Target's New Sonoco-Made Cereal Container Named Package of the Year

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HARTSVILLE, S.C., Nov 10, 2008 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Food and Beverage Packaging magazine has named the sleek-shaped Linearpak(R) package that Sonoco designed and is producing exclusively for Target 2008 Package of the Year in the Food Category. It was also named one of 13 finalists in the Packaging Machinery Manufacturers Institute's PACK EXPO Selects awards program. This new cereal container is currently being featured in the Showcase of Packaging Innovations(TM) at the Pack Expo trade show in Chicago.

A significant first for the breakfast cereal category where bag-in-the-box packaging has long reigned supreme, the Linearpak container Target used to launch its Archer Farms(R) cereals is redefining the category.

Sonoco (NYSE: SON), one of the largest diversified global packaging companies, is supplying Target with a new size and footprint of its popular recycled paperboard Linearpak container. Tall and designed to fit comfortably in consumers' hands, the new Archer Farms package doesn't have corners. Instead, its edges are gently rounded, allowing its vibrant graphics to flow seamlessly around the container. It also has a hinged plastic overcap for easy pouring and reclosability, another first on the cereal aisle. And when consumers open the package, instead of a hard-to-open bag, they find a tabbed membrane that peels away from the top of the cereal container with just a gentle tug.

An Opportunity to Delight Cereal Customers

In 2006, Consumer Reports recognized traditional cereal boxes with an "Oyster Award," a distinction given annually to a handful of hard-to-open packages. Consumers surveyed said they didn't like opening the bag inside cereal boxes because cereal frequently ended up everywhere but in their bowl. They also didn't like the fact that the bags couldn't be securely closed, resulting in stale cereal.

Viewing consumers' complaints as an opportunity to differentiate itself in the cereal aisle, Target asked Sonoco to work with it to develop a better cereal package.

According to Charles Sullivan, executive vice president, Consumer, Sonoco, this was the first time Sonoco had worked directly with a retailer to solve a consumer complaint.

"This was right up our alley," said Sullivan. "Sonoco is technology-driven company, with tremendous package design, materials science and testing resources. Because we're vertically integrated and produce our own specialty paperboard, rigid containers, membrane closures, labels and opening systems, we felt certain we could meet Target's expectations."

Retail trendsetter Target is committed to delighting store "guests," its term for shoppers. According to Rodger Fuller, vice president of Sonoco's Global Rigid Paper and Closures, once the two companies agreed upon the new design for Archer Farms cereal, Sonoco produced prototype packages at its state-of-the-art Packaging Development Center in Hartsville and then subjected them to a battery of tests.

"The tests were necessary to ensure the new packages would meet or exceed the customer's expectations," said Fuller.

A Different Package, a Different Experience

Target differentiates its brands from competitors' using distinctive packaging. The Archer Farms Linearpak container expands this successful strategy by providing consumers with a unique presentation and value-adding features.

With its unique shape and crisp flexo-printed labels, the Archer Farms Linearpak container clearly communicates the premium nature of the product inside. Its custom-designed polypropylene overcap includes a patent-pending hinge feature for easy pouring, and the overcap hugs the rim of the container to keep cereal fresh after the package has been opened.

According to Fuller, Sonoco is supplying the entire packaging solution for Target's whole line of Archer Farms cereals: Linearpak container, peelable membrane closure and plastic overcap. "Our ability to design, test and produce a complete custom package from start to finish helped streamline a complicated project," said Fuller.

Target launched all 18 varieties of its Archer Farms cereal in Sonoco's award-winning Linearpak container.

About Target

Minneapolis-based Target Corporation's operations include large, general merchandise and food discount stores with a fully integrated online business through which it offers a fun and convenient shopping experience with thousands of highly differentiated and affordably priced items. The company currently operates 1,613 Target stores in 47 states. Target Corporation news releases are available at www.target.com.

About Sonoco

Founded in 1899, Sonoco (NYSE: SON) is a $4.0 billion global manufacturer of industrial and consumer products and provider of packaging services, with 334 operations in 35 countries, serving customers in some 85 nations. For more information on the Company, visit our Web site at http://www.sonoco.com/.

SOURCE: Sonoco

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