

FLEXIBLE PACKAGING

Voortman



Voortman's Recipe for Reclosable Cookie Packaging Success

The cookie packaging team at Hostess' Voortman cookies plant developed resealable packaging for 14 stock-keeping units in just six months.

Claire Sand | Jun 22, 2023

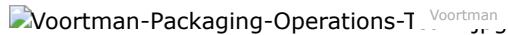
Wafer cookie brand Voortman owned by Hostess took just six months to develop resealable packaging across 14 stock-keeping units. The fast-track project is exemplary of how agile packaging suppliers and brands can rapidly deliver meaningful innovation for consumers.

The parent company team at Hostess of Alicia Babony , Katie Bliss , Steve Hunt, Dominic Neisen , Shar Manchester , Jason Smith , and Ray Clark at packaging supplier C-P Flexible Packaging shared their thoughts on the innovative packaging upgrade.

Neisen explains several exciting aspects of this effort. "We implemented resealable packaging in six months without additional capital or loss of production efficiency. The Hostess team-oriented pragmatic culture fostered a collaborative work environment for efficient problem-solving and wise decision-making."

C-P Flexible Packaging provided the technical expertise to make this happen with the extensive industry experience that enabled a streamlined implementation process. At Voortman's packaging production operations in Burlington, ON, Canada., robotic arms fill an inner 3-compartment tray, which is then overwrapped with PET/oriented polypropylene (OPP)-based film embedded with the reseal feature. The resealable package incorporates two "bridges" aligned precisely with the tray compartment ridges.

Here's how the team got there, starting with how it all began.



Voortman's Operations Team members Steve Hunt, Alicia Babony, and Jason Smith with the new resealable cookie package.

The project originated from consumer research that showed Voortman's had an opportunity to enhance freshness and convenience with resealable packaging.

"We explored a host of resealable options and narrowed options down to three based on overall cost, efficacy, and consumer experience," says Bliss. "Ultimately our consumer research showed a meaningful increase in Purchase Intent for our new resealable package versus the two other alternative technologies."

However, it was also clear from the research that consumers required a package that was both easy to open and easy to reseal.

Pragmatism addressed the packaging project time crunch.

The team geared up for the fast-paced timeline to align with an already planned package size optimization. Combining the two projects gained internal efficiencies. Neisen shares, "The Voortman's production facility began building for launch with the resealable package just 6 months after our package prototype passed consumer testing." This was accomplished despite the supply chain complexities associated with COVID-19 and when material sourcing and conversion lead times increased by 30-50%.

Managing trials during a seasonal build was also challenging. Hunt explains, "To meet the tight timeline and ensure an option was viable, three different material structures and two different opening designs were trialed simultaneously versus the more customary iterative process. This allowed us workable options after the first trial and clear direction on what refinement was needed."

This approach saved not only time but also optimized resources.

"Hostess's dedication combined with C-P's rapid development process and technical capability enabled this project to go from concept to commercialization quickly and efficiently," Clark explains. "In addition, Marketing, Operations, and R&D teams from Hostess were onsite at Voortman's plant as we ran trial material, providing the opportunity to immediately incorporate any refinements and reach final decisions expeditiously."



Bridging the resealable packaging gap.

The inherently tight and narrow long package profile meant the package "bowed outward" in width once a standard reseal feature was used. The tight package profile was preferred for brand image and due to Production constraints. This meant bridges were required to ensure the reseal feature would function properly.

In the final package, two "bridges" span across the width of the package. The size of the bridges was dictated by cookie size and the limited width available for resealing along the sides of the opening.

"Cookie dimensions were critical in refining the reseal opening required to accommodate two larger size cookies as well as a dozen more standard size cookie varieties and ensure alignment of the bridges with the inner tray," reflects Babony.

This meant the bridge size decreased as the project progressed.

According to Manchester, "As the bridge size decreased to accommodate larger cookies, bridge tearing concerns were addressed by switching to a structure containing PET and modifying the level and location of an adhesive deadener on the bridges to inhibit bridge tearing. Moreover, we were able to use the smaller width bridge to accommodate all cookie sizes."

"Interestingly, the bridges allow for portion control because consumers open the package section by section," adds Babony. "Our predictive shelf-life tool allowed us to know that this material structure would not impact product shelf life."

The agility and coordination showcased by Hostess and C-P Flexible Packaging enabled package innovation to more meaningfully connect with consumers.

Claire Sand has 30+ years of experience in industry and academia. She's owner of Packaging Technology and Research and Gazelle Mobile Packaging and an Adjunct Professor, CalPoly, Michigan State University, and the University of Minnesota. You can reach her at www.packagingtechnologyandresearch.com or claire@packagingtechnologyandresearch.com .

Source URL:<https://www.packagingdigest.com/food-packaging/voortmans-recipe-reclosable-cookie-packaging-success>