

Æcorn Drinks Pillow Boxes Create Quite The Stir

Designed to recreate that pre-dinner excitement, Æcorn set about to create the perfect non-alcoholic Spritzes for those looking to enjoy an aperitif without the alcohol.

Seedlip Drinks - Æcorn's sister brand - are the originals in the non-alcoholic drinks category, and thanks to them the no - and low-alcohol sector has been gaining traction over the last few years. Like Seedlip, Æcorn's products are complex, sophisticated - meant for grown-ups who want to still enjoy a grown-up drink without consuming alcohol.

Æcorn are passionate about crafting their drinks: carefully hand-picking grapes from their Sussex vineyard to ensure their non-alcoholic alternatives still feature the distinguishing bitter flavours of aperitifs.

The packaging predicament

Seedlip Drinks have been long-time customers of Saxon Packaging, a division of Smurfit Kappa, so it made sense for Æcorn to build on their successful partnership when it came to their new drinks packaging brief.

Contacting the Saxon Packaging team in March 2021, Mary McAnaney, Brand Change Manager for Diageo, explained their drinks packaging requirements. Having previously worked for Seedlip, she was in a unique position to create packaging that was both cohesive with the sister brand but also stood out on its own.

Æcorn wanted packaging that truly represented the brand - it was to be used in collaboration with a popular recipe subscription box, and had to remain in consumers' minds. However, alongside style came form and function: it was imperative that the drinks arrived safely and in good condition.

The Saxon Packaging design team had plenty of packaging ideas and suggested a number of designs, each reviewed carefully by Æcorn. Ultimately, a Pillow Box packaging solution was decided upon.

Perks of a Pillow Box

Sleek, sturdy, and easy to use, a Pillow Box offers advantages both to the retailer and the end consumer. They are of particular interest within eCommerce due to their ability to reduce product damage during transit whilst also offering a unique, interesting shape with ample surface area for branding opportunities.

Popular with the retail and fashion industry, their name comes from their distinctive pillow-like shape - and their attractiveness can in part be ascribed to the fact that they're easy and quick to assemble. This means that packing processes can be streamlined. This is especially crucial for businesses that don't necessarily have huge warehouses in which to keep ready-assembled boxes in. It's also key for customers who want to reap the long-term cost benefits that come with saving significant amounts of time on the packing and filling process.

Easy-open packages also mean that consumers are more likely to think favourably about the brand - which is an especially important factor for promotional campaigns like this one, and eCommerce as a whole. The consumer journey doesn't end when they click purchase: ideally, that's when CRM strategies kick in to convert them into loyal, lifetime customers. Part of this is the unboxing experience, which has proven crucial to eCommerce success.

Their curvature and shape means companies see a reduction in product damage during transit - perfect for sending across the country. Plus, they create an interesting shape to make the brand stand out. In Æcorn's case, this is particularly important: they were sending their drinks as a promotion. Not only did the packaging have to stand out amongst the other products in the popular recipe subscription box, but it was Æcorn's one opportunity to be memorable and impress potential customers.



All shapes and sizes

This particular Pillow Pack would need to also have some unique features. Each pack would have to hold a mini Æcorn aperitif and a Schweppes can of tonic. It was important that neither could move around much in transit to prevent either flat tonic or a broken bottle, which was even more complicated as the two products are different sizes.

Thanks to our many years of experience in bespoke eCommerce packaging, at Smurfit Kappa we were able to suggest a solution: an internal fitting that secured both drink elements and provided consumers with a seamless unboxing experience.

The branding

With the Pillow Pack chosen, accompanied by a bespoke internal fitting providing additional protection, the next consideration was to make sure the packaging conveyed Æcorn's bright, bold branding.

Opting for a lively orange background - the colour of a perfect, summery yet non-alcoholic drink, the brand name, campaign slogan, and tagline were then emblazoned in eye-catching white, making use of every surface.

Due to the quantity of the order and the design requirements, it was recommended a digital print solution was used. Digital print offers a great range of colours, so the tell-tale orange could be just right. It's also an efficient and cost-effective way to fulfil smaller orders.

The result

"We have worked with Saxon Packaging for a number of years; their support throughout this project was seamless as ever. Saxon provided an innovative solution to a tricky and compact design, delivering within a tight deadline. We are thrilled with both the design and quality of the final pillow packs and have received great feedback from consumers. Thank you Saxon for your continued support!"

Mary McAnaney, Diageo.

"We thoroughly enjoyed working on this project. I'm delighted with how these boxes have turned out and look forward to supporting Æcorn with their packaging requirements as they continue to grow."

Dan Peek, Customer Services & Key Account Manager at Saxon Packaging

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