

## Stepping It Up

Beringer aims for distinction with novel multi-tier strategies



### ALSO:

Effective Nutrition Labeling

Expert Advice on Paper Color-Matching

Corazonas Snacks Redesign

Purex 3-in-1 Laundry Sheets

By Patrick Henry

# Purex & Simple

A 3-in-1 laundry product goes from three to one packaging elements for a lighter, more sustainable package.



Henkel's brief to redesign its Purex 3-in-1 packaging included many requirements, such as the S-shape, new closure functionality, and sustainability gains.

## BEFORE

The new paperboard Purex package replaces both the starter kit and refill packages, both of which had non-recyclable outer packaging.



Call it washday multitasking in a box. Drop a Purex Complete 3-in-1 Laundry Sheet into the washer to release the detergent; then transfer it to the dryer with the clothes, where heat activates fabric softening and static removal. No bottles, no mess, no waste ... simplicity itself.

The same could not be said of the packaging for the launch—not until the brand owner and its package manufacturing partner thoroughly reengineered the container to give it the same

practicality and convenience as the sheets inside.

Since January of this year, the award-winning product has gone to market in a sustainable package that, unlike its predecessor, has only one component and does not need to be refilled. It's also easier for consumers to handle and store.

Optimizing the structure of the container reduces the number of packaging elements from three to one, mirroring the signature benefit of the product. Improving the closure assures one-

handed ease-of-use in the laundry room. Switching from polypropylene to paperboard saves tons of weight in manufacturing and transport and underscores recyclability after use.

#### “S” for satisfaction

What’s more, all of this—including the development of two specially designed cartoning lines for the new packaging—was accomplished without any significant design compromises. Despite its sharp break from the original concept, the Purex Complete 3-in-1 Laundry Sheets package now appearing on store shelves retains the unique “S” shape of the system it replaces, along with branded colors and familiar graphics. Although nearly everything else about the package is different, its distinctive look is the same.

The customer-facing objective was to maintain the iconic shape of the Purex Complete 3-in-1 starter kit in the carton design, says Ashley Wilkum, senior packaging engineer for laundry care at The Dial Corporation (a company of Henkel, which owns Purex). “Also, it was important to show the features of the product,” she emphasizes.

The design brief that Henkel presented to Malnove Packaging Solutions specified the replacement of both the original “starter kit” and the refill containers—each made of injection-molded polypropylene plus a printed film overwrap—with a single paperboard carton. The high-end graphics of the new package would have to do the work of the clear window in the starter kit, conveying all of the same visual information.

Problems of consistency can occur when a change of packaging materials is involved, but in Purex’s case, the new substrate performed admirably. In fact, Wilkum feels that the material exceeded expectations with reproducing the Purex

Blue and other essential colors. “There were no issues matching the colors to paperboard,” she says. “The printed carton provided greater opportunities to provide high-quality graphics.”

#### Closure does a back flip

Todd Reese and Ramsey Fisher of Malnove agree that making the new package a premium-looking carton was a high priority, but the brief gave them other mandates as well. One was to modify the closure by making it rear-opening with a flip-up lid—the opposite of the placement and style of the closure on the original package. “The closure was a must-have,” says Reese, account manager for Henkel. “The customer had to be able to reach into the package, extract the sheet, and reclose the package, all with one hand. This was crucial to ease of use.”

Replacing three bulky packaging elements with one compact container also meant adjusting carrying capacity. Fisher, the design manager for the project, says that this was addressed by creating separate packages for two variable sheet counts: one carton for 22 or 24 sheets and one for 38 or 44. The number of sheets in the carton depends on the store where the product is sold, but only two cartons are produced. Leaving a tolerance for varying quantities of sheets increases other efficiencies, such as reducing packaging or printing line changes, change-over waste, and warehouse storage space.

The typical folding carton is a collection of right angles. The sinuously contoured Purex package is an obvious exception to the rule. Malnove, which operates carton printing and converting facilities in four states, prints and die-cuts the Purex packages on existing equipment at its Omaha, NE, plant. Printed in four colors plus Purex Blue with a gloss UV coat, the units are shipped as flats to a copackaging partner in Wisconsin. There, the containers

## PUREX & SIMPLE

are processed for setup and filling on a pair of fully automated carton packaging systems that Malnove designed specifically to handle the Purex S-shape.

### No curve balls

If everything has been properly designed and manufactured, says Fisher, curves shouldn't matter when the package "comes to life" at the filling stage. Wilkum agrees: "Initial concerns were laid to rest by working together with our vendor partners from design concept forward."

As the new cartons replace the plastic packages remaining in the retail pipeline, their bright blue impact will take on a distinct shade of green in the service of sustainability. Replacing polypropylene with easily recyclable 1/18-inch SBS paperboard from an SFI-certified source makes for a lighter package—40 grams vs. 65 grams. The 38% reduction in base packaging material translates into less fuel consumed in transit. According to Henkel and Malnove, the change of materials elimi-

nates 2.3 million pounds of polypropylene and reduces packaging line waste from 15% to 3%.

The entire process, from Malnove's submission of its initial design proposal to the first appearance of the new packages in stores, was completed inside of 12 months. What made it all work, says Fisher, was close coordination and open communication between all team members from design through testing, validation, and installation of equipment.

And although one might argue that a switch from plastic to paperboard might be seen by some consumers as a step down in packaging quality, Wilkum isn't worried about this perception. "The Purex Complete 3-in-1 carton employs a high gloss coating portraying a cosmetic look on the finished carton," she says. "With sustainability as an area of great importance, paperboard is being recognized as an alternative to molded packaging. Transitioning the unique curved design into paperboard helped keep the quality image." **PD**