

Competitive Drive: The Challenges of a Globalised Packaging Industry



By Jeremy Drummond of Aesica
Formulated Products

Pharmaceutical packaging is a growing industry globally and companies are becoming more aware of the benefits of treating this component of the manufacturing process as an integral element of overall product development. Packaging is no longer solely responsible for fulfilling a functional role. It now has a significant impact upon safety, addressing the critical concerns of medication compliance and drug authenticity.

Blister packaging in particular is a lucrative market and one which has greatly improved patient adherence and enhanced drug authentication. Take the North American pharma market for instance. Whilst historically blister packaging hasn't been the favoured method for solid dosage forms of medication, it is becoming more recognised and the percentage of drugs packaged this way is growing steadily, with blister packaging currently accounting for approximately 20 per cent of the market. (source: World Pharmaceutical Frontiers)

Compare that to the rest of the world where 85 per cent * of all solid dosage forms are packaged in blisters. This suggests that firstly, contract manufacturers of blister packaging need to work hard to stand out from the competition, and secondly, if they can offer something their competitors can't, the opportunity to establish a presence in the North American market increases threefold. *(source: World Pharmaceutical Frontiers).

At Aesica Pharmaceuticals, we have invested significantly in our blister packaging offer in a bid to develop a more sustainable, innovative method of delivery. Our technicians and analysts took the traditional pharmaceutical blister packs as a basis of their work and looked to evolve our offer to encompass increasingly sustainable practices and alternatives for our global clients. Previously the packs were produced by laminating aluminium foil onto PVC pockets containing the tablets or capsules in a single moulded unit; however, they can prove cumbersome to recycle.

As a result of this work, we have been able to offer an under-utilised form of blister packaging, PP Mono, for some time now. PP Mono is 100 per cent polypropylene, a fully transparent and fully recyclable material to contain and differentiate tablets and capsules. The PP Mono blisters combine the usability of PVC with a 100 per cent recyclable profile and reduce emissions in combustion, which supports pharma companies' ongoing pursuit of enhanced sustainable manufacturing. This is an eco-friendly and fully printable alternative that enables brands to differentiate mature products or those fighting for retail shelf space in a crowded market, whether they be prescribed or over the counter drugs.

When it comes to design, PP Mono allows marketers greater creativity in differentiating blister packs. The unique transparent material enables blister packets to instantly stand out and increase visual appeal among consumers. And as PP Mono packs are suitable for individual blister printing, this opens up a spectrum of new innovative design opportunities, encouraging further patient compliance, brand loyalty and awareness.

In France, lean and sustainable efficiencies are a major priority for the pharmaceutical industry and as such, PP Mono manufacturing is eligible for the 'credit d'impot' sustainability subsidy, enabling customers to minimise the cost of switching from the traditional form of blister packaging. Understandably this is currently having a positive impact upon the European market.

Overall, PP Mono is a way for manufacturers to refresh their solid dosage portfolio in a way that appeals to end users both visually and environmentally. Aesica is one of only a small minority of manufacturing partners to offer PP Mono and we believe it's a proven route to more sustainable innovation in blister packaging.

The environmental credentials of PP Mono are a major factor in its potential success both to the

European market and North America. Sustainability is a key element of our manufacturing model and by harnessing the benefits of PP Mono, the pharma industry can invest in eco-focussed packaging and attract the attention of an increasingly green-aware patient population.

To find out more about PP Mono and Aesica, visit www.aesica-pharma.com.

About the Author

Jeremy Drummond divides his time between the Aesica commercial manufacturing and packaging sites in Queenborough, UK, Monheim, Germany and Pianezza, Italy. Jeremy has been instrumental in the growth of Aesica in secondary pharmaceutical packaging, packaging artwork services.