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MWV

SMOKING OUT CHANGE: MWV REFINES ITS BOARD FOR TOBACCO PACKAGING BY REDUCING WEIGHT

In the challenging world of tobacco packaging, **MeadWestvaco** (MWV) has come out with new blend of solid bleached sulfate (SBS) paperboard that offers enhanced performance at a lower base weight.

The Richmond, VA-based company is making a bold move to further capitalize on a market where the package frequently becomes the sole promotional vehicle. Andrej Vlahcevic, marketing director for the MWV Tobacco Strategic Business Unit (SBU), told **Packaging Strategies** that a variety of restrictive global regulations have limited (or even eliminated) tobacco advertising on outside billboards, in magazines, and for other promotional avenues.

“There’s one billboard left to them, and that’s on the package,” Vlahcevic noted. “The package is becoming more and more important to the brand owner.”

The company has met opportunities in that market with a new SBS paperboard material, called *Promina*, that offers a 7 percent reduction in base weight while offering performance properties at least equal to that of its longtime *Printkote Tobacco* SBS material. The



Promina, MWV's new SBS paperboard material, continues MWV's path in hinged lid tobacco packaging that it helped develop in 1954.

company plans to complete conversion from *Printkote* to *Promina* for tobacco packaging by early 2010.

A breakthrough with the new *Promina* material is the ability to shave weight and fiber use while maintaining the package's strength. Developed over several years, the material is 40 percent cleaner than other SBS board and virtually eliminates the twist curls that can reduce board run speeds on machines that typically run 800 to 1,000 packages a minute.

The company has plans to incorporate the technology across other packaging applications. The change is especially noticeable today, where both customers and end-use consumers are looking closely at fiber source reduction for packaging as wood demand again increases in biomass fuel and construction applications. Vlahcevic said.

Packaging Strategies' Perspective: *MWV is researching and developing post-consumer recycled grades of SBS board for tobacco as an alternative option to meet specific sustainability demands and support the environmental goals of tobacco companies.* **PS**

A NEW BRAND OF FOODSERVICE

MWV is mixing innovation with new marketing initiatives for its line of foodservice packaging materials, branding those products *MWare*.

The company is using the branding effort to further collaboration with converters and operators in the use of foodservice packaging that eliminates fossil-fuel materials and builds recognition for its innovation efforts, said Dobbie Newman, MWV

director of food service marketing.

The company has been moving along that path since the early part of this decade. The company claims to be the first paperboard maker to launch a foodservice-grade post-consumer recycled fiber cup for hot beverages and introduced a series of paperboard-based cups, trays, bowls, and containers coated with polylactic acid (PLA) material.

Food service continues on the top of Page 2

Food service continued from the bottom of Page 1

Using the resources of MWV's Raleigh, NC-based **Center for Packaging Innovation**, the company hopes to increase the amount of foodservice packaging from paper. Currently, about 30 percent of North American foodservice packaging segments that MeadWestvaco participates in are made from paper-based substrates, Newman noted.

Packaging Strategies' Perspective: *Foodservice packaging seems to be gaining ground in innovation efforts, as new efforts either move away from polystyrene or offer recycled or compostable versions of the material.* **PS**

MWV's work in foodservice includes recycled content in its paperboard-based hot beverage cups.



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