



Making do with less

Reducing at Source

At first sight it may seem strange that the paper packaging industry would actively promote the use of less packaging. But in fact paper packaging converters have always operated on the basis of reducing their production costs and persuading their various clients that their particular option will save the client more money.

Many of the actions taken by national brand manufacturers to reduce packaging were in fact suggested by paper packaging converters keen to keep the business, or to snatch it from a competitor. That's life!

Some ways to achieve reduction include eliminating or reducing layers, introducing "high performance" board or kraft paper (making it lighter), reconfiguring box flaps, and removing air space between the product and its packaging.

These and other design changes have occurred across the industry so it is difficult to single out companies for special attention.

One celebrated example with industry-wide implications was PPEC persuading the Railways Association of Canada to change its rules on corrugated containers shipped by rail. Previously, industry had to make containers stronger than necessary (using more paper fibre) so that the railways would have fewer insurance claims against them for goods damaged in transit.

PPEC proposed amendments to the rules that would protect the contents while at the same time slashing the amount of corrugated needed by between 5 and 10 per cent.

The railways endorsed PPEC's initiative, opening the way for industry to achieve potential fibre savings of 100,000 tonnes per year (the equivalent of closing down one mill's total annual production, permanently).