

CONFERENCE COVERAGE



INNOVATION INTERESTS THE CROWD AS NEW POUCHES TAKE CENTER STAGE

A combination carton-zipper-film called the *ZipBox*. The fast-growing use of a new baby food package. A foldable water-bottle replacement.

These are but three of the new pouch innovations showcased at the **2010 Global Pouch Forum**, as the format continues to gather market steam as one of the fastest growing areas of packaging.

Neil Kozarsky, president/ceo of **T.H.E.M.**, said at the event that “for us as an industry to have obvious value to consumers or to CPGs (consumer packaged goods companies), we have to do more in mainstream society with rapid change.”

Kozarsky’s packaging innovations firm is doing that with *ZipBox*, a morphing of several formats to create a new package. At the Forum, Kozarsky announced a partnership with **Zip-Pak** to support zipper and machinery systems for the novel container, with also includes partnerships with **Bemis** for film and cartoners **Malnove** and **Yeaman**.

The *ZipBox* concept is simple yet complex. A paperboard carton is married to a press-to-close zipper and incorporates film instead of an inner liner. The total systems approach marries the convenience of a zipper, the fill speeds and cube efficiency of a carton, and the protection of film. Existing equipment, while needing to be repurposed and modified, can be used instead of having to develop a new infrastructure for production, Kozarsky said.

Kozarsky echoed the thoughts of Global Pouch Forum keynote speaker John Baumann, president/ceo of **Ampac**, who said disruptive technologies and innovations were needed for pouches. Brand owners already are looking at the *ZipBox*, and applications in food applications could be available by the end of the year, he added.

Several new pouch innovations also were discussed at the event. Neil Grimmer, co-founder and chief innovation officer of San Francisco-based **The Nest Collective**, discussed the emergence of the pouch for baby and kids foods. The company has gained market traction with its *Plum Organics* and *Revolution Foods* pouches, both of which are selling well in the natural and organics retail space.

“This is a commoditized category with low margins and little differentiation, and user experience has been less than desirable,” Grimmer said at the conference. The advent of the spouted, gusseted pouch, using a *Cheer Pack* design, caught Grimmer’s attention when developing the new brand.

At the Forum, Grimmer unveiled the next stage of its *Plum Organics* baby food, a pouch with a plastic spoon screwed to



Neil Grimmer of *The Nest Collective* said his company’s *Plum Organics* line is a departure from commodity baby food packaging

the spouted cap. The new package drew applause from the crowd for its inventiveness.

A third innovation, that of a foldable, refillable, and washable pouched water container, was introduced by Jason Carignan, co-founder and managing director of **Vapur**, Westlake Village, CA. In a panel discussion at the Forum, Carignan said the new concept offers a solution in the emerging area of refillable beverage containers and avoids issues with the landfilling of empty water bottles.

It has been 20 years since **Hosokawa Yoko** presented its *Cheer Pack* concept at the **Interpack** show in Germany and helped

launched the advent of the spouted pouch worldwide.

But if a presentation at the Forum was any indication, the Japanese converter is not resting on its laurels. The conference featured a candid talk from Hosokawa Yoko managing director Toru Ichikawa and global manager Kenji Nagata on future innovations in the pouch.

The pair discussed several recent pouch innovations, a few of which are already beginning work on North American shores. Ichikawa mentioned the *Corner Zip*, a pouch with a side zipper that allows only a portion of the bag to be opened for ease of dispensing..

Another newer application is the *Soft Bottle*, a flexible replacement for a rigid container, with canister-shaped sides and a pump dispenser.

Several other Hosokawa Yoko developed are moving faster in the global sphere. Its *Fancy Cut* pouch uses a notch-free opening and a directional tear feature. The format is rolling out to North America. **Bemis’ Curwood** unit has a technology license with Hosokawa Yoko to commercialize the package.

Packaging Strategies’

Perspective: *New innovations in pouches continue to make this a category with as much growth potential as any area of packaging. PS*

New pouch innovations for baby food (Plum Organics), water packaging (Vapur), and food (Zipbox, merging the carton and the pouch) are emerging in North America.

