

Today's Perfect Package?

Why BlisterGuard® Makes Sense for Packagers and Retailers

Sustainability, pilfer resistance, graphics

Retailers and packagers have a primary common goal: They want their inventory to sell. To earn those sales and keep them coming, both need the products they market to negotiate a number of potential packaging pitfalls.

It's no secret that packages that maximize appearance, deter theft, minimize costs and, especially these days, conform to increasingly louder calls for "sustainability packaging" go a long way toward meeting that common goal. All are among the reasons why companies and brand names like Gillete, Zyrtec and Merix Pharmaceutical Corp. opted for the BlisterGuard® security package from Colbert Packaging for certain of their products.

BlisterGuard® matches or outperforms clamshell packaging in graphics potential, pilfer resistance, cost and environmental friendliness. The package's design and benefits earned it the Paperboard Packaging Council's 2005 Innovation Award and a growing base of users, including Merix.

"When Colbert came to us with the BlisterGuard® option, we liked the durability of the package, the larger print area, which enables more compelling graphics for greater shelf appeal, the fact that it is paper-based and more environmentally friendly than the plastic clamshell, and that it has a fresh, different look," says Dori Squires, vice president of Merix.

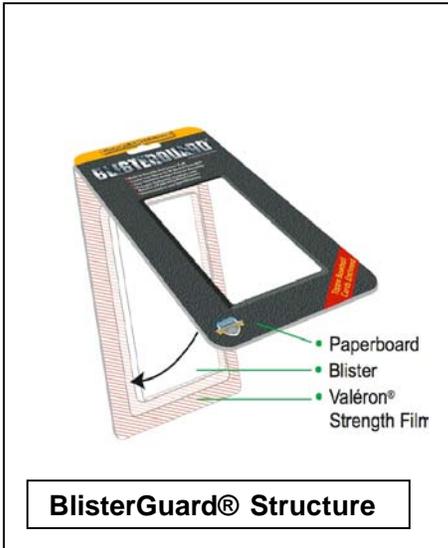
A package for the times

The BlisterGuard® package uses Everest® Safe-Pak bleached board from International Paper in a fold-over format that traps a plastic blister inside. The heat-sealable paperboard is laminated with a cross-laminated high-density polyethylene film from Valéron Strength Films, an ITW company. The design provides up to five times the tear resistance of most fold-over boards and lays the base for the benefits Merix and others were seeking in their package choices.

■ Pilfer resistance. Merix packages its RELEEV™ cold sore medication in BlisterGuard®; a product, taken from its packaging, can be easily slipped into a pocket and removed from the store. Two of Merix's major customers—Walgreens and Kmart—specifically requested more pilfer-resistant packaging to prevent such losses.

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BlisterGuard's design makes it virtually tear-proof—as tough as PVC or PET clamshells—and far more theft-resistant than packages with surface-mounted blisters.

In addition, Sensormatic® or Checkpoint® security tags can be automatically inserted into the package, ensuring that any intact package that a shopper attempts to sneak out will set off a store's theft detectors.

Although scissors or some other utensil is required to open a BlisterGuard® package, it is much more user friendly than the notoriously difficult-to-open clamshell. With BlisterGuard® consumers need not worry about slicing open a hand on sharp edged plastic while prying the item out of the clamshell container.

■ Sustainable packaging. Wal-Mart's announcement a few years ago that it will encourage its suppliers to reduce the overall use of packaging materials in an effort to promote environmental friendliness is a harbinger that environmental responsibility will loom larger for all retailers and packagers in the future. There has even been talk of legislation designed to forcibly move packaging materials toward renewable resources and recycled content.

Wal-Mart has developed a sustainable packaging scorecard by which it rates a package's alignment with its environmental goals. That scorecard takes a number of factors into consideration before issuing a grade. The BlisterGuard® package scores high in multiple categories. It can be made of recycled materials, uses far less plastic than traditional PVC and PET clamshells, and can be easily recycled.

■ Graphics. Every retailer and packager knows that it's not only the shape of the package that helps distinguish it on the shelves, but also the print, the colors and the graphics that catch shoppers' eyes. Not only does a BlisterGuard® package offer more room to print and more design options, the graphics are simply easier to see.

On clamshell packaging, the flange reduces the amount of space available for graphics. On a BlisterGuard® package, the entire die-cut board backing the product is available for eye-catching design.

Retailers and vendors say one of problems inherent with plastic clamshells is the glare. Unless a shopper is viewing a package head-on, she will have trouble seeing it. Surface-printed packages like BlisterGuard® eliminate glare problems.

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BlisterGuard® can handle virtually any type of printing, including metallic, holographic, embossed, hot foil stamped, offset, ultraviolet and others. Packages can be provided in virtually any size or shape for nearly any type of product. A tear-resistant hanger hole provides peg-mounting capabilities that, when coupled with improved graphics, expand merchandising options. BlisterGuard®, for example, is ideal for heavy products that hang at the point-of-purchase counter.

■ **Costs.** One reason Gillete and Zyrtec opted against the plastic clamshell, besides the fact that it was not “aesthetically pleasing,” as the company said at the time, was the cost. BlisterGuard® offers cost savings on two levels. First, it is simply less expensive than plastic clamshells—as much as 35 percent depending on package size. The bigger the package, the bigger the savings because of the greater reduction in plastic used. Second, BlisterGuard® runs faster on sealing equipment than clamshells, so users pick up line speeds and improve efficiency.

Savings are achieved through reduced material costs, faster line speeds, less waste and reduced product loss at retail.

Conclusion

Retailers and vendors are looking for more environmentally friendly packaging to meet social goals. At the same time, they want to reduce theft and keep sales rolling with packages that grab the shopper's attention. Packagers have similar goals, with the added incentive to reduce costs and raise margins.

Those goals meet in the BlisterGuard® package. This alternative to plastic clamshells can reduce costs, maintain pilfer resistance, and is flexible enough to be used for a variety of product shapes and sizes. It is also in line with environmental trends taking place in the industry today. It is a format that is gaining momentum as retailers and packagers alike place heavier emphasis on sustainability packaging.

Each individual benefit on its own may not seem revolutionary, but taken together, the overall cumulative benefits makes it a package right for the times. And perhaps the perfect package for you.

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