



BEYOND THE BOX

Phil Wild, Chief Executive Officer, at James Cropper, shares five predictions for the future of cosmetics packaging

The modern consumer is paving the way for a future that is innovative, safe and sustainable. If brands want to keep up, they'll need to play a meaningful role and deliver products that are in line with this vision.

The cosmetics industry has to adapt to revised consumer expectations. We are living in unprecedented times. Even before the COVID-19 crisis, our world was full of disruption; from technology shifts and digitisation, to Gen Z and the evolution of consumer preferences. To remain successful brand managers, innovation teams, and designers will need to adapt to a 'new normal.'

They will need to find solutions and adjust to the exponential growth of digital channels born from living in lockdowns and with ongoing social distancing restrictions; the wellness megatrend evolving to encapsulate the provenance and ethics of packaging as well as products; and the rise of environmental sensitivities. And that's just to name a few.

Our moulded fibre packaging solution, [COLOURFORM™](#) is an example of how future-gazing can drive innovation. It exists to reconcile the need for plastic-free, sustainable packaging with the desire for premium and bespoke aesthetics. Likewise, the creation of uncoated papers made from 100% post-consumer waste for beauty and cosmetic packaging is a further demonstration. The new Rydal Collection from James Cropper answers demand for more recycled content in packaging.

As we try to anticipate the 'new normal' and beyond, we partnered with futurologist Dr Ian Pearson to help us identify the top five predictions for the future of beauty and cosmetics packaging.

1. Augmented reality

It's only a matter of time before augmented reality (AR) becomes part of our everyday lives. Last year, global beauty retailer, Sephora, unveiled its 3D AR mirror at a selection of its standalone kiosks, which simulates cosmetics on a user's face, in real-time.

In the next decade, we can expect to see this technology make its way from stores to packaging. By holding an eyeshadow palette or box of hair dye, shoppers will have a visual representation of the make-up looks that they can create, or their hair in another colour, displayed in front of them. Giving consumers the power to see products come to life helps to rapidly shorten that purchase decision and also hopefully eliminate unnecessary purchasing.



AR also presents an important after-sale opportunity. It can show the consumer the 'what's next'; providing a full understanding of what the product and packaging is made of, how it's manufactured and what can be done with it after primary use. This could go a long way in reducing the confusion around how to recycle correctly and will both engage and educate consumers in a way that isn't possible through the limited on-pack communication we have available today.

2. Recyclable and biodegradable solutions

Sustainability is now a mega-trend and has been building momentum for some time.

We have witnessed an increasing demand for change in sustainable packaging, particularly from the cosmetics industry. Brands, such as Floral Street, are trying to change the status quo by using our paper fibre solutions to offer products with no cello-wrap, no printed cards; just beautiful moulded boxes that are easy to recycle.

Looking to the future, we can expect to see biodegradable solutions take a whole new meaning. We are already seeing 'natural' innovations dominate the packaging industry, such as Skipping Rocks Lab's edible and biodegradable seaweed packaging used in the food and beverage industry. What we might see in the beauty world are pods of mouthwash packaged in dissolvable seaweed, or exfoliants sold in packaging containing nutrients and seeds which can be planted in the garden to sprout fauna and herbs over time.

3. Packaging with a second life

Due to the rise in social influencer 'unboxing' videos, consumers have come to expect the same experience with their own purchases. In the future, beauty brands need to strike the balance between offering an experience while cutting down on excessive packaging.

To do so, brands should be clever in offering reusable and refillable packaging of a very high quality. An example of a company already doing so is global cosmetics company LUSH, who approached us with a brief to create a standalone box that would hold a selection of solid bath oils. The packaging would be 100% recyclable and work as a 'pick-n-mix'; enabling customers to choose their own selection of products, carry them home and re-use the box on their next visit to any LUSH store. This environmentally friendly solution adds a personal touch to the consumer experience. In future, we can expect to see beauty retailers offer 'naked' products in store, with reusable packaging available across their ranges.

4. Technology leads the way

Cosmetics brands will continue to borrow inspiration from the interactions that consumers have with tech products, such as lipsticks and bottles which are designed



to open with a scrolling or swiping gesture. We're already seeing these ideas emerge, with products such as the 'You Perfume Solid' from Glossier or the ergonomic packaging from Lilah B on the market.

Technology will also drive the use of innovative materials, such as shape-memory alloys and polymers which will act as packaging before being reconfigured to a shape for another purpose. Think of mascara wands which can be cleaned and transformed into combs, or electric toothbrush packaging which can be used as the product's stand or charger.

5. In-built product protection

As we emerge from Covid-19 we expect to see demand for technology that can create packaging which protects against potentially harmful micro-organisms transferred by touch.

Anti-microbial solutions have been used in healthcare products for centuries, and our [anti-microbial paper](#) protection is a great example of what could be useful for packaging in a retail environment or subject to multiple product handling in the supply chain. The paper is specially treated with a silver compound that is proven to be safe and effective against the growth of micro-organisms, such as the anti-biotic resistant 'superbug' MRSA, E-coli and the Norovirus.

The anti-microbial system is encapsulated into the papers and boards during manufacture and remains active for the life of the product. This means it cannot be washed or rubbed off. This sort of technology will be particularly helpful now and in the future for beauty packaging that may be handled multiple times.

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ABOUT COLOURFORM™

[COLOURFORM™](#) is a thermoformed, plastic-free, moulded fibre packaging innovation. It has been developed by James Cropper in response to the needs of premium brands who want to deliver a quality, unique and sustainable customer experience.

COLOURFORM™ uses 100% natural renewable wood fibres from well-managed forests and high-quality recycled fibres from its own world-class reclaimed fibre plant, giving new life to waste from a variety of sources including used coffee cups.

The COLOURFORM™ team brings together some of the most experienced craftsmen, colour scientists, engineers and sustainable innovators in this industry. Our expert in-house designers will take a brands' brief, create beautiful concepts to inspire discussion and ultimately produce technical designs ready to turn their aspirations into reality.

We use colour, texture, form, functionality and surface effects - this is part of our tool kit - but the magic is in the skill of our in-house designers, our colour specialists, our machine operators and the partnerships we have developed. Enhanced functionality and versatility plus unique colour, textures and surface finishes tailored to a brands' requirements.



COLOURFORM™ can challenge traditional approaches to packaging.

ABOUT JAMES CROPPER

[James Cropper](#) is a prestige paper innovator based in the English Lake District, supplying distinct, custom-made paper products to many of the world's leading luxury brands, art galleries and designers.

Throughout 175 years of high-quality paper production, the business has been carefully stewarded and nurtured by six generations of the Cropper family and is renowned globally for individual expertise in colour, dedicated responses to the most challenging custom projects and award-winning commitment to the highest standards of sustainability.

James Cropper is a member of the Paper Cup Recovery & Recycling Group (PCRRG), a cross-industry group that exists to develop collection and recycling opportunities for paper cups and identify and support solutions that sustainably transform used paper cups into a valuable resource. For more information, visit www.pcrreg.uk

