

# Cleanfinish

There have been numerous reports on the widespread use of plastic and non-recyclable packaging and how they have a clear impact on wildlife and the natural environment. Emma-Jane Batey examines how some brands are looking to make statements on sustainability when it comes to packaging products

**R**esponsible packaging impacts on all brands. From start-ups that wouldn't consider doing anything but the right thing when it comes to sourcing sustainable materials, to global brands that need to move with the times (and changing consumer demands), 'responsible' isn't a unique selling point anymore - it's just the right thing to do. Consumers are increasingly interested in the composition of a product's packaging as much as the ingredients in the products themselves, due to media reports highlighting the role that packaging plays in the safety and environmental friendliness of our food, drink and personal-care products.

## Smarter sustainability

For household name Nestlé, its latest launch highlights its ongoing move to deliver responsible packaging across its bottled water category, following a concerted effort to reduce the weight of its packaging and increase the use of recycled

Pure Life Purified \* Water has just released a 700ml bottle made from 100% food grade recycled plastic (rPET), Nestlé Waters North America vice-president Antonio Sduco says, «Environmental sustainability is an integral part of our company's purpose and heritage. This new bottle for our namesake brand is the latest way we were satisfying consumer demand and inspiring consumers to recycle». The introduction of rPET supplied by leading PET producer and rPET converter RETAL, to the Nestlé Pure Life portfolio, builds on the brand's roster of responsible packaging initiatives, which also includes investing in and collaborating with environmental groups. In a statement, Nestlé Waters North America said «We work with a number of strategic suppliers, including producers of food-grade, post-consumer recycled PET. We are expanding our roster of suppliers to purchase even more recycled plastic which we plan to use in our other bottled water brands across the country.»



Single-use plastics have faced heavy criticism

Ordo creator and founder Bartholomew Walsh says, 'Packaging is obviously a huge part of being a subscription as we have no consumer-facing interaction and the unboxing experience is everything. All our packaging is letterbox friendly which was a big task, but we've managed to design something that is efficient and cool. It's a little gift that you look forward to opening.'

He continued, «Always at the forefront of our packaging is its impact on the environment. It's luxurious and attractive but still fully recyclable. We're also implementing a service to recycle our customers' used products, including toothpaste tubes, toothbrush head batteries, using the bimonthly subscription service and a resealable mailer bag.

Walsh explains that Ordo's packaging allows the company to communicate its core brand values with its customers. «We keep things simple and this is reflected in our packaging - it's kept clean and clear. We hope the Ordo O' becomes synonymous with good oral-health care» he says. We use as little packaging as possible but still ensure our products reach our customers in perfect condition. We are also currently in the process of developing some new boxes for the starter packs and also our toothpaste tubes.» »

Ordo believes its packaging should reflect its ethos - cleanliness.



## No teething problems

For personal-care brands, choosing responsible packaging is a good way to show the 'natural intentions' of the product within. As consumers are increasingly drawn to SLS-free paraben-free and organic ingredients, so must the packaging reflect that demand. For oral healthcare brand Ordo, the holistic focus of the product means the packaging is a continuation of that. Billed as the freshest oral-care subscription plans delivered straight to your door', US-based Ordo launched in the UK in early 2018. With a sleek, battery-powered toothbrush - available in white silver or rose gold - the brand delivers a new recyclable brush head and toothpaste every two months.



So Eco is great for the environment



explains, IrDr Bronner's makes careful considerations about the impact

packaging may have on the safety and quality of our product.

In selecting the packaging materials for our virgin coconut oil, we chose materials that minimised potential carry over of undesirable chemicals and that met food safety quality standards. Our glass jars are currently produced in a facility certified to ISO-quality standards and comply with FDA regulations regarding food packaging. Our current packaging does not contain BPA in direct contact with the oil. Also, the inner seal is made from wood pulp and wax, thus avoiding the use of soft PVC, which usually contains phthalates and plasticisers.»

## Companies that ate clean inside and out

Thinking responsibly about the environment is not a new thing, but it is an increasingly widespread phenomenon. Take the cult US soap brand Dr Bronner's. It's been creating its distinctive, top-selling brand of natural soap for more than 70 years, and its passion for using responsible packaging has been a core part of its long-term integrity.

“For fast-growing cosmetic brush brand So Eco, a passion for environmental responsibility impacts every aspect of its offering, with the product and the packaging all carefully created using ‘planet friendly’ ingredients and materials.”

The iconic labels on Dr Bronner's namesake soaps include various ‘distillations’ of his philosophy, which includes the statement, ‘In all that we do, let us be generous, fair and loving to spaceship Earth and all its inhabitants. For we're all-one or none. All-one.’ Dr Bronner's exclusively uses 100% post-consumer rPET bottles for all its liquid soaps, and its latest launch sees the introduction of food packaging-grade glass jars for its Organic Whole Kernel Coconut Oil product.

Gere Leson, a fair-trade and sustainability expert at the company

## A new brand of responsible glamour

For fast-growing cosmetic brush brand So Eco, a passion for environmental responsibility impacts every aspect of its offering, with the product and the packaging all carefully created using ‘planet friendly’ ingredients and materials. As an eco-friendly make-up brand, So Eco places an emphasis on the components being 100% responsibly and ethically sourced. The brushes have bamboo handles and the bristles are made from high-quality taklon, making them soft and cruelty-free.

## Not just a diet: the vegan beauty trend

So Eco's brand spokesperson, Johanna King, says, «The So Eco packaging has been as carefully considered as the brushes. The brand uses corn starch windows instead of plastic inserts, and the boxes are made from recycled and sustainable materials that are compostable, recyclable and biodegradable. We also use eco-friendly vegetable inks for printing, and the boxes are stuck using solvent-free, water-based adhesives.»

King continues, “Veganism became one of the biggest trends of 2017; it goes beyond diet to clothing, footwear and beauty products. The call for more ethically aware and cruelty-free brands in the beauty sector is clear. Many vegan beauty lines are becoming aware of their carbon footprint and beginning to take a stand regarding an all-round ethical consideration. There's a shift in packaging, too; vegan beauty brands typically use less plastic and often feature entirely recyclable packaging.»

King says, “All our So Eco eye and face kits are housed in 100% recyclable, sustainable and responsibly sourced cotton. All of the product and transit packaging is responsible, too with all materials from PEFC sources. The problem of excessive packaging has been heavily featured in the media. Waste reduction targets and the environmental legacy that products create are factors that we must all address. Our approach incorporates eco-focused principles that ensure a lower impact on the environment through responsibly sourced packaging.”

Responsible packaging isn't an ‘us and them’ issue. It's an all of us’ issue. Everyone has a role to play in promoting and encouraging effective use of packaging and making smart choices when it comes to the materials used to create it in the first place. Lightweight bottles use less plastic. Biodegradable packaging doesn't add stress to landfill. Studies show even reusable cotton bags have to be reused more than 100 times to account for the added resources used to produce them, when compared with a single-use plastic bag. Choose carefully, and reuse carefully. ■



Soap brand Dr Bronner's has always had an environmentally friendly philosophy