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Features

- **Home**
- **Current Issue**
 - Table of Contents
 - Breaking News
 - Editor's Page
 - Meetings/Events
 - Ad Index
 - Formulary
 - Grayson Report
 - New Products
 - New Package
 - Personnel Round Up
 - Article Archive
 - Formulary Archives
 - Webguide
 - Company Websites
 - Professional Resources
- **Subscribe**
- **Annual Features**
 - Buyers Guide
 - Company Profiles
 - Literature Showcase
 - Corporate Profiles
 - Happi Latin America
 - Stock Market Summary
 - Contract Manufacturing / Private Label Directory
- **About Us**
 - Guidelines
- **Advertise With Us**
 - Media Kit
 - Personal Care Cybrary®

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

The Power of Packaging

Manufacturers rely more and more on innovation to get packages noticed—and purchased—by consumers.

Ava Caridad
Associate Editor

In the household and personal product industry there is an enormous amount of pressure to market new and innovative products that not only grab consumer attention the first time but also maintain customer loyalty over the long term.

Of course, value for money and product performance have much to do with the success of any product, but it's the packaging that initially catches the eye of the buyer. Features such as brand identification and ease of use also factor into the growth or decline of a product.

It's no wonder, then, that suppliers are rolling out an array of novel closures, eye-catching and unique bottles. For example, M&H Plastics USA, Winchester, VA, has introduced 130 new and innovative bottle and cap designs to the personal care marketplace in the past few years in an effort to keep current with consumer trends.

"We launched a new reciprocating closure—the X-Press Cap—that is a contemporary alternative to the traditional disc top closures," explained Alex Piagnarelli, vice president of sales at M&H. "And we have introduced in-mold frosting on PVC and PETE bottles, which offers improved durability and significant cost reductions to conventional frosting techniques. We have introduced a vision inspection system to our state-of-the-art silk screen decoration equipment that has virtually eliminated rejects due to poor print registration."

Easthampton, MA-based Tubed Products LLC has added a rectangular tube to its line of tube packaging and is developing other shaped tubes for product innovation. According to president James Farley, the company is developing several new packaging concepts expected to debut later this year or early in 2006.

"Tubed Products works primarily with polyethyleneterephthalate and polypropylene squeeze tube materials," explained Mr. Farley. "These materials are viewed by marketers as superior to crushable metal tubes, as well as being more user-friendly and more upscale than

bottles.”

The Power of the Pump

Non-aerosol pumps and sprays remain a favorite form of product delivery, utilized in everything from baby care to fragrance, sunscreens to hair styling, aromatherapy to skin care. Manufacturers continue to further develop pumps and sprays, making them smaller, more elegant, efficient and more functional.

New from ABA Packaging Corporation, Holtsville, NY, is the Giselle line of airless pumps. According to vice president Charles Marchese, the Giselle line is sleeker and much more versatile in design than traditional airless packages.

“The Giselle line of airless pumps is totally customizable. The base, body and actuator are all changeable. The line is available in 15-, 20-, 25-, 30-, 35-, 40-, 45 and 50ml and is only the beginning of a larger, more flexible line for the skin care and fragrance industry,” he said.

Valois of America, Congers, NY, is offering the Easy Line, a spray and cap combination that uses the same vial for interchangeability. According to Edward J. Quinn, national director of sales, perfumery and cosmetics, the pump engine is completely invisible inside the vial and has no contact with metal or elastomer parts of the pump. It has a very soft and easy actuation for maximum ergonomics. The Easy cap is a breakaway wand that can be re-sealed for use at a later time. Both the Easy spray and Easy cap are compatible with current filling lines and can be decorated with Valois’ completely invisible Sample Stick label capability for maximum impression.



The Giselle line from ABA offers a sleek look for its .



Valois’ Easy spray is small, yet highly functional.

Valois works with materials such as polyoxymethylene (POM), strength, as well as styrene acrylonitrile copolymer (SAN) and are attractive to marketers and consumers due to their clarity.

Airspray International, Pompano Beach, FL, introduced the new lotion pump this year. David J. Stob, director of business development, affirms the Symplicity is unlike any lotion pump currently on the market due to its aesthetic design, material, and internal parts.

“Our dispensers are developed with high-impact co-polymer polypropylene. This material, which is not often used in dispenser pumps, is chosen for its quality, strength, durability and appearance and is FDA-approved. “The Symplicity lotion pump has a 4ml output and stands to the standard of Sp28/410. For kitchen and bath applications that need more skin moisturizers, shampoos, body lotions, bath and shower products, baby care and dishwashing applications—the patented design can be easily used without redesign of the core product.”

Mr. Stob added that the appealing new lotion pump will distinguish products and create powerful on-shelf differentiation. Ergonomics: the soft-touch actuator feels comfortable, works flawlessly and imparts a sense of quality. Dependability and convenience are enhanced by a technology that uses less moving parts than conventional lotion pumps. A fool-proof pump lock and water resistant design add to the efficient end-user experience.

“Easy to use and reliable, this new dispenser technology is designed for a wide range of product categories. Consumers can now access difficult cleaning surfaces and eliminate the time and mess caused by conventional lotion dispensing technology,” he emphasized.

In keeping with Airspray's new product strategy, which calls for adding a new dispenser the company is currently developing a new foam dispenser to add to its family of over combinations of foam pumps.

"In today's competitive battle for shelf space, differentiation is a crucial part of making customer reaches for your product," Mr. Stob concluded.

The Shift from Glass to Plastic

For container manufacturers, the question of whether to use plastic or glass has been long time. Each has its advantages and drawbacks; each is suitable for some product others. However, recent trends seem to be shifting toward the use of more plastic in

According to Mr. Marchese, ABA Packaging has always been a provider of stock glass packaging. However, in recent years, ABA has expanded its lines to include PETG ar packages in order to meet customer demand.

M&H Plastics USA uses a variety of materials in its bottle production, including HDPE COEX, PVC, frosted PVC, PETG, PP and PETE. According to Mr. Piagnarelli, the HD material is becoming an increasingly popular material with consumers.

"The rubberized material gives a soft tactile feel to a package that provides a better gi consumer. This is particularly important in applications where the package comes into water; i.e. sun care, bath and shower and spa products," he explained.

M&H has also introduced in-mold frosting for PVC and PETE packages. This gives a etched-glass look that appeals to many upscale marketers. Conventional frosted decr as a secondary procedure by a third party. In-mold frosting helps reduce the cost of fr eliminate the extra handling that comes with conventional frosting techniques, stated Piagnarelli.



For high end products, the Ice Collection from Arrowpak utilizes acrylic materials that resemble glass.

while achieving the custom look."

Jim Slowey, vice president of marketing and sale Richmond Hill, NY, explained, "We are seeing a of acrylic jars and bottles and the use of PETG. ' behind this is the ability to supply a very luxurious plastic while being able to provide compatibility v ingredients."

However, glass isn't being phased out completely contends customers are still looking to glass bot for their high end products.

"There is a trend to UV coating and spray finishes prevent deterioration of product. As the formulas sophisticated and sensitive to light, the need for continues to grow," added Mr. Slowey. "The spr bottles also provides a new level of decoration for looking for classic shapes with a new edge. Dec facilities are becoming more creative and taking trying to provide a unique look while using stock This allows companies to save on tooling for priv

Arrowpak tries to introduce five to six new items in glass every year to continually update its stock line. Through relationships with design studios and the availability of CAD/CAM software, Arrowpak designers aspire, in conjunction with plastics manufacturers, to develop new and unique items and shapes to provide a growing supply of packaging to the cosmetic

industry.

Innovation in all Sizes

Is bigger necessarily better? Within the past year, Tubed Products has introduced a new larger capacity Spa Size tube to meet industry demand for "super-sized" packages. Economy sizing, commanding shelf presence and increased decoration area are now available with the new 2-3/16 inch diameter Spa Size tube.

Jim Farley commented, "The Spa Size tube is another in the growing Super Tube line up, giving our customers the ability to compete with other large volume packages. The sleek new jumbo size tube is hitting the bath and body and personal care markets with a bang."

"The Super Spa size was added in response to increased customer demands for a large volume, plastic squeeze tube package with an increased graphics display area," Mr. Farley added. Products fulfilled this need by adding the 38-400 Super tubes. The large size guarantees a powerful presence in salons, boutiques and spas as well as in traditional retail setting market outlets."

Arrowpak executives report a rise in acrylic jars and bottles to house cosmetics ingredients.



Spa Size Super Tube from Tubed Products.

The Spa Size Super tube holds up to 399ml/13.5 and accepts a full sized 2-1/8 inch stand up dispenser. Decorating options for Spa Size Super tubes include printing, silk screening, foil hot-stamping and labels as eye-catching combinations of decorating techniques determined by the customer.

The flip side of the coin is packaging that can be completely functional at the same time.

According to Valois' Ed Quinn, designers are demanding smaller and lower profile pumps, and the Eclipse is the lowest profile pumps on the market.

"It allows designers maximum freedom in the design of fragrance packages due to the low stacking height. The perfume never comes into contact with any metal components, thereby protecting the olfactory note engine is completely invisible inside the bottle."

The newest launch from Emsar, Stratford, CT, is the Elegance pump with a very low profile and a stack height of 11mm. According to Des McEttrick, global marketing director, the Elegance gives designers the flexibility to create the package designs they want, and was launched to capitalize on the trend toward smaller, more miniaturized pumps in fragrances.

"The Elegance pump offers an exceptionally nice spray. It is both easy to actuate, and provides a fine spray that is ideal for fragrance," Ms. McEttrick remarked. "The 13 and 15mm pump offers an effective pre-compression feature for a very consistent, fine spray. The Elegance provides easier compatibility with fragrances because the springs and the ferrule are not in contact with the product. There are two dosages, 70 and 100mcl, so the marketer can offer the right spray for the products."

Emsar is also offering the new Mini Mist, a very small, portable

squeeze sprayer, which provides very fine particle breakup for a fine mist. The Mini is a complete, all-in-one, 3ml integrated package with a large graphic area for decoration. It offers great portability, and an easy to open and re-lock system for the consumer. The Mini Mist is designed for products such as breath sprays, body sprays and fragrances. It's portable, easy to use, and, according to Ms. McEttrick, very different.



The Mini Mist from Emsa

The Future is in Safety

Packaging, however, is about more than just catching the eye of the consumer; it also houses and protects the product within. Product tampering has long been a concern for packagers and marketers of food, beverages and pharmaceuticals. However, the personal care industry has been somewhat behind in providing their products in tamper-proof packages.

Company executives at Enercon Industries, Menomonee Falls, WI, told Happi that the recently received many calls and attended a number of industry conferences where many of personal care products have shown interest in induction sealing for their products.

"Induction sealing is not a new technology but it is new to the personal care products. Traditionally, tamper-evidence has not been a primary concern for these types of containers. However, the threat of terrorism has alerted them to the danger of packaging products without sufficient means of making them tamper-evident," stated Bill Zito, vice president of sales at Enercon.

In the past, induction sealing required a cap. Enercon's induction sealer heats up a foil cap and subsequently melts a polymer, which bonds with the lip of the container. Enercon introduced rotary, indexing and tabletop induction sealing technology for containers without caps. Sealing prior to capping or lidding allows companies to perform 100% seal integrity in-line. According to Mr. Zito, induction sealing is a popular choice as a tamper-evident solution for beverage, petroleum, and pharmaceutical industries and is recognized by the FDA as a means of tamper-evidence. It's economical and provides the added benefits of preserving freshness, preventing leaks and deterring pilfering. Since this technology is new to the personal care products market, Enercon is offering packagers free laboratory testing to determine if induction sealing is right for their product.

Safety comes from within a package as well. The first European product to utilize Airspray International's Dual Foamer dispenser is the Tristel Duo system from the Tristel Company, Newmarket, UK. Part of the company's range of sporicidal cleaning products, it's the first action sporicidal cleaner for general hospital surfaces, including non-invasive medical surfaces, instrument tables, monitor cases, control panels, keyboards, beds and mattresses. The product helps protect against the spread of MRSA—or "Superbug"—a major health concern in UK hospitals.



Airspray's Dual Foamer consists of two small foam systems. A single actuator activates both pumps simultaneously, keeping two incompatible liquid ingredients separate until the moment of application. At that point, the ingredients combine to create an instant, 50/50 foam formulation. Output is 0.8ml per stroke. The patented mechanism lets consumers apply products easily, and comfortably, without drips, spills, blotches or mess.

Packaging remains critical in merchandise branding, product influence and product protection, and will continue to be a vital link between consumer and product. Manufacturers will continue to invest time, research and finances to ensure that their product is picked off the shelf ahead of the competition.

The Dual Foamer from Airspray keeps liquid ingredients separate until the time of application, making it suitable for formulations using incompatible ingredients.

Looking for a supplier of packaging components? can be found on p. 94 in the print version of Happ

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