Green Packaging Encyclopedia Article

Green Packaging

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Green Packaging

Packaging is the largest form of domestic **garbage**. In 1999 it amounted to 33.1% of **solid waste** as measured by weight in the United States. Significant waste prevention implies reductions in packaging. There simply is not enough room in landfills or incinerators for all the excess packaging the industry produces.

People value products not only for their content but also for the packaging. It gives products a better feel and a more attractive appearance and suggests less of a risk of contamination. It prolongs the life of the product and allows people to make fewer trips to the supermarket.

For purely economic reasons most packages are becoming lighter. **Aluminum** cans, for instance, are 45% lighter today than they once were. Shrink wrap film and a plastic base are increasingly taking the place of corrugated boxes. Some companies are trying to eliminate packaging entirely. Outer boxes were once thought to be absolutely essential for the sale of toothpaste, but the giant Swiss retailer, Migros, discovered that consumers ultimately became accustomed to unboxed tubes and that sales did not suffer as a result. McDonald's and other fast food restaurants in the United States have stopped using **polystyrene** boxes to package their sandwiches, turning instead to paper wraps. Other innovations in packaging are also occurring. For instance, Procter & Gamble is no longer using metal-based inks for printing on packages.

See Also

Container Deposit Legislation; Green Advertising and Marketing; Waste Reduction

Resources

Books

Cairncross, F. *Costing the Earth*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1992.