

# TRENDS & ANALYSIS

## Custom Thermoforming lets P&G open niche for Pringles



Specially shaped thermoformed cups keep chips fresh and help prevent breaking. Red and green colors—carefully matched from plastic cup to foil lid—indicate the two initial flavors in the line: Original and Sour Cream & Onion respectively.

Seeing the potential for significant sales in a new market niche, Procter & Gamble Global Snacks Group is testing a new portion pack for Pringles potato chips. The September launch was timed to coincide with back-to-school lunchbox sales.

Pringles breaks from its traditional composite can with a custom thermoformed cup with easy-peel foil lidding. Holding about a dozen chips, this pre-packaged size better meets the convenience needs of today's busy consumers.

Mary Carmen Gasco, senior product development engineer for Global Snacks at P&G, tells us the custom designed thermoformed container was chosen as the best option to achieve the project's goals:

- It's fun and consistent with the Pringles equity.

- It's available for a different occasion, specifically the lunchbox and other on-the-go snacking events.
- It's more convenient. The portion-control size is small enough to fit in the lunchbox or backpack so parents don't have to transfer the chips into a sandwich bag.
- It protects the product. The rigid cup helps prevent chips from breaking and keeps them fresh. The polypropylene cup—coextruded with an unspecified barrier material—offers an extended shelf life with the necessary protection against light, oxygen and moisture.

Gasco emphasizes that this project was a collaborative effort across functions within P&G, as well as with its trade customers and suppliers. Winpak Portion Packaging, Inc. is a supplier of

thermoformed barrier cups for this project. Winpak recently completed a \$10 million plant addition to include a second machine for coextruding and forming packages in-line. And a third machine is being installed now.

Jim O'Rourke, senior purchasing manager for Global Snacks Packaging, says, "It's been a fun project. I can't say enough of the professional capabilities of the suppliers. We are encouraged by initial consumer feedback and look forward to learning more from the test market"

The Pringles portion pack will be sold in two multipack sizes: 8 and 24. Paul Leonard, assistant brand manager for Pringles, explains, "We're introducing the sizes that best meet the needs of consumers and our trade customers."

Here's one opportunity that this package opened up: The cups will appear in Kraft's Oscar Mayer "Mega" Lunchables kit.

The company may explore other opportunities in the future, too, including sales of individual cups in convenience stores and possibly vending machines. **F&DP**



Winpak Portion Packaging, Inc.  
828A Newtown-Yardley Road, Suite 101  
Newtown, PA 18940-1785

Voice 267-685-8200  
Fax 267-685-8243  
E-mail [info@wpp.winpak.com](mailto:info@wpp.winpak.com)  
Website [www.winpak.com](http://www.winpak.com)