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On the Path to 100% Recyclable Packaging: Südzucker Puts its Faith in Koehler's Barrier Paper for their Sugar Sticks

- **Südzucker switches its sugar stick packaging material to Koehler NexPlus® barrier paper**
- **Seamless changeover of the packaging material on existing packaging lines**
- **Complete changeover in just four months**

Oberkirch/Germany, 03.18.2021—With Koehler NexPlus®, the Koehler Group is meeting the rapidly growing demand for sustainable packaging solutions - and this extends beyond just the food industry. Within the framework of an extensive sustainability project, Südzucker is changing all of its packaging to 100% recyclable solutions over the coming years. As part of this, Südzucker has changed the packaging material of its sugar sticks to Koehler NexPlus® Seal paper.

In 2021 sustainability has long ceased to be a niche topic, instead translating into a competitive advantage. Sustainable aspects are playing an increasingly important role in the consumer decision-making process. Today a large number of people are questioning their own consumer behavior and placing greater importance on sustainability when shopping. Retail is reacting to these changes in consumer behavior and is enhancing its sustainable product offering - with the term 'sustainability' no longer simply restricted to the product, but also shining a spotlight on the product packaging itself.

Koehler's barrier paper as a sustainable packaging solution

Koehler NexPlus® paper is characterized by its barrier coating with various capabilities. In particular, these include barriers for aroma, grease, oil, water vapor, or gases, which combine with the paper's inherent capabilities, such as high strength properties and a natural feel, to create a strong overall concept. The paper really delivers in terms of the primary purposes of packaging: to protect the contents and their surroundings as well as provide excellent processing properties.

Südzucker sets itself target of 100% recyclability for its packaging

Südzucker has historically prioritized using resources in a responsible way, with one of the company's objectives to steadily reduce the resource requirements and environmental impact of its business activities. Within the framework of an extensive sustainability project, all packaging will change to 100% recyclable solutions over the coming years. Tillmann Dörr, Food Technology Manager in the Research, Development, and Service division at Südzucker outlines: "Right at the very start, we sat down together with Koehler and established the must-have features that the packaging needed to include. Food packaging often ticks more boxes than is strictly necessary." Südzucker carried out a range of stress tests on

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samples of Koehler NexPlus® in order to verify the general product claims. These were followed by qualification tests on the existing packaging lines. “One of our requirements was for the new paper to be used on our existing packaging machines, with the same processing time and efficiency. With Koehler NexPlus® Seal 45 gsm, we’ve found the optimal solution,” continues Tillmann Dörr.

The advantage of Koehler’s NexPlus® barrier paper is that it is manufactured from sustainable raw materials. These materials can be fully fed back into the recycling loop - in operation for paper in many countries worldwide and also embraced by consumers. Eckhard Kallies, Director Flexible Packaging Paper Division at Koehler stresses: “Barrier paper is part of our future vision. Paper has an increasing number of capabilities that in the past only plastic could offer. And the difference with paper is that it has a much more sustainable life cycle.” An analysis of the life cycle of Koehler’s flexible packaging paper shows a significant reduction of CO₂ compared to conventional PE-coated paper and even plastic duplex products.

Another advantage of using Koehler NexPlus® for Südzucker’s sugar sticks is that the material has a lower grammage than the company’s previous solution. As a result, Südzucker is fulfilling its commitment to sustainability in two ways: not only by using sustainable packaging products, but also by using fewer resources in the process.

Südzucker switches sugar stick packaging in just four months

After passing the qualification phase and initial test quantities, all of the sugar stick packaging was changed over to Koehler NexPlus® after just a four-month test period. “By switching to a fully recyclable packaging solution, we’re meeting the goal we set ourselves on the one hand and responding to the tangible demand from our customers on the other,” adds Südzucker’s Tillmann Dörr. “Open and rapid communication was ultimately crucial for the swift implementation of this project, as was close coordination with Koehler”. The new sugar sticks have been in stores across Germany since late February 2021.

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More on the Koehler Group

The Koehler Group was founded in 1807 and has been family-run to this day. The Group's core area of business is the development and production of high-quality, specialty paper, including thermal paper, playing card board, drink coasters, fine paper, carbonless paper, recycled paper, decor paper, wood pulp board, sublimation paper, and, since 2019, innovative specialty paper for the packaging industry, too. In Germany, the Koehler Group, with its more than 2,000 employees, has five production sites, as well as three more in the USA. The Group operates on an international level, with an export ratio of 70% in 2019 and annual revenue of €900 million.

As an energy-intensive enterprise, Koehler invests in renewable energy projects such as wind energy, hydroelectric power and biomass. The Koehler Group has committed itself to producing more power from renewable sources than is needed for paper production by 2030.

Find more information at: <https://www.koehler.com>

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