

## Researching opportunities of packaging

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Apack researches and participates in many projects related to consumer tendencies of the day. Many of the market research papers from around the world find their way to our desks. In these research papers, people of all age groups, cultural backgrounds and market expectations living conditions are studied in detail. Economists are projecting what are life styles will be like in the future. The packaging market is continuously adapting and shaping itself based on this very data.

Today, just like brands are researching more eco friendly opportunities, the consumers, as well, are feeling the responsibility of doing something good for the environment. The hard part is that this consumer need has a cost. We end up paying the higher price for the same products even though alternative packaging materials that decrease the costs has been the major focus of the research and the industry. Survey results report that 63% of consumers in the United States prefer to buy products that are biodegradable or reusable. You do not need to be a clairvoyant to be able to say brands will use “eco-friendly” materials, an important buying trigger for consumers, in their upcoming marketing plans.

It is only natural that having followed the pulse of the packaging world and its future this closely, we as Apack, feel the need to focus our work in this direction as well.

The new generation of packaging is being developed and designed in consideration of the consumers current life styles. We have been examining the food industry very closely in our projects around the world. We see that our traditional life styles are changing at a very fast pace. Our habits are changing. Companies that do not produce the right solutions for the present day society are shutting their doors with big losses.

Today, we can list the changing parameters of the 20 to 35 age group, the main consumer segment, as follows:

- Efficient use of time
- The need to socialize in the digital world
- Demand for Light, organic, natural products in their diet
- A conscious reaction to food additives
- Proper packaging/portions for their mobile life style
- Increased demand for ready to cook, ready to use, ready to heat products
- Ease of use (easy to carry, easy to open, easy to prepare, and easy to throw away)
- Saving time from the kitchen and dishes
- The want to consume unique products
- An expectation to configure products to their personal preferences
- Traceability of products
- Use of recyclable material

You could list more of these arguments, but what we need to understand is that the consumer profile that we have come to know and are used to has changed.

When we noticed that people, from 2010 on, are leaning more and more towards environment friendly products in their preferences, we knew that this would create a commotion in the packaging world. Today, even before constricting provisions like France's prohibiting plastic packaging came about, we decided to prepare and develop our commercial solutions.

We have been focusing our minds primarily on what more environmentally friendly packaging products should be since 2013. The market demands both long shelf life and recyclability. So, we need to develop packaging with no preservatives, and easily degradable materials. Many laboratories across the world have been working on this subject. We leaned toward paper/carton packaging. We could achieve long shelf lives with the MAP (Modified Atmosfere Products) process. Now, we needed to add the environmentalist factor to it.

We started working on the application of the MAP process with paper/carton packaging materials with our customers. Obviously it would take time for these carton applications to become commercially viable. Lab work meant time and money. For medium size manufacturers like us, one of the biggest problems is not being able to appropriate enough resources and time to research and development while trying to keep the gears churning.

Despite all, we continued to develop our new solutions. The future would arrive sooner or later, and all projections were sounding alarm bells. To be able to exist in the future we had to take these facts into account.

When our work started to take shape, we felt the need to name it. We decided to summarize our work by calling it cartoMAP®. We completed endless trials. We shared our work with our colleagues around the country and abroad. We also made use of the related departments at the universities.

We completed our first MAP development within the cartoMAP® concept, but the temperature profile of the packaging materials, both cold and hot, were not satisfactory.

In the meantime research and development abroad was increasing. We worked on “recycled cardboard” products with our Dutch partner HALOPACK®. We presented this solution to both the local market and other markets internationally. The Halopack product’s most important attribute is its recyclability. Once the packaging is used, you can easily peel the laminated film from the carton, and recycle the two parts separately. The packaging material is suitable for both cold and hot applications. You can heat the goods packed in Halopack in the microwave. Depending on customer needs, especially in the Nordic countries, our equipment and films are being used within this concept.

The latest development comes from our Finish partners DELIGHT®, and we are proud to be able to present a brand new solution to our customers. The packaging that Delight has developed has both high barrier qualities and makes the MAP process applicable. The outer layer being carton, and the inside being coated with high barrier material allows temperature down to -45 °C, cooking up to 40 minutes at +200 °C, making it ovenable.

Before launching the product within our markets, we completed trial runs at our customer production sites and then received positive feedback and success from their relative consumers.

The cartoMAP® system, has progressed significantly over the course of the development phase, and has the capacity to respond to current consumer trends with the most demanded applications and attributes.

We at APACK, tell everybody that works with us, or sits across the table from us that packaging is serious business. Packaging design and development of the technology are a separate business line in itself.

We strive to create the packaging systems that will achieve the desired shelf for your products. We focus our strength and work on the development of appropriate packaging technology with our partners in order to meet the consumer demands of the day, and offer new solutions to our customers.