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Rising Trends in the Blister Packaging Industry

The U.S. packaging market has seen its share of difficulties in recent years—including high raw material costs and negative environmental impact—but trends on the horizon predict a brighter future for manufacturers, vendors, and consumers alike.

The market is evolving rapidly, largely due to the increased usage of blister packaging throughout the country. Blister packs are highly versatile products that offer several advantages to various consumer goods. The efficiency and

popularity of blister packaging has sparked several notable



- *Enhanced protective features.* To provide added protection for consumer goods, vendors are utilizing higher-quality plastics and raw materials when producing blister packs. With the use of plastics, blister packs can safeguard any products from possible contamination—particularly in regards to medicine and medical devices. Thermoform plastics can instill blister packs with chemical and wear resistances as well as increased durability.
- *Product and technological innovations.* Manufacturers are constantly on the lookout for high performing solutions with low production costs—blister packaging offers both. Blister packs can be manufactured

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to provide products with longer shelf lives thanks to their anti-microbial qualities. Nanotechnology is also playing a larger role in blister packaging. The use of nanotechnology affords blister packs enhanced barrier protection and reduced weight of the package. This technology is in high demand by pharmaceutical companies requiring improved protection against moisture, oxygen, and other gases for their products; demand for nanotechnology-based packaging is expected to increase by 15% compound annual growth rate during the forecast period.

- *Demand for child safety.* There is a growing demand for blister packs that are safer for children, such as child-resistant and tamper evident products. Child-resistant products are a direct result of numerous poison-related injuries befalling children; non-secure packaging can lead to accidental ingestion of medicines. Tamper evident products also have a positive effect on the packaging market, since they can an early warning sign for avoiding questionable products.
- *Sustainability.* Certain packaging materials can adversely affect the environment. To combat this issue, packaging and manufacturing companies have been encouraged to develop more sustainable products and solutions. Current environmental regulations are forcing vendors to cultivate blister packs that are more eco-friendly; vendors are designing bio-degradable blister packs, which will be expensive to produce and will necessitate increased research to offset added costs.

These rising trends are expected to continue driving growth within the U.S.

market, as manufacturers, vendors, and consumers strive for reliable packaging solutions.

The Beauty of Paper Over Plastic

There is nothing like smelling a forest filled with beautiful plastic pine trees on a cool fall day. Wait. OK how about going green by planting five plastic trees for everyone you cut down? No, that doesn't work either.

The point? No matter how many "green" and "recycled" labels you slap on petroleum-based plastic products, they cannot and will never be as renewable as paper. Unlike trees, oil and gas don't put CO₂ back into the atmosphere and trees are a homegrown product that unlike plastic are not beholden to the ups and downs of oil and gas prices.

If it is both more environmentally friendly and often more affordable, why aren't more things made out of paper? One of the main reasons has always been that plastic outperforms paper at some tasks, like waterproofing and sealing.

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At Sierra, thanks to our innovative technology and methods we are bridging this ever-shrinking performance gap everyday. Sierra is able to coat the back or front of paper in order to enhance its ability. A great example is food and cleaning product packaging. Sierra can create water barriers and heat sealed packages, all

with our state-of-the-art recyclable coatings. It is hard to be more “green” than replacing PVC and other plastics with recyclable paper.

One of the other benefits to using paper is that major retailers like Walmart are now demanding that products reach very high standards of recyclability. The Walmart Sustainability Index grades the “Greenness” of products, if you don’t get a high enough index score, your product will not end up on the shelves of the world’s biggest retailers, and no one can afford for that to happen! Once again, the solution is paper, and thanks to Sierra, you can now easily replace plastics with coated paper products and suffer no fall-off in quality.

The next time you think you have no choice but to use hard or impossible to recycle plastics in your packaging, think again.

Think Green. Think Affordable. Think Effective. Think Paper.