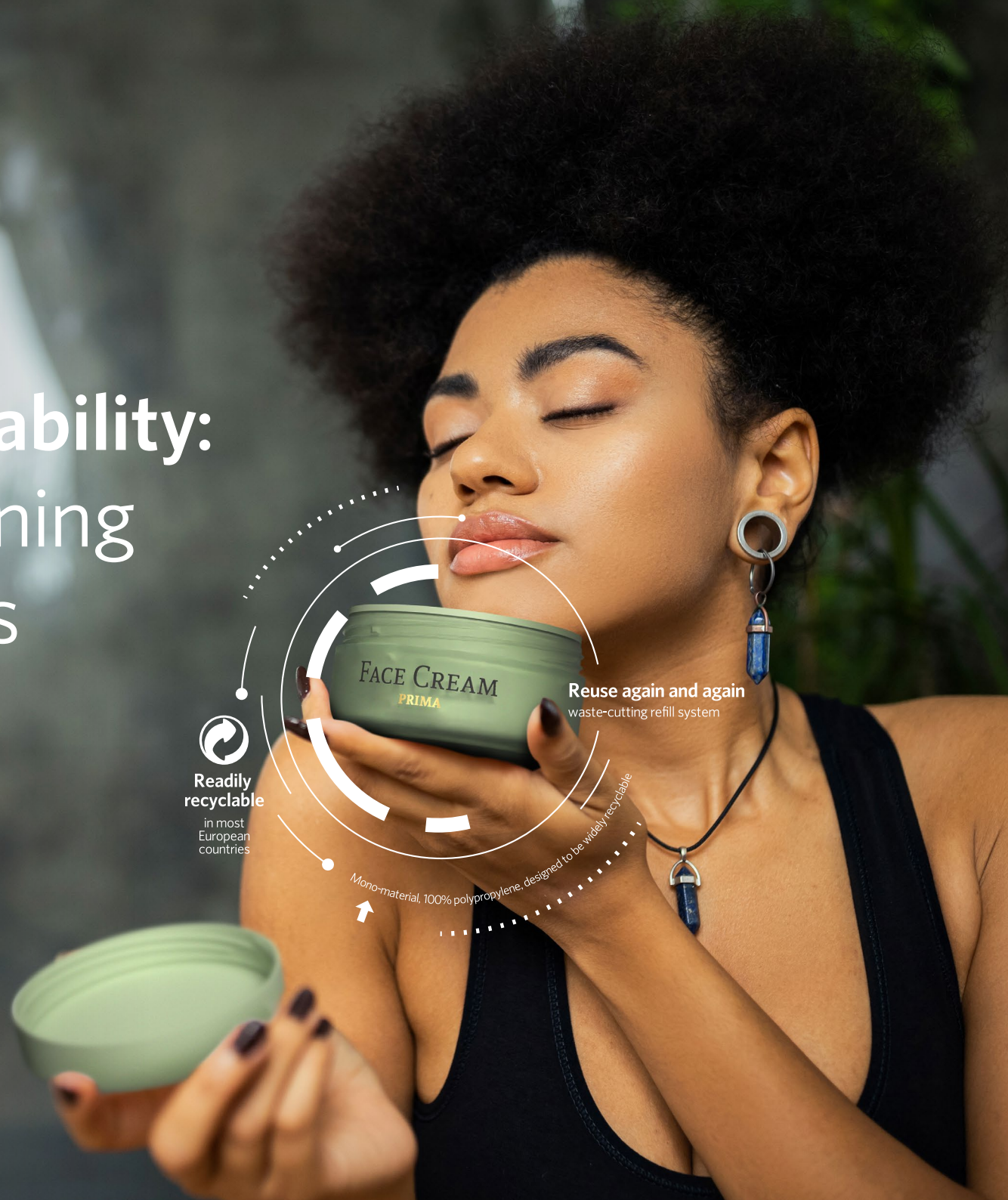
Design for Sustainability:
The secret to winning consumers' hearts

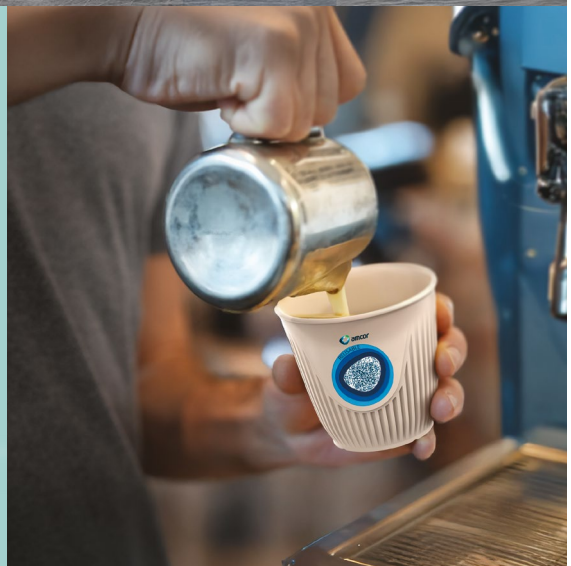












Sustainability is a key consideration in new pack design and complement the other important attributes that contribute to successful packaging. For those who get the combination right, the opportunities are huge.

In today's bustling market, capturing and keeping consumer loyalty is key. And guess what? Packaging can often be a brand's ace in the pocket, whether it's catching eyes in-store or wowing customers with e-commerce deliveries. From its shape and color to its graphics and messaging, every detail plays its part. And let's not forget functionality and ease of use.

But there's another major factor influencing the consumer choice: sustainability. With the environment making headlines and new regulations being introduced, many companies are turning their focus onto more sustainable packaging.

Understanding the **consumer**

Sustainability is a subject that continues to concern many consumers. A GWI research into European consumers' perceptions of packaging sustainability found that global warming remained the top concern for consumers, followed by plastic pollution, food waste and carbon emission.[1]

Packaging plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. According to GWI, the percentage of consumers who say they are willing to pay more for sustainable packaging grew from 47% to 59% in seven years.[1] Having recyclability claims on a pack positively influences their purchasing decisions and most consumers actively check recycling instructions.

It's no surprise, therefore, that many retailers and brand owners now see sustainability as a vital element of any new packaging development.





Building **trust** with brand values

Consumers are savvy and won't fall for unverifiable sustainability claims. Euromonitor International[4] found that consumers were 'greenwashed out', requiring organisations to show proof of their sustainability attributes. Planned legislation in both the UK and EU will specifically target inaccurate sustainability claims.[5]

Thus, rather than being a standalone requirement, sustainability is a critical design element that should be prioritized alongside shape, color and branding aspects.

Can plastic be more sustainable?

For the plastics sector, incorporating recycled plastic is a well-established and well-received practice. Advances in mechanical recycling technologies, such as Amcor's CleanStream® process, are enabling the use of recycled materials in contact-sensitive applications like food and personal care.

Today, a huge variety of packs for many end-markets can contain anything from 30 to 100 percent recycled plastic. Importantly, mechanically recycled plastics can help reduce CO_2 emissions as its production typically consumes less energy than the manufacturing of virgin plastics[6], and the recycling process avoids emissions caused by incinerating or decomposing used plastics. Also, by reusing and recycling we minimize the need for oil extraction and processing. Recycling, promotes a system where materials are reused rather than discarded, reducing the overall carbon footprint of virgin plastic production over time. This message can have wide appeal, depending on the specific target consumer audience profile.



Designing for more **sustainable packaging**

Packaging design can play a role in improving the quality and sustainability attributes of a raw material.



Here are some key elements in more sustainable product development:

Boost recycling quality: Choose monomaterial designs to ensure recyclability. Opt for materials that are already widely recycled.

Fight food waste: Smart packaging design can help reduce food waste, a major environmental issue. Think portion control packs, resealable options or barrier materials that keep food longer fresh.

Color matters: Did you know the color of a packaging can impact its recyclability? For PET containers, go for transparent or light colours. These can be recycled multiple times, turning into new containers instead of single-use products.

Embrace reuse: Reuse is a cornerstone of the circular economy. Many plastic containers such as plastic cups, skincare sticks and homecare bottles can be reused several times. Refill and reuse for personal care: For personal care products, refillable containers are a win-win. They promote reuse while maintaining a premium look for the brand.

...and efficiency

In the food retail sector, there is a move towards more refill stations[7]. Plastic's lightweight, durable and flexible design makes it perfect for refillable containers, while its design flexibility allows the creation of containers that consumers will prefer to reuse, whether for refill or recharge.

In the circular economy, it is all about keeping materials out of landfill and incineration. Check the award-winning closed loop recycled paint container[8] solution that allows used residue paint to be removed from the containers and re-engineered into new paint, enabling the empty paint cans to be recycled back into new ones.

Physical design is as important element in creating a more sustainable pack. We usually think of shape in terms of aesthetics and on-shelf appeal, but it is just as important to design a pack to be as carbon-efficient as possible. Maximizing pallet loads or reducing secondary packaging for an e-commerce delivery can contribute to minimizing emissions while cutting transportation costs.



Fit-for-purpose packaging: **Sustainability meets functionality**

There are many ways in which sustainability can be incorporated into a pack's design, but it is still vital that these complement and support its other attributes. All parameters to develop a more sustainable packaging need to be evaluated and integrated whenever appropriate, while at the same time making sure products are still desirable for customers, profitable for the brand and that packaging performs its initial function of protecting and adequately delivering the product.



Beauty and sustainability combined

Wondering if you can have both a more sustainable design and eye-catching aesthetics? The simple answer is yes!

Rauch Yippy Sports Cap: This product features a tamper-evident band that remains attached to the bottle—streamlining recycling and reinforcing the circular economy without sacrificing safety or ease of use. Its lightweight construction and fully recyclable materials further reduce environmental impact.

Reusable packaging with high performance

The Borrow Cup provides a shared system that enables consumers to avoid disposable cups by borrowing a returnable cup from any participating location. The Amcor reusable cups were selected for their durability, easy-clean design and dishwasher-safe construction. The cups' innovative heat-insulating ribs ensure comfort and stability for both hot and cold drinks and they can be recycled when they finally reach their end of life, where appropriate recycling facilities exist.





Packamama's Rectangular Bottle

Another multi-award-winning design, the Packamama bottle breaks the myth that quality wines need glass bottles. This unique shape is perfect for e-commerce and retail shelves. Made from 100% recycled PET, the bottle, label and cap are all recyclable through standard kerbside collection.



Lighweight, monomaterial solution for food service

Developed for Cofigeo, this three-compartment ready meal tray for single-serve ambient features a lightweight mono-material PP construction using a near-infrared (NIR) masterbatch that ensures it can be recognized by NIR sensors in recycling facilities. The user-friendly format enables the main ingredients in each of the recipes to be kept separate, allowing consumers to choose whether to mix them when the meal is eaten.



Werner & Mertz Trigger Spray

A winner at the German Packaging Awards and the prestigious WorldStar Global Packaging Award, this 3R circular trigger spray is monomaterial, using over 97% PP and incorporating post-consumer recycled (PCR) plastic. What's more, it's 18% lighter than the market standard. To boost the circularity of the entire pack, the spray head is screwable for easy removal, enhancing refilling and reuse for multiple times.

Boost your brand with **genuine sustainability improvements**

Sustainability improvements and attributes offer great opportunities for brands to shine, – but they have to be embraced for the right reasons.



Today's consumers are savvier and more sceptical about sustainability claims. Inaccurate, not verified or over-promising ones can backfire, damaging the brand reputation and even leading to legal implications. When credibly is integrated into a brand's positioning, it can enhance image and boost sales.

At Amcor, our experts create personalized packaging solutions that will elevate your brand's influence on consumers while reducing its environmental footprint.

1. GWI - Lifting the lid on sustainable packaging
2. Ipsos - Mapping the journey to sustainable pack
3. Nielsen IQ - Consumers care about sustainability - and back it up with their wallets
4. Euromonitor - 'Greenwashed out' consumers demand businesses step up and prove their eco credentials
5. European Commission - Green Claims and Gov.uk - Misleading environmental claims
6. COMET - Making plastics emissions transparent
7. The Grocer - Supermarkets should sell 30% of products as refills by 2035, says Wrap
8. Amcor.com - Second award for Amcor's recycled paint containers