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Kenvue Prioritizes Plastics As Part of Healthy Lives Mission

by [David Ridley](#)

Plastics – specifically the reduction of virgin plastic in packaging and the move to recyclable or refillable packaging – is one of nine priority topics Kenvue is focused on as part of its global sustainability strategy, according to the company's global head of packaging innovation, sustainability and experience, David Lickstein.

The global consumer health industry is under huge pressure to go green over the next few years and is facing a multitude of regulations, for example as part of the European Union Green Deal.

One such piece of related legislation is the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive, which proposes that all packaging should be recyclable by 2030, with special provisions for medicines packaging, which would need to also be recyclable by 2035. (Also see "[EU Packaging Regulation Presents Challenge And Opportunity For Consumer Health Industry](#)" - HBW Insight, 28 Mar, 2023.)

Currently in trilogue negotiations, it is looking like medicines will be exempt until at least 2035, at which point the European Commission may check whether the development of materials and the recycling process have progressed and may adjust this exemption accordingly. (Also see "[EU Parliament Stricter Than Council On Medicines And Medical Devices Packaging](#)" - HBW Insight, 28 Mar, 2024.)

Nevertheless, companies have been put on notice that they will need to come up with alternatives to single-use plastics, for example, in blister packs, or find a way to collect and recycle these at scale.

In this exclusive interview, we get a view from a major consumer health company whose own sustainability goals – tracked in its recently published [Healthy Lives Mission report](#) – promise 100% recyclable or refillable packaging by 2025, and a 50% reduction of virgin plastic in



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packaging by 2030 from a 2020 baseline.

Kenvue has already reduced the volume of virgin plastic in packaging by 21% (versus a 2020 baseline year), the company's global head of packaging innovation, sustainability and experience, David Lickstein, tells HBW Insight.

In some cases, for example its OGX hair care brand, packaging is now 100% recyclable. As a result, the brand "acts as a platform model to all our global brands and paves the way for Kenvue to be a leader in superior sustainable packaging," Lickstein explains.

Like others who have spoken out about the tricky sustainable packaging issue, Lickstein emphasises collaboration as the "key to success." (Also see "[AESGP Annual Meeting: Sustainability Optional Now, But Not For Long, Warns Haleon](#)" - HBW Insight, 31 May, 2023.)

"By working with our insights and innovation teams, suppliers and external partnerships, and even co-creating with our consumers, we're able to create value for people, planet, and Kenvue," he comments.

Q Kenvue has committed to achieving 100% recyclable or refillable packaging by 2025 and significant reductions in virgin plastic use. Could you elaborate on the strategic importance of sustainable packaging within Kenvue's Healthy Lives Mission?

A

Kenvue's Healthy Lives Mission – which is our environmental, social and governance (ESG) strategy – aims to advance the well-being of both people and our planet as we recognize that healthy people need a healthy planet on which to thrive now, and for future generations. Within our Healthy Lives Mission, plastics is one of nine priority topics we're focused on to help manage the impacts we create and safeguard the earth's health and resources..

Innovative packaging that uses less, refills more, recycles easily or replaces virgin material with renewable or recycled feedstocks, has widely informed our approach

and is helping to drive progress against our Healthy Lives Mission plastics goals. In 2023, we reduced the volume of virgin plastic in packaging by 21% (versus a 2020 baseline year).

Q What are the main challenges Kenvue faces in transitioning to sustainable packaging solutions, and what innovative approaches is the company exploring to overcome these challenges?

A

We aim to introduce more sustainable packaging across our portfolio and innovate in a way that delivers delightful brand consumer experiences and solves unmet needs. Sustainable packaging has opened new pathways for material innovation and formats for consumers to experience our products. We lean into several initiatives that address better material selection including advanced design techniques, refill experiences, and recyclable decoration methods. Collaboration has been the key to success; by working with our insights and innovation teams, suppliers and external partnerships, and even co-creating with our consumers, we're able to create value for people, planet, and Kenvue. A few examples that highlight Healthy Lives Mission strategy in action recently are:

- OGX's new packaging that is launching in multiple markets. The new packaging design improves consumer experience with better material efficiency for ease of dispensing and formula evacuation. OGX is a great example how our brands are driving Kenvue's HLM commitments: the bottles are now made with up to 100% recycled plastic and the entire package is designed for recycling. It acts as a platform model to all our global brands and paves the way for Kenvue to be a leader in superior sustainable packaging.

- Many of our brands offer refillable solutions and reusable packaging options as well. Johnson's Baby head-to-toe wash & shampoo has launched a paper-based carton that is recyclable and uses 88% less plastics than purchasing new pump bottles each time. Our brands see refills as a growth opportunity to engage with consumers

and have our products “always available” in the home. Aveeno and Neutrogena both have resealable pouch products for body wash and facial cleansing, with a spout designed to easily transfer the formula from the pouch into the bottle.

Q How does Kenvue measure the environmental impact of its packaging choices? Can you share some insights into the metrics used to track progress towards your packaging sustainability goals?

A

As part of our Healthy Lives Mission, we’ve committed that 75% of new product development, using scientific principles, will have an improved environmental performance by 2030. Applying scientific life cycle assessment principles to our packaging design is critical to achieve this goal. Kenvue is developing new internal assessment tool – our Sustainable Innovation Profiler (SIP) – which will assess how new products deliver against our Healthy Lives Mission commitments with improved environmental performance, seeking to future-proof products by promoting the adoption of sustainable ingredients and packaging materials.

We are a member of the EcoBeautyScore Consortium, an international, voluntary initiative of more than 70 cosmetic industry stakeholders, which aims to develop an environmental impact assessment and scoring system for cosmetic products. The Consortium was created to enable consumers to make more informed and sustainable choices about the products they use and address growing expectations from stakeholders for enhanced transparency. (Also see "[Global Beauty Consortium For Eco-Scoring Products Is 36 Companies Strong; Prototype By Year-End](#)" - HBW Insight, 1 Mar, 2022.)

We’ve also signed the EMF Global Plastics Commitment in 2020, which is the basis for our 2025 and 2030 virgin plastic reduction, recyclable and refillable packaging goals. As a member of the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) Plastic Waste Coalition of Action, our design process is aligned with the CGF Golden Design Rules.

Q How does Kenvue collaborate with suppliers and partners to ensure the adoption of sustainable packaging practices throughout your supply chain? What role does supplier engagement play in achieving your packaging goals?

A

We work collaboratively with suppliers to drive more sustainable innovations and make a bigger impact than we can achieve alone. We share our Healthy Lives Mission goals and commitments with them, establish joint business plans and brief them on specific sustainability requirements to drive progress towards those goals and commitments.

Q How does Kenvue educate consumers about the importance of sustainable packaging, and what steps are taken to ensure transparency regarding packaging materials and their environmental impact?

A

Research shows that sustainability is a top concern for consumers. Specifically, they're concerned about climate change, health and plastic pollution. We can help consumers understand the environmental benefits of more sustainable choices like refills and do it in a way that's easy to understand. We are focused on developing brand communication and product stories that highlight consumer and sustainability benefits. Our goal is to connect with people on an empathetic level, while delivering efficacious products to ensure consumer and brand loyalty.