

I ncreasing brand consciousness and customised medicine: New challenges for pharmaceutical packaging

Modern pharmaceutical packaging involves the efficient coordination of a wide range of disciplines. Requirements are rising constantly: growing brand awareness also for drugs, convenience, authenticity safeguards, customisation and service are the trends dominating tomorrow's pharmaceuticals market.

OTC products have long since been subject to the classic rules of the fast-moving consumer goods market where packaging design and branding play a central role in marketing. Now the producers of ethical drugs are also starting to develop individual brand images – a trend now particularly reflected in packaging. An increasing number of patients are now demonstrating their brand awareness when consulting their doctors and are demanding familiar brand-name drugs. Graphic art and processing technology ensure the necessary recognition level amongst patients – authenticity being an indispensable requisite here. On international markets, in particular, these recognition levels are of paramount importance for globally distributed brands.

High-impact solutions are those primarily gaining importance here. These ensure correct dosage and convenient handling for patients thereby creating added value for end users providing a clear competitive edge over products from other brands. Moreover, packaging today is a key means to ensuring correct dosage: hard-to-open bottles or complicated instruction inserts can become obstacles. Novel packaging ideas are designed to promote correct dosage use which is why wallets are enjoying increasingly widespread use: they make it possible for blisters and key dosage instructions to be packed together in an easy to understand way for patients 'on the go'. Simplified, patient-friendly dosage handling can also strengthen customer loyalty to a specific branded drug.



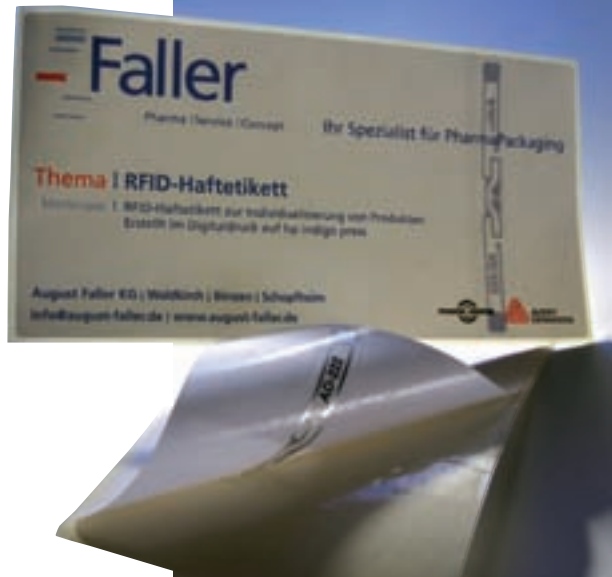
Schering responds to current requirements on the pharmaceuticals market: More and more patients demonstrate brand consciousness by demanding familiar name drugs they know and trust. Schering places its oral contraceptive product under the "aida" brand in upgraded, patient-friendly power-brand packaging.

Schering reagierte auf aktuelle Anforderungen im Pharmamarkt: Immer mehr Patienten treten markenbewusst auf und verlangen das Medikament ihres Vertrauens. Schering positioniert seine Anti-Baby-Pille als Produktmarke „aida“ in einer markenstarken, veredelten und patientenfreundlichen Verpackung.

In parallel with this altered consumer behaviour the legal regulations governing the traceability of drugs are also getting tighter: while the FDA may currently be setting the pace no technical standard is available as yet. Over time experts expect RFID technology to be the clear winner: Track & Trace aims to not only provide quality control for the goods flow but also provide protection against drug counterfeiting. The issue of authenticity safeguards has played and will continue to play a crucial role in pharmaceutical packaging.

Individualisation on the health care market is thought to be another mega-trend for the years ahead. Customised drugs, so-called genomics, will present these players in the pharmaceutical value chain with new challenges. A combination of customised drug dosages geared to individual patient requirements is considered an important option for cost cutting since only the individual's actual drug needs are catered to here. The basis for this new, personalised medicine is the decoding of the human genome and the digitalisation of measuring methods at laboratories and clinics. The customised combination of active agents this entails will also inevitably make custom manufacturing a necessity. "In about ten years customisation will become relevant for packaging production," forecasts Dr. Michael Faller, General Manager of August Faller KG.

This means more consulting, better service and comprehensive engineering competence are required to develop innovative packaging concepts that enable the industry to adapt to economic packaging needs. The "new" requirements for pharma-packaging such as traceability, safeguards against counterfeiting, international provisions on packaging, including various language versions or just-in-time production, are just some further examples for the growing degree of process management required from packaging producers. They will be networking with their customers more closely in the future and therefore will have to perform more up and downstream tasks of the actual manufacturing process such as EDP consulting for optimised artwork or improved quality management. Even at this early stage the packaging industry is called upon to not lose sight of these developments so as to be in a position to respond flexibly at the appropriate point in time to the inevitable changes and requirements ahead.



RFID is the response to ever more stringent requirements concerning drug traceability, Track & Trace not only improves quality assurance of the goods flow but also increases protection of drugs against counterfeiting.

RFID gibt die Antwort auf steigende Auflagen hinsichtlich der Rückverfolgbarkeit von Arzneimitteln. Track & Trace erhöht neben der Qualitätskontrolle des Warenflusses auch die Fälschungssicherheit von Pharmaka.