

FLEXIBLE INSIGHTS

"Close" More Sales With Recloseable Flexible Packaging

We hear more and more that packaging is being utilized as a strategic tool in the re-invention of a brand or product offering. Success is not only driven by the use of dynamic stand-out graphics and printing, but flexible packaging today must also provide the consumer with a positive "use" experience.

The ability to add convenience and functionality to the flexible package format is having a dramatic impact on the global growth and acceptance of flexible packaging as a category.

Reclosability and the ability to incorporate reclosure methods into today's advanced packaging and converting equipment has made the technology both economical and feasible. Reclosability comes in many forms, but today the most desirable from a consumer perspective is zipper, "slider" zipper and spout closures.

Billions of bags and pouches are produced annually and there appears to be no end in sight to the popularity of convenience. Reclosability is a novelty or a nice option no longer it is a consumer expectation. If your flexible packaging does not provide a means of reclosability you can expect your product to be re-packaged by one of the 5-7 billion consumer bags sold in North America. Once your product is re-packaged it is no longer carrying your brand, your colors, your marketing message, but has become very, very generic, so generic your



Calamusa

marketing department will lose sleep at night just thinking about it.

"Press to Close" and "Slider" Zippers

The most popular and cost effective zipper profile is "press to close" provided in

the form of roll stock, pre-applied to roll stock or in the form of pre-made pouches or bags. Most machinery companies providing VFFS or HIFS have refined the technology and systems to provide this technology on-line within the packaging or converting process, either at converting level or more commonly within the packaging production environment

The fastest and most advanced technology today is being realized on multi-up pre-made horizontal pouch-making equipment and horizontal form, fill and seal machinery. Depending on package size, they can produce and package hundreds of pouches and bags per minute on a single machine.

"Slider" zippers have stormed on the market in recent years introduced by ALCOA PRESTO, ITW ZIP PAK and PACTIV. Consumers reportedly prefer "sliders" as they are easier to open and close, once again highlighting the importance of convenience. The shredded cheese market, one of the first industries to embrace "press to close" zippers as a standard feature, has today almost completely shifted to "sliders" led by Sargento and now followed by Kraft.

Due to the higher cost of both the "slider" zipper and the application

technology this method of reclosability appears best suited toward larger sizes and products with a higher price point including frozen foods and club store size packages, as well as agricultural and techni-chemical products. Once again, consumer preference will drive the market and forward-looking companies will embrace the technology.

Spouts & Fitments

Either produced as a pre-made and filled and sealed or produced on-line as part of the form, fill and seal process, the addition of spouts and fitments provides the designer and marketer the opportunity to custom create a "solution specific" approach to dispensing a liquid or semi-viscous product from a flexible pouch package. We are beginning to see the emergence of beverages, condiments, health and beauty care and a multitude of other products incorporating spouts as part of the design and functionality elements of their packaging. Spouts are available in many different styles and configurations, along with many closure designs that offer tamper evidence and child resistance. MENSHEN and IPN are the global leaders in "spout" technology for flexible packaging and both companies offer a multitude of styles to suit most application.

The ability to add reclosable zippers, "slider" zippers, spouts and special closures will continue to revolutionize and expand flexible packaging for many years to come. ■

Dennis Calamusa can be reached at ph: (941) 923-1181, e-mail: dfcflex@hotmail.com, or visit www.standup-pouch.com.