



CAMPBELL ARNOTT'S

Few Tim Tam fans would have noticed the changes to the packaging of the iconic Australian biscuits when the Campbell Arnott's packaging team switched from using nine different inks to just four to create the look of the pack.

However, for the food and beverage manufacturer, the new design and printing process was an important test of the potential environmental gains that innovations in packaging can deliver. The new film and packaging process for their high volume Tim Tam range didn't disappoint: the annual savings included 11 tonnes of ink, a 20% reduction in water consumption and energy usage, and a switch to solvent free inks and a water-based adhesive.

For a business that relies heavily on the sales of biscuits and snacks, plastic packaging is vital for maintaining product freshness, quality and longevity. 'It's a fine balance act', says Conny Morgan, Campbell Arnott's Program Manager Packaging – Savoury, 'between preventing food waste and reducing packaging'.

Given rising public concerns over waste, especially lightweight plastics that can leak into the environment, Campbell Arnott's is fielding an increasing number of customer inquiries about their packaging.

While internal changes like the latest Tim Tam packs are reducing the environmental footprint of Campbell Arnott's packaging – and earned the FMCG organisation two APCO Awards in 2018 – the company also needed a way to communicate clearly with their consumers.

The Australasian Recycling Label (ARL) solution

This came in the form of the Australasian Recycling Label (ARL), which is now being rolled out across all Campbell Arnott's products.

'It's a real game changer in defining packaging choices – and in clearing up consumer confusion about recycling,' says Ms Morgan.

Campbell Arnott's has actively worked to methodically assess the recyclability of their packaging using the Packaging Recyclability Evaluation Portal (PREP), a resource available to APCO Members, enabling them to confidently determine the optimum recycling and disposal routes for every different material and piece of packaging across their range. Some unexpected results have also proved useful for forward planning.

'We were surprised that certain packs we had thought were recyclable were in fact not,' says Ms Morgan.

'We've also learnt that dark coloured plastics might not be picked up by scanners in recycling plants.'

The Australian Recycling Label (ARL) is 'A real game changer in defining packaging choices – and in clearing up consumer confusion about recycling,' according to Conny Morgan, Campbell Arnott's Program Manager Packaging – Savoury.

That's enabled suggestions of dark coloured trays, that are often favoured for the look of premium products, to be rejected in the planning stage, to ensure maximum recyclability. PREP and the ARL are helping Campbell Arnott's 'make informed decisions when developing packaging', says Ms Morgan.

For consumers, the ARL is 'a great tool', she says. 'It's easy to use and understand, and highlights the recyclability of packaging – prior to the ARL we had a range of recycling logos which we feel led to consumer confusion.'

'The ARL logos are easy to identify and understand – so will clear up confusion regarding disposal.'

Soft plastics – the missing link in recycling solutions

For products like biscuits and snacks, soft plastics are critical for freshness and for confidence in shelf life. However, they cannot be put in kerbside recycling bins anywhere in Australia. The ARL has filled an important missing step in the process, by directing consumers to 'Return to Store' those soft plastic items to a system of collection bins within retail stores run by REDcycle.

Campbell Arnott's, a member of REDcycle, is pleased with the noticeable increase in the volume of their soft plastic wrappers being recovered via the 'Return to Store' route. The company has also installed REDcycle bins at head office and have trained their entire staff on soft plastics recycling. In 2018 the recovery of Arnott's branded packaging through REDcycle increased by 54%, to 18 tonnes.

However, the overall soft plastics recycling rates remain low. The APCO Soft Plastics Working Group noted in 2018, the multiple challenges of limited collection and drop off points, safety regulations preventing recycled soft plastics being reused for food or drinks, technical issues and a recycling rate of about 14% (2015-16).

'While schemes like REDcycle do a fantastic job, we are very keen to increase the annual tonnage of our (soft plastics) packaging that's collected – it still represents only a small percentage of what goes into general waste bins (so into landfill),' says Ms Morgan.

Part of the solution is education, so consumers understand the benefits of collecting their soft

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plastics at home, then returning them to stores when they have, say, accumulated a full bag.

However, compared to kerbside bins, the additional steps involved in taking soft plastics back to stores are a barrier for many consumers. It was this issue, in particular, that prompted Campbell Arnott's to take part in APCO's Soft Plastics Working Group.

'We believe access to the collection and recycling of all types of plastics needs to be a key focus area,' says Ms Morgan.

Campbell Arnott's is also constantly investigating more environmentally friendly packaging formats and whether innovations, like the new Tim Tam packs, can deliver benefits without affecting quality, brand recognition or consumer experiences.

Another recent gain was made by moving away from bleached Chinese corrugated cardboard made from virgin wood fibres. Instead this packaging component is now provided using recycled Australian board sourced in Sydney. The switch, implemented in just six months, avoided the import of 1488 tonnes of bleached virgin board for 186 SKUs in 2018. The extension of the scheme in 2019 has seen an additional 204 tonnes of packaging manufactured from domestic recycled material, rather than overseas virgin material.

In addition, Campbell Arnott's has introduced mandatory sustainability training for its internal packaging team, part of the suite of initiatives that led the company to winning APCO's 2018 Food and Beverage Sector Award and Outstanding Achievement in Packaging Design Award.

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