

Seafood Expo North America and Seafood Processing North America

EXPO TODAY

Brought to you by:  SeafoodSource

THE OFFICIAL SHOW PUBLICATION

SEAFOOD AT ITS BEST

AT NORTH AMERICA'S
LARGEST SEAFOOD EXPO



PAGE 8

Shuttle Schedule



PAGE 34

Expo Floor Map



PAGE 38

Boston Dining Guide



PAGE 46

Conference Schedule

 **Panamei**
SEAFOOD

More than Just Seafood™

March 11-13, 2018

Visit us
at booth **1051**



Seafood Expo
NORTH AMERICA





Seafood packaging innovations meld to modern market trends

By Madelyn Kearns

We eat
with our eyes.

It's a truth intrinsically known to food packagers across industries, who dedicate ample amounts of time and scores of resources toward attracting the hungry eyes of shoppers searching for their next meal. A deftly executed package can have a profound impact on a company's profit margin. It can also be the difference-maker in dismantling long-held consumer skepticism when it comes to seafood, according to packaging experts and innovators.

"Modern consumers look upon fish and seafood with a striking ambivalence. The category is associated with a modern and healthy lifestyle, yet at the same time [consumers] think of fish and seafood as the scariest source of protein," global packaging developer Bemis Company argued in its whitepaper, "Overcome the Consumer's Fear of Fish Through Packaging."

Where seafood is concerned, consumers are spoiled for choice to the point of confusion, and possess an aversion to the way it smells and its messy handling, the Bemis whitepaper found. However, much of what "scares"

consumers away from the fish and shellfish counter can be combatted with sophisticated packaging that champions the same values of the protein it houses, according to Lee Coffey, the product manager for Bemis North America.

"The modern consumer is looking for packaging that is easy to use (easy open/close, re-sealable, portionable/individually-wrapped), effective (leak-proof, easy to handle), informative (nutrition facts, cooking instructions), and sustainable (recyclable, reusable, extends shelf life/reduces waste). Companies that combine these features with unique, eye-catching packaging will continue to win in a competitive retail environment," Coffey said.

"As consumers look to adopt healthier eating habits, the seafood industry has a tremendous opportunity to provide products and packaging that make seafood preparation



Lee Coffey



more simple, while touting the health benefits of eating more seafood," he added.

Modern developments in the seafood packaging realm are becoming more complex and more attuned to the social

inclinations touted by consumers as well as the retail and foodservice key buyers who shop for them. But to understand what's to come in seafood packaging innovation, both on the consumer and distribution sides of things, it's important to look back at segments of the seafood packaging sector's roots.

Pack to the future

There's a lot of difference 50 years can make. Packaging Products Corporation (PPC) President Ted Heidenreich knows this well. Back in 1961, when Heidenreich's father founded the New Bedford, Massachusetts-based family business, perishable fresh seafood was typically shipped in wooden or waxed boxes,



stamped with simple, bold lettering, traveling maybe two days at most by truck from company headquarters.

"When our business began in 1961, wooden or waxed boxes were the only way to package fresh seafood, but at the time fresh seafood did not travel more than a two-day truck ride from New England," Heidenreich recalled.

While fresh seafood was on the go, it wasn't going very far just yet. Thus, perishables packaging developers were tasked with thinking inside, outside, and all around the box to help fresh and frozen seafood to truly go the distance. To this effect, PPC developed insulated packages and gel inserts that allowed for fresh seafood products to make it onto supermarket trucks carrying dry goods, and then onto airplanes in the

1980s. Packaging innovations such as these helped to extend the market reach afforded to fresh seafood in particular, Heidenreich explained.

"Supermarket trucks carrying dry goods could...take these dry insulated shippers without the wet drip that was common with iced seafood, which increased the ability of the supermarkets to receive good fresh seafood," Heidenreich said. "In the early [1980s], the airlines started carrying these self-contained insulated shippers around the country and eventually around the world."

Advancements in refrigeration and cold-chain technologies have allowed for PPC, which helps seafood suppliers design packages for distribution, to create and embrace shipping solutions such as its Plastic Corrugated and

Wax Alternative box products, and its standard In-Mold Labeling (IML) plastic gallon containers for shellfish – all of which are not only water-resistant and quality secure, but recyclable and brand customizable.

"Two drivers have influenced the developments of Plastic Corrugated for the seafood industry: The increased desire for recycled solutions across all seafood applications, and enhancements of the cold chain requiring less insulation," Heidenreich said, touching upon one of the other major influencers, next to technology, driving modern seafood packaging developments of all kinds: sustainability.

Sustaining innovation

An increased sensibility toward sustainability and eco-friendliness among consumers,

(Continued on page 64)



SeafoodSource
PREMIUM

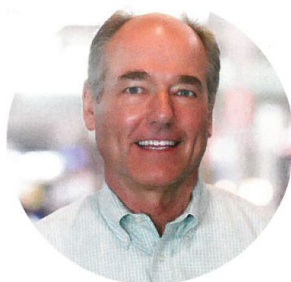
Knowledge shouldn't break the bank.

Join the industry's most affordable membership community.

NOW OFFERED FOR EVEN LESS WITH A SPECIAL AT-SHOW PRICE.

Visit Booth #1301 to explore SeafoodSource Premium and take advantage of this great membership deal.

Produced by: **di.ersified**



Ted Heidenreich

"Our customers are promoting sustainable seafood and they want to package that seafood with an eco-friendly solution."

distributors, and the seafood industry alike has been a major influencer of the paradigm shift seen in packaging developments over recent years. Nowadays, seafood packaging is being tailored to fit modern consumer, retailer and industry preferences for preserving the environment, according to Heidenreich.

"Sustainability of seafood has been a good and strong trend promoting a healthy seafood resource for generations to come," he said. "The same idea is now focusing on the sustainability of packaging used to protect and ship the seafood. Our customers are promoting sustainable seafood and they want to package that seafood with an eco-friendly solution. Recyclable packaging is much more than a trend, as it is truly where innovations are continually developing across all seafood applications."

Concern for sustainable practices from all areas of the supply chain are expected to continue to increase, according to consumer-facing packager Bemis. "It is an intricate business to balance ease of access and ease of handling with environmental concerns, food safety, and ultimately, the attractiveness of the product once on display in the store. "The complexity even continues to increase as both the demand for fresh food and environmental concerns grow stronger," the company said in its recent whitepaper.

What's next?

Consumer-facing packages, as well as retail- and foodservice-facing packages for seafood, are being framed to showcase not only the product quality and its sustainability, but its



branding as well. Moving forward, emphasis on packaging branding all along the supply chain will be key – and that means even at the distribution level, according to Gretta H. McGrath, PPC's director of marketing.

"Today, our customers realize the importance of building their brand to stand out in a huge and confusing marketplace," said McGrath, who represents the third generation of Heidenreichs at PPC. "Seafood is expensive and the competition is fierce, so using high-end graphics to promote your brand and deliver your message is a very important consideration."

"When you look at the shipping docks of the largest seafood distributors, or walk the aisles of a wholesale provider like Restaurant Depot, you see the importance of using smart design to deliver clear branding and audience communication," McGrath added.

As for what consumers want to see in a seafood package moving forward, Bemis' Coffey highlighted trends in convenience, transparency, and freshness.

"Consumers are demanding more easy-to-prepare, convenient, healthy, and flavorful meals. As a result, we're seeing more products that are portioned/pre-cut to size, seasoned/marinated, and combine multiple components, ingredients, and sides into a single packaging," Coffey said. Packages that are ovenable have proven attractive in this regard as well, according to Coffey and Bemis.

The consumer desire for transparency, particularly as it relates to fresh seafood, is also picking up steam. Case-ready vacuum skin-packaging that "gives the consumers the ability to easily see and touch the product"



Gretta H. McGrath

"Seafood is expensive and the competition is fierce, so using high-end graphics to promote your brand and deliver your message is a very important consideration."

has been gaining a lot of interest, Coffey said, as has packaging that "provides a more local, crafty, or artisanal appearance." Packaging that tackles these elements, such as Bemis' 10K OTR vacuum-skin pack, has been very popular among retailers in addition to consumers, Coffey said, "as product can be prepared and packaged at a central processor, eliminating in-store preparation, cross-contamination risk, and high shrinkage rates."

Watch out for packaging innovations that have brought success to the candy and baby wipe industries, Coffey said, as they could soon be applied to seafood. "EZ Peel Reseal packaging has been popular in other markets, such as baby wipes, candy, deli meats, and many more, and could potentially make its way into seafood as well," he said. 