

## Cartonboard – packaging material of the future

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### Abstract

Packages – often denounced as packaging waste – have important functions in our modern, consumption-driven society. Cartonboard packages are faced with strong competition from alternative packaging materials and must stand their ground. Consumers see clear advantages in cartonboard packaging, first of all its sustainability. It scores with renewable resources and exemplary recycling circuits whereas other packaging materials are associated with environmental pollution and the use of scarce resources. This has repeatedly been confirmed by studies.

The European cartonboard industry is a key link in the major value chain of convenience goods – from the raw materials used for cartonboard production to commodity trading. It is sometimes considered an antiquated sector, but is in fact extremely modern and innovative. Its manufacturing and application figures are highly impressive.

Cartonboard packages convey brand messages and act as support at the point of sale, but they also protect the product from damage or loss, act as communication platform for the product itself as well as between manufacturer and consumer or manufacturer and retailer. First consequences of the digital transformation have become visible in the online business: cartonboard solutions that are both transportable and advertising offer clear advantages in terms of distribution. So far, the digital transformation has been a blessing rather than a curse to cartonboard manufacturers. But is cartonboard really ready for what is called “smart packaging“?

Special surfaces and finishes will make cartonboard fit for the future. Current barriers and coatings are already capable of satisfying steadily growing demands for product safety. The opportunities offered by digital transformation will increase the requirements for informative and communication functions at exponential speed. Our industry must concentrate its efforts on these issues to develop suitable offers. Sustainability aspects alone are not enough to make cartonboard succeed in long-term competition. The sector’s present challenges can be met by combining high-quality cartonboard surfaces with the use of modern converting techniques by folding carton manufacturers.

This will make cartonboard the packaging material of the future.