

Food & beverage plastic packaging crisis demands holistic response

Reducing the amount of plastic waste generated by the food and beverage industry requires a cohesive approach that openly acknowledges the complexity of the issue, according to Sagentia, a Science Group company.

The science and technology specialist – sister company of Leatherhead Food Research – says interdepartmental front-end planning is a critical first step, combined with an understanding of the important multifunctional role plastic often plays. Without a deeply-rooted and integrated approach, gaps in the ability to replace, reduce or reengineer plastic packaging will remain unclosed. Consequently, plastic reduction initiatives will fail to properly address the issue.

In a move to help the industry tackle these problems, scientists and engineers across the whole of Science Group have been working on solutions. These involve science, materials, regulation, design, compatibility across different industries and true multi-faceted innovation.

This has led to the development of a white paper, [‘Breaking up with plastic’](#), launched by Sagentia today. It outlines a three-phase technical framework to facilitate the reduction of plastic packaging, and is available to download free of charge.

Simon Norman, one of the paper’s authors and applied science consultant at Sagentia, says that in some cases it will be necessary to rethink the way products are presented, prepared or consumed.

“Much of the time food and beverage product development is considered separately to packaging development,” he explains. “But with such a siloed approach there is less opportunity to get to the crux of issues that result in the need for plastic packaging. Whether it’s pod coffee machine refills or ready meals with a ten-day shelf-life, different departments and specialists need to work together to reduce single-use plastic packaging.

“Addressing this issue requires consumer insight and understanding of the manufacturing and distribution stream, combined with scientific knowledge of the products themselves and properties of various packaging materials. And crucially, the industry needs to find ways to cut plastic waste without compromising important factors such as food safety and consumer enjoyment.”

Breaking up with plastic, Technical steps to rethink, replace and reduce plastic packaging is available at <https://www.sagentia.com/insight/breaking-up-with-plastic/>

Ends

21 May, 2018

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Notes to editors:

About Science Group plc

Science Group plc (AIM:SAG) provides independent advisory and advanced product development services focused on science and technology initiatives. Our specialist companies, Sagentia, Oakland Innovation, OTM Consulting, Leatherhead Food Research and TSG Consulting, collaborate closely with their clients in key vertical markets to deliver clear returns on technology and R&D investments. With more than 400 staff worldwide, primarily scientists and engineers, the Group has R&D centres in Cambridge and Epsom with more than ten additional offices in Europe and North America.

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About Sagentia

Sagentia is a global science, product and technology development company. Our mission is to help companies maximise the value of their investments in R&D. We partner with clients in the consumer, industrial, medical and oil & gas sectors to help them understand the technology and market landscape, decide their future strategy, solve the complex science and technology challenges and deliver commercially successful products.

Sagentia employs over 150 scientists, engineers and market experts and is a Science Group company. Science Group provides independent advisory and leading-edge product development services focused on science and technology initiatives. It has 14 European and North American offices, two UK-based dedicated R&D innovation centres and more than 400 employees. Other Science Group companies include OTM Consulting, Oakland Innovation, Leatherhead Food Research & TSG Consulting.