

Unfortunately, some photo captions in this article regarding Shorewood were wrongly attributed and we have corrected them within the text of this downloadable pdf version.

Sustainable packaging, a fad or a new way of life!

Debbie Galante Block finds that suppliers and clients are looking at the issues more holistically, tracing carbon footprints, the sustainability of resources as well as trying to reduce green issues of disposal

Sustainable packaging. Is it just the buzz word of the moment? What does it actually mean? Generally the key is that all packaging should be sourced responsibly, designed to be effective and safe throughout its life cycle, should meet market criteria for performance and cost, and should be made entirely using renewable energy. Once used, it should be recycled efficiently to provide a valuable resource for subsequent generations. Packaging designers and manufacturers have been faced with environmental issues in the past. Seemingly, interest in being “green” has been cyclical for content providers whose intentions may have initially been honorable, but their wallets and bankbooks couldn’t “sustain” the hefty prices of green packaging. Will interest in the environment this time around be different?

Packaging manufacturers told *MediaPack*, there is no going back this time!

So many issues get convoluted when people speak about being green. It’s a complicated issue, with one factor affecting another. Major retailer Wal-Mart knows how complicated the environmental chain can be. As a result, the retailer issued some initiatives last year which began to address the whole supply chain, and does not put the pressure on any one part of that chain.

Wal-Mart’s packaging Scorecard gives its buyers and suppliers a measurement tool designed to help reach a 5% packaging reduction goal by 2013. Maybe that doesn’t sound like much, but it will reportedly take 213,000 trucks off the road, will save 323,000 tons of coal and over 66 million gallons of

diesel fuel, according to Matt Kistler, vice president of packaging innovation at Sam’s Club, a retail division of Wal-Mart.

Wal-Mart has given its suppliers the Scorecard. The first page is for direct supplier information. Materials are scored by Wal-Mart on the basis of renewability and energy intensiveness, also its rate of recycling and whether or not it can be incinerated. The second page asks for materials-specific information. Wal-Mart also wants to know where the package is coming from, where it is converted and where

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“Companies will opt for environmentally friendly product only if they are offered capacity they need”

PaperFoam trays and recycled paperboard used by Shorewood work equally well for DVD multipacks as (right) environmentally packaging generally becomes a strong selling tool



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it is sold so they may calculate transport distance. Another question has to do with how many different materials are in that package.

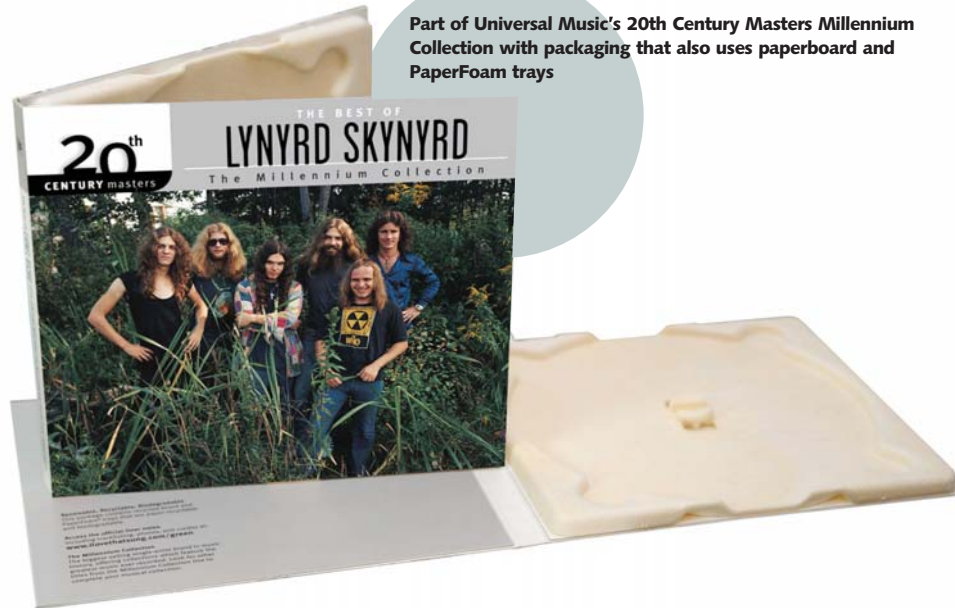
After the whole Scorecard is filled out, Wal-Mart gives a raw score with a link to show packaging suppliers where they may be able to help improve their score. They also get an overall rank based on how they are relative to their peers. Using modeling software, the supplier will be able to figure out how to improve a package.

Those producing entertainment packaging are just beginning to get their feet wet in terms of using the Scorecard. That's not to say content providers, designers and packaging suppliers have been sitting still. All of those approached were more than willing to share information about client demand and new environmentally safe products they have introduced.

"The good news for those of us producing paperboard packaging is that we are already working with something that is a renewable resource," said Linda Lombri, director of marketing services at Shorewood Packaging, a business of International Paper, which launched its greenchoice initiative late last year. "Paperboard is made from a renewable resource: trees. It is recyclable. When you put it into a municipal composting system, it is biodegradable."

Shorewood now offers its customers virgin and recycled board, as well as alternative materials like CD and DVD paperboard packaging with PaperFoam trays in place of plastic. The company also produces the Flip Pack family of CD and DVD packages, which are all paperboard, no plastic tray or hub.

Another 100% paperboard package comes from Stora Enso Media Solutions, The Disc Box Slider (DBS). What makes DBS relevant is that it is 100% renewable, according to Matti Koski, director, but, the biggest difference is that it is 100% automated. "That makes it the first true alternative to the jewel box! Since it is fully automated, it can handle the volumes at the right price point. Companies who are considering completely replacing their packaging with an environmentally friendly product will not do



Part of Universal Music's 20th Century Masters Millennium Collection with packaging that also uses paperboard and PaperFoam trays

that, unless a company can offer the capacity they need. Furthermore, that package can't cost any more than their current packaging. If you have to make anything manually, you are not going to be able to hit the mark," he added.

According to Erin Willigan, vice president, marketing, Multi Packaging Solutions (MPS),

this format in the coming year. Among the first Sony BMG artists to release in the paperboard package are Beyonce, Omarion, and Bow Wow.

Interest in environmentally friendly packaging is coming from all content providers, according to Andrew Kyle, Sales Manager, St Ives Print & Display. The music industry, he said, has been

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"The goal of content providers is to use more earth-friendly print and packaging. Solutions run the gamut from increasing recycled content for print and packaging, to using Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paper and paperboard. Alternatively modifying disc trays with new designs that reduce the amount of plastic used, or eliminate plastic entirely. There is also interest both in digital printing, which has lower VOC emissions than other conventional printing processes and in soy-based inks." Universal Music released its phenomenally successful 20th Century Masters Millennium Collection in sustainable materials, such as the Lynyrd Skynyrd CD package (pictured above) produced by Shorewood. EMI Recordings' 16 title "Best of" series exclusively for Wal-Mart is being printed on 100% recycled paperboard with potato starch foam trays. Approximately 1 million units of Paul McCartney's *Memory Almost Full* Super Jewel Case CD were printed on a 50% recycled content sheet from Europe. Sony BMG has also released a number of titles in an all paperboard packaging and plans to release additional titles in

"Ultimately, there has got to be the adaptation of new technologies in order to meet the needs of the marketplace," Ross Youngs, Univenture.

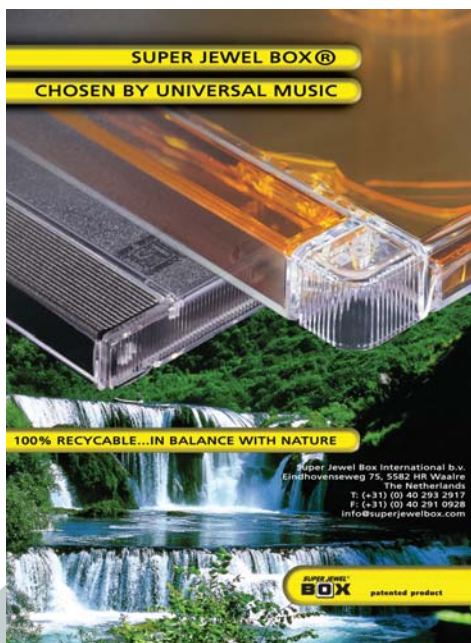
focusing on environmental packaging on a small scale over a number of years. "Approximately, eight years ago, larger publishers in the games industry also started to look at the impact of EU packaging waste regulation – especially in territories such as Scandinavia and Germany, where environmental laws were more established. But more recently we have been approached by two major video publishers, who want to establish significant environmental credentials."

Shorewood also indicated that games manufacturers have been showing interest in green packaging, just in the last couple of months.

Is downloading the answer?

While some content providers have indeed offered environmental packaging on and off for the last 20 years, the issue has reached greater proportions now... probably at the worst time ever. As studios and record labels search for ways to combat digital downloading, unique packaging has become important. How will the packaging companies, content providers and retailers agree on how to make environmental packaging that is still eye catching, but reduced by 5%?

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Plastic cases are recyclable and the card inserts are 50% recycled content

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Ivy Hill provided the box for Paramount's *An Inconvenient Truth*. Mark Roberts, Ivy's vice president, entertainment sales, says customers are not looking at reduced packaging in multi-disc sets. "It's more the standard catalogue A-title releases. And rather than reducing packaging, we've been asked to come up with more sustainable packaging. Also, we're being asked to offer paper and board that has a higher recycled content and is certified by Forestry Stewardship Council." The FSC is a non-profit organisation, devoted to encouraging the responsible management of the world's forests. FSC sets high standards that ensure forestry is practiced in an environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable way.

Lisa Cuming, account executive at Ivy Hill says, "the thing about *An Inconvenient Truth* is not that Paramount was going to reduce the package, but they wanted to come up with a solution that was going to have as much post-consumer (recycled paper) content as possible. Its first package done for DVD was 100% post consumer recycled fiber." On the other hand, studios releasing multi-disc sets are still going to do a package that will hold 10 and 12 discs, but they want to eliminate the plastic trays and are looking at alternatives made out of potato or bamboo, for example, she added.

A two or three-tier type packaging release system is predicted by Dustin Wills, Shorewood's vice president of West Coast Sales. "You'll have the basic packaging utilising recycled board and paper stock for your low cost items and standard releases. Then, there will be the special packaging spec which will have value-added features and will sell at a higher price. Volumes will be lower." This packaging, however, can still offer a number of greenchoice solutions, such as renewable vegetable-oil based inks and recycled paperboard.

Ultimately, there is no simple answer. An earth-friendly print and packaging strategy has many facets, some of which are significant in terms of environmental benefits, but subtle in terms of changes to the consumer's retail experience. "For example, switching to digital printing which emits lower VOCs (volatile organic compounds) and virtually eliminates waste. Or they can switch to soy based inks," says Willigan. "Content providers and package designers are being challenged to design packaging that can be automated for loading, fits in existing racking systems, has strong retail presence, and is effective for archiving the product after purchase. A lot of development work is underway in this area and products are expected to debut later this year."

The Plastics Industry answer

One question that seems to glare is whether paper is all that much better for the environment than plastics, or is it just a matter of perception? Caroline Schuurs, sales manager, Super Jewel Box USA addressed that issue. "All Super Jewel Box products are 100% recyclable polystyrene."

"Consumers who consider the impact on the environment..... need remember the three R's: 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle'"

In terms of expense, Schuurs says, it's important to look at the whole picture. She quotes the "Garbage Project" conducted by Dr William Rathje of the University of Arizona. It says "nothing biodegrades in modern landfills – not even paper or food. However, over time, decomposition of these 'biodegradable' materials occurs, producing methane gas and allowing toxic fumes and leachate to pollute the air and underground water supplies. However, polystyrene is chemically inert, so it will not decompose or harm our natural resources if disposed of in landfills. Consumers who consider the impact on the environment when making product purchasing decisions need to understand this, and should insist on packaging that is 100% recyclable as opposed to being biodegradable. Remember the 3 R's: 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.' That's being green."

For *An Inconvenient Truth*, Univenture used its EnvyPak technology to make the plastic outer wrap from Plastic Suppliers'

EarthFirst film. This PLA-based film is made from the 100% annually renewable resource, corn. It is biodegradable, sustainable, and compostable. "People can say that early in this life cycle, it takes a lot of energy to create this plastic. It's not that environmentally friendly when you compare it to paper. And that's true. But, if someone had to go out and buy a pulping mill to create their first bit of paper, paper wouldn't seem that environmentally friendly either. Ultimately, there has got to be the adaptation of new technologies in order to meet the needs of the marketplace as effectively and efficiently as possible. Sometimes you have to take a step backwards before you take giant steps forward," says Ross Youngs, CEO and Founder, Univenture.

Both Univenture's Youngs and Ivy Hill's Roberts believe all materials have a place in the market. "Plastic does carry a higher perceived value. That's probably the biggest hurdle in presenting board packaging. Plastic still has its place," said Roberts.

To conclude

While the initiatives of creative companies are wonderful, the help of governmental officials encouraging new programs and creating feasible goals and laws is essential. Much of the recycled content in product today is from post-industrial waste. For example, Shorewood reportedly sells about 60 thousand tons of industrial paperboard left over from its processes to recyclers every year. Statistics suggest that 57% of US communities have some kind of municipal or community program for collecting paperboard. That's only slightly more than half. What about plastics collection? All plastics can be recycled if programs are put in place, even the dreaded PVC.

Shorewood's Wills says, "We are confident that environmental issues will not go away this time which is why we've invested as much money as we have, and that is the other reason we are being so aggressive. We don't see it going backwards this time, and frankly, we don't want it to disappear." ●



The industry is getting used to working with materials like Cascades Orford board – 100% recycled, 35% post consumer waste materials