

Corrugated Industry Gathers to Chart Future



Clive Bowers,
CEO Smurfit Kappa

On 15th September, over 100 senior executives from the corrugated packaging industry came together in Stratford-upon-Avon to listen to speakers from influential organisations such as Tesco, WRAP and INCPEN.

The conference was organised by the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) and the Sheet Plant Association (SPA). Entitled "Making Waves with Corrugated", the conference marked an important period in the development of corrugated packaging, a material increasingly seen by government, business and the consumer as one that plays a fundamental role in the drive towards a low carbon economy.

Steve Pizer, Packaging Development Manager of Tesco, reminded the gathering that the UK's largest retailer was aiming to create "a mass movement in green consumption". He referred to the "renaissance in corrugated" that is taking place as retail ready packaging grows in importance. Steve also agreed with the industry position that packaging should be specified by setting new performance standards, not "by history".

Haulwen Nicholas, Senior Packaging Technologist at WRAP, spoke of the move towards "packaging optimisation, not packaging reduction". She highlighted the shift to "carbon-based decision making" and said WRAP was taking a phased, evolutionary approach as the development of a robust set of tools for calculating the carbon footprint of packaging was likely to take some time.

Jane Bickerstaffe, Director of INCPEN, described the difficult task of countering mistaken, but strongly held, public perceptions about packaging and encouraged the industry to get its messages across as strongly as possible to consumers as a whole. She also pointed to the increasing adoption of Corporate and Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies which, she felt, are driving change in the right direction.

Andrew Barnetson outlined recent initiatives to promote corrugated packaging and said that messages have been widened to include not only corrugated's superb environmental story but also its efficiencies in the supply chain and its ability to enhance in store branding.

This year, CPI is sponsoring the new Integrated marketing award at The Grocer Magazine Advertising & Marketing Awards (Gramia 2009) event, as well as holding, in November, its second MPs' Parliamentary Reception..

Andrew urged everyone in the industry to spread the message about corrugated to customers and the wider community, reminding them of all the information that is available as fact sheets on the websites of both CPI (www.paper.org.uk) and SPA (www.sheetplant.co.uk).

Andrew also showed the delegates the CPI's flagship presentation that summarises the benefits of using corrugated. This flash-based presentation has already had a major impact on a number of organisations and it is available, free of charge, for Members of both CPI and SPA, from their respective websites.

The final speaker, Martyn Eustace, Director of Two Sides, outlined the current campaign to change negative attitudes towards paper. The Two Sides initiative is setting out to tackle the environmental arguments head on with factual and authoritative information, exploring and exploding the myths about paper.

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Clive Bowers, Chair of the CPI Corrugated Sector and CEO of Smurfit Kappa, rounded off the conference with a rallying cry to his industry colleagues: "Let's go for it!" he said. "Corrugated is already the world's favourite packaging material and is set to make an even greater contribution in years to come as more companies, regulators and government see corrugated as not just good for business, but good for society as a whole."

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For further information please contact Andrew Barnetson, Corrugated Sector Manager, on 07775 771662 or email abarnetson@paper.org.uk.

Notes to Editors

- For additional information on the UK paper industry, in the first instance, please contact Catherine Waterfield, External Affairs Coordinator, on 01793 889612 or email cwaterfield@paper.org.uk. Alternatively, please visit: <http://www.paper.org.uk>.
- CPI is the voice of the paper industry in the UK, representing papermakers, tissue manufacturers, corrugated packaging producers and recovered paper merchants.
- CPI represents 265 member sites across 60 companies, with a combined annual turnover of £4 billion and 24,500 personnel.
- Corrugated packaging accounts for more than 30% of all UK packaging.
- Over 80% of all corrugated packaging is recycled.