

BlisterGuard is a Win for Gillette's Retailers, Consumers and the Environment

Overview

Gillette® is a division of Procter & Gamble and a household name around the world. Well-known for their large line of shaving products, Gillette manufactures a variety of high-quality blades and razors for men and women, which are sold in grocery stores, pharmacies and club stores. The Procter & Gamble community consists of over 138,000 employees working in over 80 countries and offers one of the largest, strongest portfolios of trusted brands in the world.

Challenge

Since 2000, Gillette's razors have been packaged in RF-sealed clamshells as a solution to address a high theft rate. The clamshell offers great security against pilferage, since it is sealed around the edges during the packaging process. However, this process also makes it very difficult and dangerous for purchasers to open, due to the sharp edges that are formed when opening the package with a knife or scissors.



BLISTERGUARD

Moreover, the clamshell's exterior is made entirely of plastic, which creates issues around sustainability as manufacturers and many retailers are focusing on the reduction in the volume of plastic used in their products and stores. Today, the manufacturers and retailers paying attention to sustainability are commended for their great vision, as sustainable packaging continues to gain ground as one of the best and "greenest" business practices.

As Gillette began to focus its efforts on more sustainable packaging, the company was faced with a challenge to consider clamshell alternatives for its products in the context of their current systems, process, equipment and continued need to guard against pilferage.

Solution

Gillette set out to find a packaging solution for their razor lines that would meet their sustainability needs without requiring new packaging equipment or additional labor costs. They also didn't want to sacrifice the pilfer-resistance they had with their clamshell packaging. Gillette, under the project management of senior engineer Michael Marcinkowski, evaluated several packaging options, and ultimately selected BlisterGuard® from Colbert Packaging.

BlisterGuard is an environmentally friendly package that delivers high visual appeal and state-of-the-art security for Gillette's razor lines. BlisterGuard's heat-sealable, tear-resistant design is recyclable*, meeting both the manufacturer's and retailers' needs for more sustainable packaging. BlisterGuard uses Everest® Safe-Pak™ solid bleached sulfate paperboard from International Paper with multilayer Valéron® Strength Film and a clear plastic blister to replace Gillette's clamshells. Gillette worked closely with Colbert Packaging to develop a fully customized solution specific to their needs.

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“We really pushed the envelope on the design. We worked closely with Colbert’s R&D team to develop unique foil-laminated cards and a feature that allows some of the packages to breathe,” said Marcinkowski. “Our R&D team was involved in package design and trials. They had a lot of great ideas, and we relied on Colbert’s expertise to ultimately deliver on our needs. It was a great, collaborative process. In fact, whenever we had an idea or request, Colbert found a way to make it happen.”

Today, the BlisterGuard packaging is used for the entire Gillette razor product line sold at all club stores in the United States and Canada. This includes such well-known Gillette brands as Fusion®, Mach3®, Sensor® and Venus®. While all club packs are now sold in BlisterGuard packaging, the packaging design varies by brand and model to meet the individual needs of each product and the various components. For example, some packages contain a razor plus blades, some also contain a battery, and others contain blades only.

Primarily paper-based, BlisterGuard’s large printable area gives Gillette better shelf presentation for their products. As the BlisterGuard packaging was being customized for Gillette’s products, the company used the opportunity to redesign their packaging across their razor brands.

Results

Ultimately, BlisterGuard is a win for Gillette’s retailers, consumers and the environment.

The benefits of Gillette’s use of BlisterGuard include:

- Packaging reduces the amount of plastic in the environment (by 50-70 percent).
- Products are theft-resistant at the store and easy to open at home with scissors.
- Package increases brand visibility and is more consumer-friendly.
- Packaging was changed without changing equipment.
- Assembly process was made more efficient, with minimal retooling.

“BlisterGuard gave us what we needed to retain pilfer-resistance, while also meeting our goals for sustainability,” said Marcinkowski. “We were able to make a positive change to our razor packaging with our existing machinery without increasing the time it takes to deliver our products. The end result is a win for all involved – retailers, Gillette, the environment and our consumers.”