

Pressure-Sensitive Labels Reseal the Deal

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Consumers increasingly want a way to reclose their perishable-content packages without resorting to either rubber-banding, chip clips, or transferring the contents to a storage container.

For more than a decade, companies have answered the call by offering their products in slider/zipper packages with enthusiastic consumer response. Yet, many companies are precluded from participating in this trend due to financial and other factors.

Many medium to small companies simply cannot justify the cost of slider/zipper applicators coupled with the price of the material. In addition, zipper material can slow packaging-line throughput because of the additional seal time needed to weld the extra layer of zipper material to the bag. Plus, pre-applied zippers often require former modifications and more roll changes due to the zipper material's added thickness.

A cost-effective alternative is pressure-sensitive reseal labels, which cost just pennies per package and offer consumers an easy way to reclose bags. In addition, the same labeling equipment that can apply reseal labels can double as a traditional on-pack labeler to apply promotional labels.

Sticky situation

Pressure-sensitive reseal labels should find particular appeal among companies working within lower profit margins, such as makers of pasta, potato chips, and even certain candies. Some coffee makers are utilizing the approach, too.

These types of labels vary in size and shape. In fact, it seems anything goes. In addition to the freedom this offers in terms of container size, reseal labels also can tout messages. However, this currently is an underutilized aspect that few companies have seized upon and instead typically place the reseal label on product backs—causing consumers to sometimes miss its presence altogether. Some companies, though, are putting messages on product fronts, such as “resealable package” or “resealable tape on back.”

Perhaps more companies will pick up on the reseal label's promotional possibilities and begin moving them to the front of packages with demographically appealing messages. For example, senior citizens with

limited mobility might find the slider/zipper packages difficult to line up and close. Reseal labels that are repositionable represent a much more user-friendly solution. In addition, reseal labels can offer 8 to 12 openings/closings of the package.

As in many things, perception can be everything. Consumers like the idea of zippers, believing such products offer an opportunity for complete closure. In reality, once a bag is opened, the freshness is compromised. Nothing is ever the same once that heat seal is broken. Basically, it's going to keep as long as if it were closed using a rubber band and the sticky seal will keep it closed just as well as a zipper.

Outside of freshness factors, a sticker offers a seal to protect, say, a bag of snacks from spilling out when children are rummaging through the cupboard looking for cookies. Would a zipper on a chip bag offer better protection?

Nice numbers

Perceptions aside, there are the numbers that, when compared side-by-side, demonstrate reseal labels can offer multi-tiered savings and benefits.

Lower material cost—Reseal labels in quantity cost 1 to 3 cents per package versus zippers, which can add anywhere from 3 to 7 cents to the cost of a package.

Decreased application-equipment cost—A pressure-sensitive labeler easily integrated into any flexible packaging line (horizontal or vertical) can be purchased for half the cost of a machine capable of applying reclosable zippers.

No throughput loss—Running a zipper along the top of a flexible bag, for instance, increases the thickness of the area the heated jaws need to close. This requires more heat, greater pressure and increased time, which might compromise throughput by as much as 2 to 3 percent. Reseal labels can be machine-applied at rates matching and exceeding even today's higher speed form-fill-seal machinery, and because the label is applied to the body of the bag, no additional seal time is required.

Less waste—During the aforementioned welding process, out at the very edge where zipper material goes, the material needs to be held back. Imagine heat-sealed jaws coming together with the last 16th of an inch on each end of the zipper not within the sealed area. These

“margins” can cause “leakers” due to faulty sealing. If the seal isn’t formed properly and completely across the bag, the material might be able to be recycled but the costs of packaging film have been lost.

Small footprint—Labeling equipment has been designed to take up less room versus larger equipment needed for zipper-making equipment.

Bottom line: Reseal labels are easy to use and reclose. Just peel and reseal.

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