

Case Study

Fiber-based, glue-free wrap is easily recyclable post-consumer use



Full-can-height wrap delivers billboarding space



Molson Coors replaces plastic rings with fully recyclable fiber-based sleeve on can multipacks

Multinational drink and brewing company, Molson Coors, is leading the way on packaging sustainability in the beverage aisle. Outlined in its Imprint 2025 sustainability goals, the company aims to ensure that its packaging is 100 percent reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025. Molson Coors saw the opportunity to partner with Graphic Packaging International ('Graphic Packaging') to introduce a fully recyclable and sustainable paperboard sleeve for all its major brands, facilitating the removal of all single-use plastic from the packaging of Carling and Coors.

Case Study: Sustainability | Elevated Experience | Convenience

Challenge



- **Circularity**
A fiber-based solution that is sustainable and circular while increasing pack integrity and branding space.
- **Consumer appeal**
Increases billboarding space and enhances branding opportunities due to full-can-height wrap around design.
- **Increased convenience**
Mono-material, glue-free design is easily recyclable post-consumer use and incorporates consumer-friendly features such as finger hole carry apertures.

Solutions



- **Replaces plastic**
Removes single-use plastic from Molson Coors' UK beverage portfolio on can multipacks, in line with the company's Imprint 2025 sustainability goals.
- **Enhances branding opportunities**
Billboarding space is significantly enhanced compared to previous solution, best promoting Molson Coors brands.
- **Designed for convenience**
Renewable paperboard mono-structure is glue-free due to Graphic Packaging's innovative locking mechanism, to support recycling and circularity. Convenient finger apertures for easy pickup and base aperture reveals date code.

Results



- **Optimum circularity** with 100% recyclable paperboard wrap made from renewable fibers. Average of 10% pre-consumer recycled content is blended with the virgin fiber.
- **Suitable for multi-channel** retail by increasing pack integrity and allowing for better handling and storage throughout the value chain.
- Champions sustainability with **enhanced shelf appeal** by drawing the consumer's eye to fiber-based, recyclable alternatives with increased branding opportunities.
- Supplied flat packed for **reduced carbon impact** in transit.
- Runs at high line speeds and designed to eliminate sheet waste for **efficient, cost-effective manufacturing**.

Challenge

In line with its Imprint 2025 sustainability goals, Molson Coors had a need to replace hi-cone and mid-cone plastic packaging in its UK beverage portfolio of 4-, 6- and 8-count can multipacks. The North American-based beverage company is committed to ensuring its packaging is 100 percent reusable, recyclable and compostable by 2025 and the requirement to replace single-use plastic on its cans would help the company to make significant progress towards this pledge. The new fiber-based solution should be a 'like-for-like' replacement solution in terms of performance, while adding value to enhance branding opportunities and increase consumer convenience. As an experienced provider of sustainable fiber-based solutions, Graphic Packaging was selected as Molson Coors' partner of choice to ensure that the project was executed seamlessly with minimal disruption.



Solution

Graphic Packaging developed a one-piece paperboard wrap for Molson Coors to be used across all the beverage company's major brands, including Carling and Coors cans. The wrap, which contains an average of 10 percent pre-consumer recycled material, was quickly recognised as a 'like-for-like' replacement by rigidly securing 4-, 6- and 8-count cans together to form robust multipacks.

Where the solution excels is in its increased structural integrity. The design, which is completely glue-free and features an innovative Graphic Packaging locking mechanism at the base, is stronger through the supply chain than its predecessor. Wrapping the cans securely without glue opens up other benefits too; the solution is easy to recycle post-consumer use and offers consumer-friendly features such as finger hole apertures at the top for ease of carrying and an aperture at the bottom that gives visibility of date codes.

A major advantage over hi-cone and mid-cone packaging is that the full-can-height wrap style of the solution delivers billboarding space that simply wasn't there previously. Large printable areas allow for better promotion of Molson Coors' brands and increase shelf standout, differentiating the pack from plastic ring-wrapped alternatives.

Best of all, the solution was easily implemented with little disruption to Molson Coors' can multipack lines. Two Marksman 1600™ HS machines were installed, which run at high speeds to meet the beverage company's packaging requirements. The wrap is supplied flat packed to Molson Coors to cut down the carbon emissions in transit due to a greater number of packs per truck.

Results

Graphic Packaging is experienced in providing fiber-based plastic alternatives at scale. For Molson Coors, this meant the efficient transition away from plastic rings to a fiber-based wrap solution. With little to no impact, Molson Coors came one step closer to its Imprint 2025 sustainability goals with a solution that was designed in accordance with Graphic Packaging's Vision 2025 goals. Together, the partners succeeded in driving towards a circular economy with a seamlessly executed project, demonstrating the commercial viability of paperboard as a plastic alternative. In addition, the Graphic Packaging team worked with Molson Coors to develop added-value features that simply could not be achieved with the previous solution. For example, by increasing the potential for promotion on pack, the teams have, in turn, increased the likelihood of consumer engagement with the packaging.