



Stick-Pack Benefits for Pharmaceuticals and Nutraceuticals

Four Reasons to Consider Stick-Packs

The global food and beverage industry has recognized the benefits of stick-packs – the slim, sealed, tube-shaped format for single-servings – as far back as the 1970s. In North America acceptance of single-serving packaging, particularly among those in the influential segment of working women and baby boomers, is increasing. Now this unique packaging option is gaining favor with the pharmaceutical and consumer healthcare industries not only for its convenience but also for the safety, compliance, cost-savings and marketability it delivers to the Rx and nutraceutical markets.

Product Safety.

The fundamental question for pharmaceutical and consumer healthcare companies is a significant one: “What effect will the stick-pack option have on the integrity of my product?” Rigid parameters – particularly with the packaging of probiotics -- must be in place to ensure product safety as well as the safety of the consumers who will use it, including state-of-the-industry technology, a controlled production environment with Class 100000 clean rooms and stringent processes.

A series of factors will provide maximum product safety in primary and secondary packaging using the stick-pack option. Most importantly, when a stick-pack is formed, filled and sealed in an environment with controlled temperature, low relative humidity and controlled residual oxygen, the product is therefore protected from any contaminants. As further protection, the use of high-quality film, from 7 to 12 micron foil barrier, provides zero MVTR and OTR. Use of leading-edge stick-pack equipment ensures fill and seal integrity at high speeds and a high degree of fill accuracy per dose. Together, these safeguards provide content preservation resulting in a shelf life of up to 24 months.

Improved Compliance.

Several factors contribute to stick-pack’s ability to influence compliance.

- Pediatric dosage in stick-packs: Easily blended in a child’s hot or cold food or beverage, pediatric powders in uni-dose stick-packs provide taste masking. As a result, infants and children have a greater acceptance rate.

- Convenience and portability: The compact size brings convenience for people on the go. Able to be tucked into pockets, handbags and backpacks, medications and supplements in stick-pack format have the portability that improves compliance. Opening the stick-pack and dispensing its contents is simple. The slender stick-pack fits into the opening of a bottle of water or other beverage for easy no-spill dispensing.

Reduction in Cost.

Cost benefits of stick-pack are significant, yet sometimes overlooked. With stick-pack, for example, pharmaceutical and consumer healthcare companies bypass encapsulation and tableting processes, thus controlling costs and eliminating the need for the extra expense of bottling or blistering. Consider, too, that APIs can be sent directly to the North American packager. Excipients can then be locally sourced, blended and filled. The end result is lower total product cost, product protection and efficiency of time, along with the elimination of significant international freight charges.

Stick-pack packaging simplifies the formulation process because there is no need for compression or more complex formulas that bind all ingredients. Because stick-packs use up to 40% less material, the reduction in paper and foil usage and waste volume is both a bottom-line benefit as well as an ecological one. Because of the slim, compact size of stick-packs, cartoning and secondary packaging are efficient and economical, so the overall cost-savings with stick-pack become substantial.

Increased Marketability.

In the challenge to differentiate its brand from the abundance of products on the shelves, pharmaceutical and consumer healthcare companies benefit from the uniqueness of the stick-pack design. It is a format that gets noticed because it has not saturated the marketplace, yet has strong consumer acceptance. Small, simple and easy to open and dispense, stick-packs are an ideal sample option. Stick-packs also have the flexibility to accommodate beneficial additives, such as sweeteners, flavors and more, making the product more appealing to the consumer and thus more marketable. Marketing messages fit easily on the stick-pack surface and the compact, versatile finished goods make an attractive presentation.

The marketplace becomes more competitive, manufacturers actively seek opportunities to distinguish their products, maintain product integrity and reduce costs. Stick-pack is a consideration for accomplishing those goals.