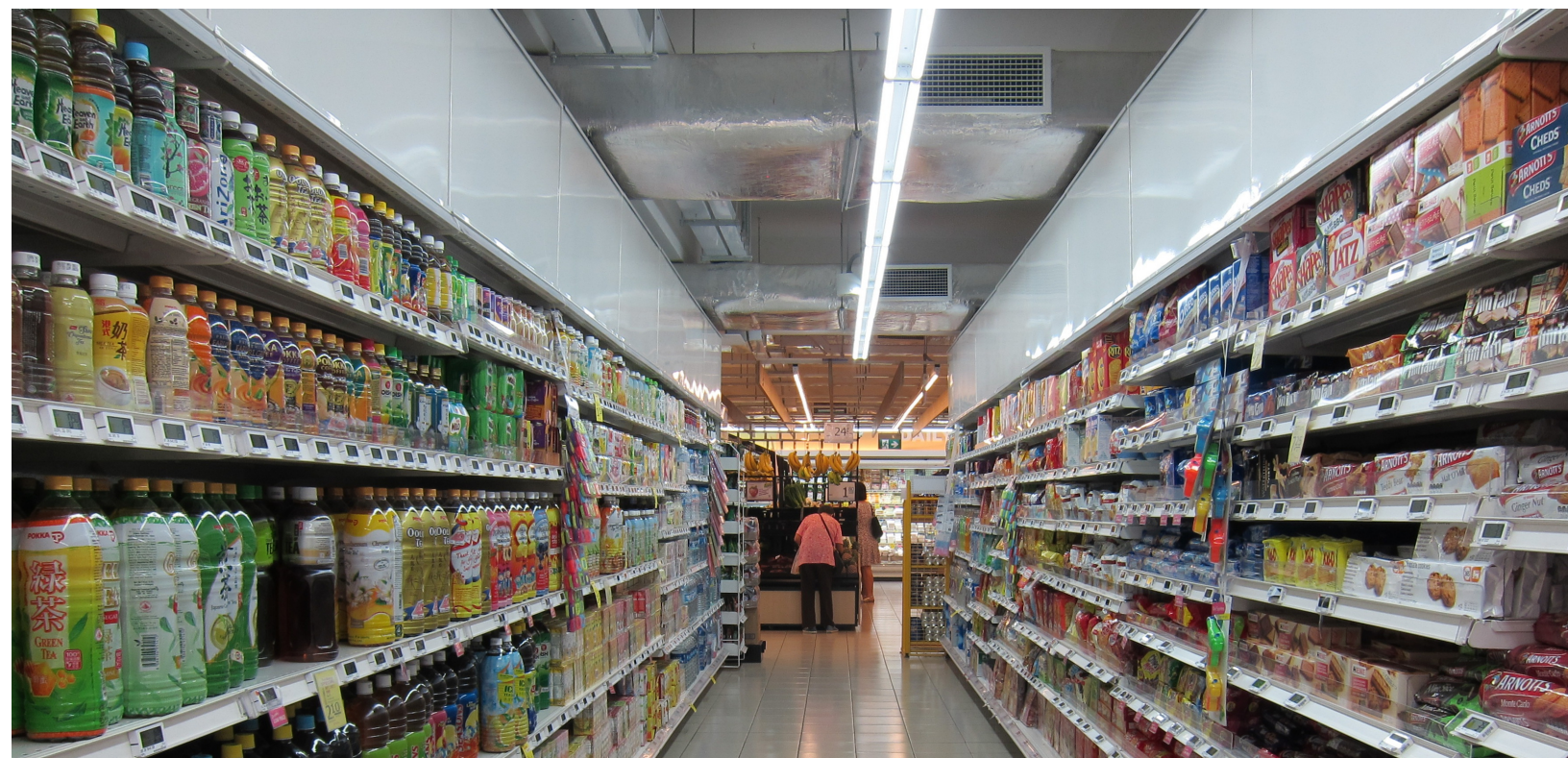
IMPACTED SUPPLY CHAINS AND LABOR SHORTAGES

From raw materials to labels and cartons, there is no part of our supply chain that has been untouched by the pandemic—and that doesn't even include actual product!

Supply chain issues and labor shortages go hand in hand, and the pandemic has highlighted this weakness. Automation in packaging mitigates these issues and will be top-of-mind for everyone in the industry.

Our experts in automation can do a landscape assessment to see how your processes and be streamlined to increase you ROI.

"Warehouse and fulfillment center operators also had to cope with labor scarcity, which has led to much more automation. COVID has pulled the future forward," Clark said. In fact, she believes COVID-19 has pushed automation in packaging up by three to five years (1)



ACCOMMODATING SHIFTING SHOPPING BEHAVIORS

Larger retailers like Amazon, Walmart and Target went smaller on packaging too — but in a different way from small businesses. Instead of a new demand for smaller packaging because of facility space constraints, large retailers are sizing down packaging to reduce the empty space inside
(2)

A shift in packaging trends occurred rapidly when brick-and-mortar stores increasingly offered in-store and curbside order pickup. Larger packages take up too much room in these retail settings, leading for more efficient, smaller packaging options.

Corbus can help you reduce packaging waste – utilizing packaging software from Esko, such as Artios CAD and Cape, you can create right size packing that meets the ever-changing Brick & Mortar environment.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, GRAB-AND-GO AND AUTO-SHIP OPTIONS

Subscription boxes, ready-to-go kits and auto-ship options had a major moment over the past year. From cooking kits to mystery parties, consumers sought new and exciting ways to interact with brands and pass the time in quarantine.

For many small businesses, subscription or auto-ship boxes were a lifeline during shutdowns. This also created a need for packaging that allowed them to quickly pivot their business models. Larger companies also found creative ways to create buying moments in the absence of in-store browsing. Many companies also experimented with grab-and-go options, with restaurants leading the way in that category. For all of these options, finding the right packaging was paramount. (shortages occurring again due to shipping delays)

Consumer testing takes time and tends to have a high cost associated with creating mock-ups, deploying testing and evaluating results. These costs can be drastically reduced by creating 3D packaging to be utilized in a virtual store. To check out the Esko product demos of Studio and Store Visualizer, contact sales@corbus.com.

“A new study from CouponFollow shows that during the COVID-19 crisis, many US consumers have leaned into subscription-based product—some for the first time... Retailers are taking note of this shifting behavior, and data projects that by 2023, as many as 75% of direct-to-consumer brands will have a subscription-based offering.”
(3)



INCREASED CONCERN WITH SUSTAINABILITY

McKinsey & Company's Sustainability in Packaging: Inside the Minds of Global Consumers report, which surveyed 10,000 consumers around the world, found that the overwhelming majority of respondents say they're willing to pay more for sustainable packaging. The highest percentage was in China at 86% willing to pay more for sustainable packaging in the food service industry; the U.S. clocked in at 68%.

In the beginning of the pandemic, consumers were buying whatever basics they could get their hands on—from off-brand paper towels to distiller-produced hand sanitizer. However, as supply caught up and more consumers settled into online shopping for most of their needs, they had more time to consider issues like sustainability.

As a result, many consumers and brands reported an increased focus on claims of sustainability, ethical sourcing, renewable resources and other top-of-mind issues in packaging.

With plenty of time and a wealth of information at their fingertips, consumers aren't just grabbing something off a shelf. They're researching and choosing accordingly—and packaging needs to keep up.

Transparency in sourcing will continue to drive changes in consumer behavior. See how Corbus can help you upgrade your packaging to meet the sourcing and sustainability demands of the consumer.

REFERENCES

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