



# INSIDE PACKAGING

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## THE INEVITABLE SHIFT TOWARD THE FUTURE OF PACKAGING



By Dennis Calamusa,  
ALLIEDFLEX Technologies, Inc.

In recent years the global packaged consumer goods market has experienced a dramatic increase of flexible packaging introductions. This growth has not just occurred in niche or new product introductions, but we have started to see the crossover of mainstream products and in some cases, the shift of complete product categories toward innovative Flexible Packaging and in particular the popular Standup Pouch format. This type of excitement and momentum toward a new packaging style has not been experienced in many decades.



**T**he trend toward Flexible Packaging and the Standup Pouch has mainly been driven by companies looking for ways to differentiate their products from the competition, add consumer convenience and in general provide a new innovative marketing approach by using “packaging” to stimulate the sales of flat growth mature products and stagnant brands.

The ability to add reclosability features to a variety of flexible packaging formats have further propelled flexible packaging as a direct alternative or replacement of many forms of rigid packaging and has greatly added to the acceptance by the consumer through improved functionality and convenience.

The Standup Pouch in particular has proven to offer many more benefits to the packager than just good marketing. Material cost reduction and simplification

of the packaging process are also benefits when compared to more traditional packaging formats. In addition, the increasing concern for the environment, the increasing cost of transportation and logistics are causing many companies to take a closer look at the “total cost” and “environmental impact” of their packaging selection process.

It is challenging to shift from one package format to another particularly when the incumbent format has become the very essence of a company’s product or brand. Take for example the iconic cereal box which has certainly become the standard format globally, not just for a single company, but for the entire cereal industry. Shifting or changing from the iconic “box” to something new is challenging to say the least. As a result the cereal industry has become the “box” which happens to also market breakfast cereal.



A walk down the crowded cereal aisle clearly illustrates the massive wall of cartons with little point of differentiation. How does the consumer find that new product introduction or even their preferred brand when every package virtually looks the same on the shelf?

Another example of this lack of differentiation is the “canned food” category. This mature market sector has also become the “can”, much like the cereal industry has become the “box”. We have all seen the iconic Campbell’s Soup Can made famous by Andy Warhol. Try changing that format to something new and innovative - talk about challenging. These are a few examples, but the super market is full of these older style formats that have become the norm over many decades.

The inability to change or adapt to a new packaging format has created a unique opportunity for those smaller companies entering the market without the mature infrastructure of the largest and most dominate market leaders. These small to mid-sized companies

are using new and innovative packaging to their full advantage to get noticed on the busy retail shelf and capture market share.

The Standup Pouch format being introduced is not only offering an important point of differentiation on the retail shelf, but is literally re-inventing many product categories through improved convenience of use which has proven to be very much appreciated by the consumer through repeat sales. These important marketing attributes are enabling these smaller entities to disrupt the market leaders and gain market share through growing consumer acceptance.

This re-packaging trend is creating a rebirth of sorts which many companies have not experienced in decades. Many are benefiting from the positive effects throughout their entire infrastructure, but the most important effect is from the consumer through their repeat sales which have the biggest impact on their bottom line.





Getting started is easier than ever. Do not think about a complete shift from what you have done successfully for the past 50 years or more. A better approach may be to look to value-added product line extensions, a new product introduction, a new size or targeting to a specific demographic with a new innovative packaging alternative. Try not to get hung up on the traditional retail shelf, but consider showing off your new packaging around the retail environment, perhaps in the perimeter of the store where activity is growing. Use point of purchase displays strategically placed

to partner your product with other complementary products to increase and broaden sales opportunities.

In order for flexible packaging to continue its global growth it will be critical for the flexible packaging industry to continue to communicate the “total benefits” of flexible packaging, as compared to other forms of traditional packaging in relationship to reduced energy consumption, improved logistics, source reduction and total impact from an environmental perspective.

Education will be the key to continue to further drive the momentum of change including improvement of material, printing, pouch making and flexible packaging machinery technologies and yes, even recycling for end of life. All of these critical areas will need continued close collaboration by the flexible packaging industry to meet the global growth opportunities coming our way.

Of course we will see new iterations of the Standup Pouch format, but at this moment in time we are just getting started with a revolutionary packaging format that has all the right stuff for this time in history and for the foreseeable future. ■

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

**ALLIEDFLEX® Technologies, Inc.**  
780 Apex Rd, Sarasota  
FL 34240

**Phone:** +1 941.923.1181  
**Fill out our online form >**  
**Website:** [alliedflex.com](http://alliedflex.com)

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