

# Regulations limit scope for tear tape branding and security

The EU's new Tobacco Products Directive (TPD2) limits tear tape's use for branding and promotion, but it also makes it harder to utilise it as a security feature on packaging. TJI spoke to leading tear tape producers, Essentra and Tann Paper, to hear their thoughts.

**T**ear tapes remain an integral part of cigarette packaging on a global basis, providing tamper evidence and ease of opening for consumers," says Robert Sykes, global product director, Essentra Tapes. "Demand for tear tape remains fairly stable on a volume basis, with some slight regional variations broadly offsetting each other. It is anticipated that demand will rise a little faster in the Asia Pacific region, with both Europe and the Americas in modest decline."

When considering functionality, Essentra classifies tear tape into three categories; unprinted, printed and security. Unprinted tear tapes carry no additional features and are used solely to provide easy opening functionality. Printed tear tapes are those that contain additional marketing messages. In some cases, this can take the form of brand information or even Variable Data Printing

(VDP) for use in promotional campaigns. Finally, security-related tear tapes carry more sophisticated security features, such as holograms or micro text, that help brand owners and governments identify counterfeit product more quickly. Looking to the future, Essentra expects that tear tapes will remain the most common and preferred option for pack opening in the tobacco sector.

## A shift towards commodity tear tapes in Europe

With regard to changes occurring in the tear tape market, TPD2 is expected to have implications for tear tape specification, although there still remains uncertainty as to the precise outcome. "Currently, TPD is

prescriptive in terms of the outer packaging materials, such as the wrapper and the tear tape, which it states must be plain in nature and preferably clear, explains Sykes. "As such, implementation will see a shift toward commodity tear tapes in Europe, reducing the scope for branding, promotions and the application of overt security features. Covert or invisible security features may increase in relevance as a result of plain packaging legislation. However, in the growth markets of Asia, the promotional and security solutions carried on tear tapes are increasingly in demand. Indeed, an increase in illicit trade is leading to greater interest in layered authentication technologies that can help both brand owners and governments ensure products are genuine, such as track and trace features, holograms, micro-text and other layered solutions."

Macro factors driving product development are, on the one hand, packaging responses to regulatory requirements and, on the other, the drive to combat counterfeiting in emerging countries. In addition, in markets that are not currently moving to standardised packaging, the opportunity exists to explore different ways of opening a pack through alternative application methods, which could be used to differentiate the consumer experience with a particular brand. Cost optimisation will be key in markets where tapes become commoditised as a result of regulation, says Sykes.

"In terms of product development, Essentra is further developing authentication technologies to provide



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layered solutions to help protect against illicit trade,” says Sykes. “And with regard to the future, whilst challenges exist, mainly due to regulatory uncertainty in the EU, the global outlook remains relatively stable in volume terms, and with certain regional growth opportunities related to brand protection.”

### Tear tape still an effective means of brand promotion

With increased regulations limiting the space usable for customer communication, tear tape remains one of the most effective ways to promote brand values and convey messages to customers. This applies to the purchasing process at the point of sale, as well as the post-purchase phase with the customer holding the pack in his or her hands. Even if, in future, legislation bars the opportunity to use tear tape as a marketing tool, the seemingly modest product will still be inordinately significant for the tobacco industry, as Ralf Schaffranke, sales director at Tann Germany, explains. “Even when regulation prevents the use of tear tape as a marketing tool, the expected high functionality, in terms of easy opening, will remain. Nowadays nobody underestimates the negative impact on brand image of the potential breakage of a woman's fingernail when trying to open a pack. A strong focus on cost effectiveness in terms of longer reel lengths and reductions in tape width, wherever possible, remain expected from the industry. Additional opportunities exist as tear tape is the ideal carrier for covert security features such as invisible UV inks or sophisticated taggants to protect the brands and, last but not least, the brand owners.”

Certain market segments, like water pipe (shisha) tobacco, show, an increased demand for both security of brand and brand awareness. Tann has developed and supplies combinations of overt security features like sophisticated print designs including micro text and fine line printing as well as special inks like OVI (optically variable ink)



inks, both to support brand values and to protect the brands against counterfeiting and plagiarism.

### Market-driven by both mature and emerging markets

In terms of drivers of development, Schaffranke says that the company's innovations and developments are driven by the requirements of both the mature and emerging markets. Finding solutions to particular market needs leads

to new project work, and this is a key factor that drives development. “Our continuous improvement programme, which runs across all departments, ensures that reductions in cost and improvements in manufacturing enable us to remain a competitive force with our standard production portfolio and enables new product development to be funded so that we can expand our product ranges,” he explains. “With regard to R&D, we are currently focusing on the development of sustainable and environmentally-friendly base materials made of renewable resources together with the further development and extension of our range of security features.”

As for the future, Schaffranke feels that industry consolidation will continue, together with a change in smoking habits in markets like Western Europe, and a general reduction in tobacco product volumes. “In order to further strengthen our position as a major supplier to the industry, we will continue our continuous improvement process, intensify our efforts and investments in more effective and competitive production methods and underpin our commitment to ‘go the extra mile’ for our customers,” he says.

Tim Glogan



(Above and below) examples of tear tape from Tann Paper

Photos: Tann Paper