



Zipper features a crested center point to allow logo to stand taller




Two apertures on either side of the carton allow the retailer to easily access the zipper and remove the entire top to display all 12 cans

Budweiser Brewing Group UK&I meets the demand for hard seltzers with retail-friendly Bud Light Hard Seltzer packaging solution made from renewably sourced fiber



As the trend for hard seltzers steadily increases across Europe, Budweiser Brewing Group UK&I, a business of AB InBev, needed a fast turnaround on packaging for the UK launch of its Bud Light Seltzer brand. Budweiser Brewing Group required packaging in line with its mission to inspire and empower consumers to create a better world. They chose to partner with Graphic Packaging International ('Graphic Packaging') due to the company's reputation for efficient delivery of world-leading fiber-based packaging solutions, its Vision 2025 goals and Design for the Environment approach.

CASE STUDY: ELEVATED EXPERIENCE | CONVENIENCE | SUSTAINABILITY

 CHALLENGE	 SOLUTION	 RESULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short project turnaround Meet the demands of a new product launch under remote-working conditions • Shelf appeal Ensure stand-out presence in the growing and competitive market for hard seltzers • Retailer convenience Design a 12-pack carton that facilitates single unit can sales, increasing the opportunity for promotional cross-selling • Circularity Select a fiber-based package that promotes sustainable, circular packaging solutions in a new and growing sub-sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced branding opportunities via the superior printing surface of AquaKote™ for high-quality graphics • Designed for retailer convenience with a zipper to allow for removal of the top section of the carton, exposing all 12 cans for easy-access, single unit sale • 22pt AquaKote™ board made from renewable sources is recyclable post-retailer use. AquaKote board provides package integrity, line efficiency and performance in high-humidity conditions • QuikFlex™ 2100G3 machine features state-of-the-art technology to meet the highest speed requirements on new or existing product lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers retailer convenience with a zipper to remove the top, expose all 12 cans and allow easy consumer selection • Rigorous testing of opening feature and on machinery for ensured design functionality • The zipper features a crested center point to allow the logo to stand taller than the remaining tray for enhanced shelf appeal • Elevated consumer experience with convenient access to multiple flavors • Recyclable fiber-based wrap is made from renewably sourced fibers with an average of 10% pre-consumer recycled content. Pack is widely recyclable for optimum circularity of the materials • Runs at high line speeds and designed to eliminate sheet waste for efficient, cost-effective manufacturing

Challenge

Figures released by Kantar reveal that UK households consumed £11.8m worth of hard seltzer in 2020. With 3.7 percent of UK households already buying into the trend (Kantar), and 52 percent of consumers actively looking for tips on personal health and wellbeing as a result of the pandemic (GlobalData), demand for hard seltzers is rising and competition is fierce amongst beverage manufacturers. This has promoted a flurry of product launches with supermarkets ready to stock new and exciting brands.

With Bud Light Seltzer already a trailblazer in the US, Budweiser Brewing Group wanted a fast-track route to market in the UK, including the 12-can recyclable packaging solution specially designed for single unit sales, which would also provide maximum branding and promotional opportunities. Budweiser Brewing Group was also keen to facilitate retailer convenience for shelf display, storage and promotions.

Solution

A design was created incorporating a convenient zip feature, allowing removal of the entire top of the carton to expose all 12 cans for easy removal. The zipper featured a crested center point, allowing the Bud Light Seltzer logo to stand taller than the remaining tray and giving the brand optimal shelf presence alongside competitor packs.

The cartons were made from AquaKote™ coated board, providing a recyclable solution as well as a superior printing surface, engineered to deliver excellent print results and high-quality graphics to create maximum impact on the shelf.

To arrive at a solution, the two teams collaborated virtually in the ideation stages with samples manufactured and sent to Budweiser Brewing Group for review. The final cartons were manufactured using the QuikFlex™ 2100G3 with features that include no-tool changeover, functional design for easy access, and the latest technology and innovation for the highest speed requirements on new or existing product lines.

Results

Two apertures on either side of the carton allow the retailer to easily access the zipper and remove the entire top section so that all 12 cans are on view. This supports promotional activity, such as three-for-two offers on multiple flavours, which was an important element of the original brief to encourage the adoption of hard seltzer as a new-to-market product. The crested center point design feature ensures that the Bud Light brand stands proud alongside competitor brands.

The Bud Light pack meets the requirements for a fiber-based packaging solution, with the added bonus that there is no requirement for a tray, thus preventing plastic from entering the value chain. The retailer can handle the carton through normal recycling channels post-use to encourage greater circularity.

Graphic Packaging was able to achieve a short project turnaround supporting Budweiser Brewing Group in the launch of Hard Seltzer in the UK, with remote collaboration and samples provided for approval. The zipper was tested rigorously on the machinery to meet the project deadline, providing the confidence that the carton would perform well on shelf and best present the Bud Light Hard Seltzer brand.

