



**27.-29.9.2022
NÜRNBERG**

KEY THEME

April 2022

Transition in Packaging – Step by step into the future

Preparations are in full swing for FACHPACK, to be held in Nuremberg from 27 to 29 September 2022. With its new key theme this year, “Transition in Packaging”, the trade fair is focusing on the upheavals in the packaging industry.

Sustainability, digitalization and e-commerce are the key trends that will be discussed at the stands, in the forums and in the special shows at FACHPACK 2022. Those are three themes that motivate all exhibitors and visitors, and they have become increasingly complementary and interwoven in recent years. Digitalization is thus being applied on the shop floor as a sustainability tool, and without it, it would be impossible for e-commerce strategies to succeed. At the same time, sustainability serves as an important checking mechanism in assessing the future viability of new processes and business models. After all, technological developments should enable businesses both to achieve their sustainability targets and to ensure their business success. At FACHPACK 2022, there will be plenty of small and larger examples of these transitions as well as narratives about new departures.

Unbeatable pair: Sustainability and digitalization

With the amendment to Germany’s Packaging Act come growing demands to make packaging more sustainable. In addition, on 30 March, the European Commission introduced its Sustainable Product Initiative (SPI). This is intended to ensure that all products offered for sale in the EU are as sustainable, long-lasting, reusable, repairable and recyclable as possible, and that their manufacture is energy-efficient. This will be followed in July by proposed legislation to counter false sustainability claims, which is intended to ensure that all statements regarding green product qualities are justifiable and comparable.

Improvements in sustainability are demanded not only by law but also by consumers. Studies show a growing trend on the part of consumers to assess brands based on their contribution to the environment and society,

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and they are more prepared to pay extra for them. The result is a far-reaching transformation within the packaging industry.

Right at the top of the agenda for manufacturers, therefore, is the need to reduce packaging waste by adopting alternatives that will save resources, followed by the trend toward recyclability (see [FACHPACK Trend Radar 2021](#)). It is becoming very important in this connection to develop and make use of monomaterials to replace packaging composed of a mix of materials that is difficult or impossible to recycle. Monomaterials are easier to reuse, and would also cover the growing requirement for recyclates.

Many companies have now revised their packaging strategies, switched their plant over to alternative materials, and taken many steps – both large and small – to begin the transformation toward the circular economy. But changing the design of packaging is just one part of the efforts directed at sustainability, even if that has the greatest impact in terms of public perception.

Energy efficiency and the use of materials in the production process are also effective tools. Rationalized production processes and effective recycling and recovery initiatives reduce waste and use resources more efficiently than before. What makes this possible is the targeted use of digitalization tools in the context of Industry 4.0.

Sensors have now become natural components of packaging machines, constantly recording data in real time that will make packaging processes more efficient than ever, as long as it is properly analysed. At the same time, power-monitoring applications help to improve energy efficiency and reduce CO₂ emissions. Digitalization, from Industry 4.0 to the Smart Factory, thus integrates packaging processes, the use of packaging materials and consignment into the overall company workflow.

How the Internet of Things finds its way home

The digital expansion in the form of myFACHPACK underlines the fact that digitalization involves the entire sector, from production through to interaction with the customer. The Covid-19 pandemic in particular revealed the importance of opportunities to interact at a virtual level as a complement to face-to-face meetings.

Services in the form of online shopping and home deliveries proved especially valuable during the crisis. That established e-commerce even



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more firmly as a component of purchasing behaviour. This trend offers new sales opportunities and the chance to market products better by making use of the Internet of Things. Those best able to draw attention to their products via digital platforms or social media channels benefit most from this dynamic market.

But packaging also has a part to play in this strategy. After all, the first physical contact with a product is the packaging used for shipping, and that creates the first impression, which we know is especially important. The important thing here is to understand the customers' lifestyle and what they want, and to take this into account. Consumers will notice if there is too much packaging, empty space or poorly recyclable materials, and they will draw their own conclusions, especially if good examples show how unpacking can be a positive experience. Recycled materials, reusable shipping packaging and an individual appeal to the customer leave a lasting impression that pays off in the form of customer loyalty.

Sustainability, digitalization and e-commerce are disruptive trends. But major upheavals can be overcome with a strategy involving many small steps and transitions. For the packaging industry, all these themes are not just a task; they also offer a major opportunity to transform – as FACHPACK, with its theme of “Transition in Packaging”, will show this autumn.

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