

PRESS RELEASE

Sustainable packaging

Even cleverer: Nature MultiPack from KHS with a carrying handle made of kraft paper

- Cardboard as an environmentally friendly and convenient alternative to film
- Reduced material consumption and lower packaging costs
- BottleClip carrier for various sizes of pack and bottle

Dortmund, November 28, 2024 – Totally without plastic film and thus twice as environmentally friendly: the unique Nature MultiPack from the KHS Group can now be combined with a simple and practical carrying handle made of cardboard. In view of increasing climate change, both consumers and legislators are demanding that industry and commerce come up with more environmentally-friendly and more sustainable forms of packaging. There's thus a considerable interest in systems that provide this – even more so if the benefits prove both ecological and economical. After all, the use of less material also means a cut in packaging costs.

One good example of climate-friendly packaging in the beverage industry is Nature MultiPack by KHS: in place of shrink film, paper or cardboard, here just a few dots of adhesive are required to turn PET bottles and aluminum cans into packs. This means that 85% less material is consumed compared to conventional setups. Furthermore, in the best instance just one third of the energy is needed for production.

Minimalist addition

So that a Nature MultiPack can be fabricated and taken home by the consumer without any plastic having to be used, KHS has now combined it with a further minimalist feature: what's known as the BottleClip Carrier made of kraft paper has now been developed in close cooperation with the Hinojosa Packaging Group, a leading company in the design and manufacture of sustainable packaging solutions. The convenient carrying handle is slotted onto just two bottles in the pack, regardless of how many this actually contains. Here, two pre-punched and folded tabs are erected and hooked under the ring on the bottle neck. This ensures that the carrying handle sits firmly and the pack can be safely transported.

Comfortable handling and great flexibility

Especially when handling heavier packs, conventional handles made of plastic film often cut into the shopper's hands. In contrast, the cardboard carrying handle is far more pleasant to grip. When the consumer picks up the pack by the BottleClip Carrier, its long sides bend upwards. This protects palms from sharp punched edges and bottle caps. Once home, the cardboard handle can be easily removed and recycled together with other recovered paper.

Flexibility is writ large regarding both the packs and the cardboard carrying handle. Pack sizes of two to eight PET bottles containing 250 milliliters to two liters each are possible. "We've made sure to create a uniform look and feel for all sizes," says KHS project manager Manfred van Triel. Minimal adjustments were made to the respective punching dies to suit the bottle diameter and volume and ensure the best possible functionality.

Extensive testing at the development stage

KHS designed the clip in an iterative process with its partner Hinojosa that specializes in sustainable food and beverage packaging solutions. Extensive pack life cycle testing also included consumer handling and logistics tests, among others. Various parameters were constantly optimized during the process.

The result is a carrying handle made of cardboard that's large enough to include product information and the multipack barcode – but at the same time is as small and as stable as possible. “We believed it was important to find a shape that's as simple as possible for application in the packer,” emphasizes van Triel. “What good is the best solution if it's so complex that it can't be quickly and easily processed on our machines?”

Reliable processing

Great importance was thus attached to devising a sophisticated logistics process. The BottleClip Carrier is supplied in cartridges, i.e. secondary cartons, that can be easily fed into the machine magazines in a loading process. “This is crucial to the performance of the system,” van Triel explains. Not only is there less operator involvement and material consumption; the amount of space needed is also reduced. The new application module specifically saves up to four meters in machine length in direct comparison to a machine that processes conventional film carrying handles. For beverage producers with limited production space, this is an especially relevant argument.

The interest being shown by the industry in the new equipment is considerable, with the first projects already in preparation. This comes as no surprise to van Triel. He's convinced that it would be hard to find a multipack currently on the market that uses less material.

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Pictures and captions

(source: Jan Schwerdtfeger, KHS GmbH, Frank Reinhold)

Image download: <https://KHS.dphoto.com/album/bb7h4o>

Innopack Kisters NMP (source: Jan Schwerdtfeger)

The Innopack Kisters NMP joins bottles together with dots of adhesive to form packs before robots apply the carrying handle in alternation.

BottleClip Carrier (source: KHS GmbH)

Packs of two to eight PET bottles containing 250 milliliters to two liters each can be transported using the BottleClip Carrier.

Applying the carrying handle (source: Jan Schwerdtfeger)

The carrying handle is applied by the robot to just two bottles – regardless of how many containers the pack actually contains.

BottleClip Carrier detail (source: KHS GmbH)

Minimalist packaging feature: the BottleClip Carrier made of kraft paper is a joint development by the Hinojosa Packaging Group and KHS.

Manfred van Triel (source: Frank Reinhold)

Manfred van Triel, project manager for KHS in Kleve.

About the KHS Group

The KHS Group is one of the world's leading manufacturers of filling and packaging systems for the beverage and liquid food industries. Besides the parent company (KHS GmbH) the group includes various subsidiaries outside Germany, with production sites in Ahmedabad (India), Waukesha (USA), Zinacantepec (Mexico), São Paulo (Brazil) and Kunshan (China). It also operates numerous sales and service centers worldwide. KHS manufactures modern filling and packaging systems for the high-capacity range at its headquarters in Dortmund, Germany, and at its factories in Bad Kreuznach, Kleve, Worms and Hamburg. The KHS Group is a wholly owned subsidiary of the SDAX-listed Salzgitter AG corporation. In 2023 the KHS Group and its 5,400 employees achieved a turnover of around €1.517 billion.

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