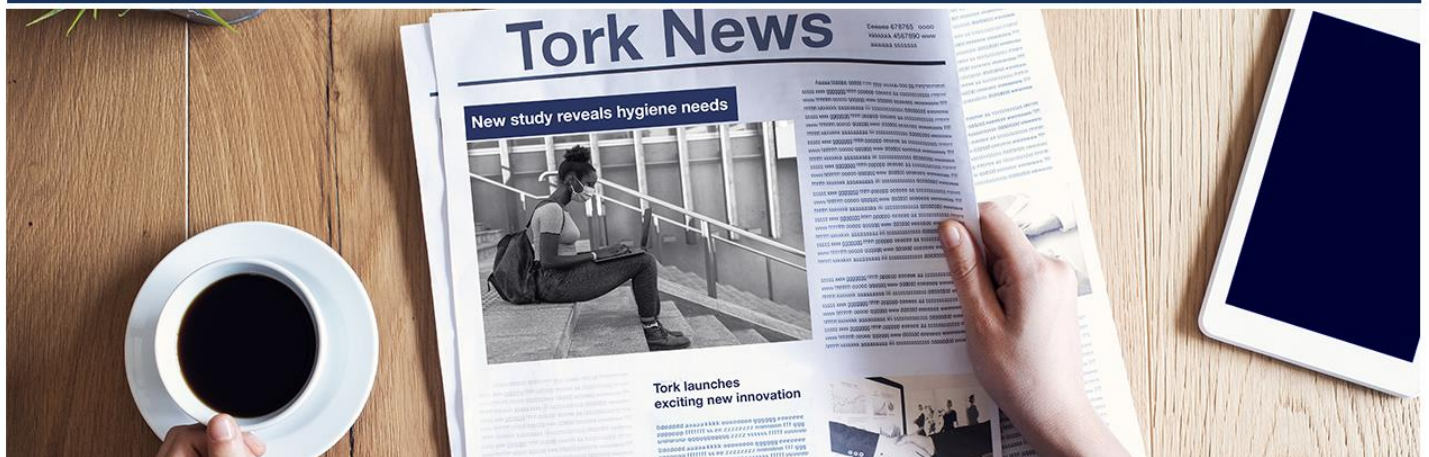


TorkHighlights



Rethinking Packaging



Packaging is often the first physical touchpoint a customer has with a brand and product - the form, function, and branding of the packaging can be very influential on a purchasing decision. However, packaging has a massive sustainability problem that can't be ignored. Today the world produces [400 million tons of plastic waste annually](#), 36% of which is from packaging and 85% of which ends up in landfills or as unregulated waste.

Rethinking how we package products can improve the sustainability and [circularity](#) of these materials, address health concerns like microplastics and antimicrobial-resistant bacteria along the way, and even provide an improved business case.

With that in mind, let's dive into four trends and innovations in sustainable packaging that will define the future of the category.

1. Reducing and recycling plastic packaging

The biggest concern – and area for potential impact – is to reduce waste from plastic packaging by using less material and ensuring it's recyclable. In Europe, the packaging recycling rate was [64% in 2020](#), but only [16% globally](#), showing significant progress in some areas but a long way to go on the whole.

To improve this rate and make recycling simpler for consumers, Essity, maker of the Tork brand, has been stepping up to transition plastic packaging to be fully recyclable and made of recycled materials, with the goal of having [100% recyclable packaging by 2025](#). Towards this goal we have made significant progress, with recyclable packaging making up [81% of our](#)

[total and 73% of our plastic packaging in 2021.](#)

2. Making strides with mono-materials

Another way to improve the recyclability and overall circularity of packaging is through the use of mono-materials. Mono-material packaging – or packaging that contains just a single material in its composition – reduces the amount of material needed for packaging, but also improves recyclability, reducing cost for manufacturers and effort for recyclers.

One example of this is [Essity's partnership with Mondi and Dow](#) to introduce mono-material packaging for our feminine care product range in Asia under the Nana (Libresse/Bodyform) brand. This change improved recycling rate packaging by nearly 50%, along with reducing unit weight and material cost.

3. Biodegradable and repurposable packaging

Biodegradable packaging is an emerging field with many new opportunities, but one example is [Ecovative Design](#), which is pioneering a styrofoam alternative made from mushroom roots that can be composted so that when the packaging cannot be recycled, it breaks down naturally over time.

It's also important to consider all the ways in which materials can be reused beyond just packaging itself. For example, today [90% of Tork packaging](#) worldwide is recyclable and made from renewable resources such as paper and cardboard, providing new opportunities to use the packaging in further applications down the line.



4. Antimicrobial awareness and innovation

Antimicrobial packaging is becoming an [emerging trend](#) in the food industry, but also has applications in health products, especially among growing concerns of surface-transmissible diseases and antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

At Essity, [we have been working closely](#) with global organizations on awareness campaigns like the World Health Organization's (WHO) [World Antimicrobial Awareness Week](#), and have developed packaging with antimicrobial properties, such as spools for [Leukoplast tape](#).

Looking ahead

As past trends show, [development in packaging](#) is driven by consumer preferences that dictate innovation and change. From lower costs and smaller packages at the expense of sustainability, to billions of new consumers causing a boom in demand, to the current focus on transforming packaging, the businesses that will lead the change and reap the benefits are the ones who embrace sustainability trends and integrate them holistically.

Learn more about Essity Sustainability: <https://www.essity.com/sustainability/>

Learn more about Tork Sustainability: www.torkusa.com/sustainability