



SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING | RECYCLING

Paper-based Blister-style Packs Make a Splash at PACK EXPO Southeast

A subset of the paperization trend, some brand owners are moving from thermoformed plastic trays with cardstock backing to fully fiber-based blister packs. The trend was noticeable at PACK EXPO Southeast, with both materials & machinery vendors involved.

By — Matt Reynolds

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The paper-blister trend, a subset of the wider paperization trend, is replacing thermoformed plastic trays on cardstock with entirely paper trays that are curbside recyclable.

At least two companies, almost certainly more that we haven't gotten to yet, are putting their paper-blister best foot forward at [PACK EXPO Southeast](#).

On the materials side, [Atlantic Packaging's](#) offering gives brand owners an on-ramp to the trend. They say it offers a sustainable alternative to traditional single-use plastic blister packs, using renewable paperboard that is curbside recyclable.

"One of the things we're most excited about at PACK EXPO Southeast is our blister pack replacement, called Paperform," says Chad Fields, Fishbone and sustainable packaging at Atlantic Packaging.



Carmex brand Minis lip balm applicators were an early adopter of paper blisters.

Its fiber-based composition reduces environmental impact while still providing reliable protection for products, the company says, given the paperboard is curbside recycling. Designed with custom printing and structural options, Paperform allows brands to stand out with vibrant, high-quality packaging produced at Atlantic facilities, the company adds.

An early adopter was the Carmex brand of lip balms, as early as 2021. About to hit the market, [P&G's](#) Crest Pro-Health is launching a four-count pack, designed for membership warehouses and big box stores like Costco, Sam's Club, and the like.



P&G's Oral-B brand Glide floss uses a paper blister formed in Starview equipment.

The solution is also compatible with existing blister packaging equipment, ensuring an easy transition for businesses seeking eco-friendly options. One such equipment manufacturer, exhibiting not far away at PACK EXPO Southeast, was [Starview Packaging](#).

The machinery used to form Atlantic (and other materials suppliers') paper blisters for the Crest and Carmex applications is Starview Packaging equipment. The company also partnered with P&G on an Oral-B Glide Floss project with a package that also uses paper blister.

"We've got an Oral-B package converted to an all paper design. We've also got a Carmex lip balm package that is in a pre-formed paper tray," says Eric Carlomusto, VP of sales & marketing at Starview. "We're seeing a lot of activity with either pre-formed materials, or we're actually taking flat card stock and forming it on our equipment. So for shallow products, it's just a simple form. Corners are open. Whereas for bigger packages and heavier products, we're actually tucking corners and optional sealing, so closing off and securing those packages.

"We're also seeing a lot of customers that will either add an open window, so you can actually see and touch the product, and others are blanketing that off with a smaller window so you can see the product without touching it.

Also in the Starview booth was a pre-formed pulp tray, currently on retail shelves, made for GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) Consumer Healthcare's Flonase brand product that he says has been well-received by consumers.

In the case of the pulp tray to cardstock backing, a heat-activated adhesive bonds the two materials without an issue, Carlomusto adds. **PW**



GSK's Flonase brand uses a paper cardstock backing, serving as the printed front-of-pack billboard. The pulp tray binds to the backing with a heat-activated adhesive.

[View this type of machine on Starview's website](#)

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