Latest trends at Propak 2009

By Sibongile Gura

The 2009 Propak Africa, Pro-Plas Africa and Print Expo being held at the MTN Expo Centre at NASREC from 20-23 October, is an ideal platform for local and international exhibitors to network, exchange ideas and showcase their latest products, services, information and technological development trends across the combined industries. This year’s expo will provide a stimulating forum for trading, sourcing products and education-giving buyers leading edge information on global trends, advancements in technology, product development and marketing updates.

Propak Africa

Propak Africa is the largest and most successful packaging, printing, plastics, labelling and food processing exhibition to be held on the African continent and has skilfully harnessed the synergy and strengths of the inter-dependent industries. Buyers from Cape to Cairo get an opportunity to meet suppliers and manufacturers on neutral ground and each year the largest, most progressive industry players take part in the exhibition showcasing the latest trends, advancements in technology, product and systems development and market updates. As the audience numbers grow the response and feedback from exhibitors remains synonymous, the event is unparalleled and exceptional. Naeem Patel, director of Alternative Coding Solution said ‘Being a relative new supplier we needed additional exposure, which we have achieved through exhibiting at Propak Africa. We have received a lot of interest from visitors, now potential customers.’ Eptech director John Binedell said ‘the show brings our customers to us and gives us the opportunity of showcasing a lot of equipment. Propak Africa definitely works for us. 2007 was our best show ever.’ Propak Africa gives exhibitors a unique platform to launch new product ranges, get sales, discover what’s new and get the latest trends in the packaging, food processing and labelling industry.

Propak Africa visitor’s include buyers, manufacturers, retailers and wholesalers personnel who hold positions such as: directors, general managers, production mangers, food and packaging technologists and scientists, quality controllers, chemical engineers, marketing, advertising and sales personnel, farmers and laboratory technicians. The expo will showcase equipment, products and services that visitors can use to improve the production and marketing of their products and a high percentage is expected to attend for the purpose of making purchasing decisions for capital equipment.

Pro-Plas Africa Expo

There is great synergy between Propak Africa 2009 and Pro-Plas Africa Expo 2009 because 52% of plastic produced is for packaging. The plastic industry is a high-tech, multi-million dollar global industry that experiences constant change through innovation and invention as production techniques and materials become more advanced. The total South Africa plastic industry –from raw materials to converters to all other suppliers is valued at approximately ZAR33 billion per annum and contributes in excess of 4% to SA GDP.

The Pro-Plas Africa Expo 2009 promises to showcase the latest products, and global trends. This is yet another platform where local and international exhibitors can network, exchange ideas and display the latest products, information and technological developments trends. Manufacturers and suppliers will be exhibiting products and services that visitors can use to improve the production and marketing of their products. Exhibits will include plastic processing machinery such as, blow moulding and injection moulding machinery, chillers, converting equipment, extrusion equipment, feeders, processing aids, recycling equipment and various materials.

The Print Expo

The printing industry continues to be at the forefront of technological change, with the most noticeable area of change being the growing use of digital technologies and technology advancements in the areas of conventional printing. In SA the printing industry encompasses printing, paper and newspapers and naturally a relationship exists with the packaging industry. Printing is a broad spectrum
of companies, from small to very large print houses producing large runs and publishing magazines and books. The equipment used ranges from colour machines to ultra sophisticated eight colour presses operating in conventional printing and digital technologies.

The 2009 Print Expo is an essential forum for the printing and related industries and bridges the gap between conventional and state-of-the-art digital technology in the printing and associated industries and provides an insight into the latest trends and technologies, with a glimpse into the future world of print. The Expo will also highlight the latest international trends and innovations right across the board.

The exhibition will be based on products and services that visitors can use to improve their production lines and how they can best market their products. Exhibitions will include adhesives, bar-coding, book-binding, collating equipment, computer systems, converting machinery and drying systems just to name a few.

This year’s visitors will include directors, owners, general managers, production managers, administrators, buyers, estimators, machine minders and production assistants.

The Propak Africa, Pro-Plas Africa and Print Expo shows enjoy active support and recognition from the most reputable institutions in the industry. These include: The Institute of packaging in SA, The Packaging Council of SA, The Plastic Federation of SA, The Flexographic Technical Association of SA and the Printing Industries Federation South Africa (PIFSA).

What impact has decreasing sales projections had?

It isn’t a secret that the current economic downturn has resulted in numerous companies reporting lower sales projections. According to industry analysts EP Resources through its global industry-wide survey ‘Economic Crisis – Impact on the Packaging Industry’, sales projections show a continuing downward trend through 2009, with the rate of decline easing and recovery starting in 2010. More than half of all packaging producers surveyed reported a capital expenditure freeze during 2009, with the resulting negative impact on equipment sales.

Even though the plastic industry was affected there are reports of plant expansions and many molding companies using strategic acquisitions to diversify their business away from a heavy dependence on automotive. Some companies are reported to be taking up opportunities in alternative growth areas such as the small engine, appliance, and electronics markets, and the medical products sector, including disposables and infusion and instrumentation components, which remain a staple of the molding industry.

The food sector had weathered the economic storm until recently when a number of supermarkets were forced to expand their portfolio of budget foods as the demand for premium, value-based and niche foods decreased.

Chief Operating Officer at Specialised Exhibitions, Gary Corin says ‘Taking a firm, hard look at your business and coming up with a realistic set of solutions is what balances business risk.’ Corin added ‘If you take appropriate action, you can steer your business around this economic downturn and become a leaner, meaner, more competitive market player.’ ‘Packaging sales in the US and Europe plummeted to record lows in the final quarter of 2008, as most manufacturers reported sales declines of up to 20%,’ says Corin. ‘Packaging producers are projecting negative growth throughout 2009, with some recovery predicted for 2010, and, yes, there is reduced capital investment but selling hasn’t stopped, and products such as converting equipment at the top of the list, followed by printing presses (digital, offset, flexo and gravure), are still selling well. Other equipment purchases being budgeted for include labelling, prepress, CAD/CAM, inspection, filling and sealing, extrusion and molding machinery,’ he explains.

Even during these economically trying times companies are feeling the impact from the economy as well as customers who are choosing more environmentally friendly products. With a dire task of having to consider customer opinion and preference, companies are also forced to find alternative ways to not only increase profit margins and stay afloat but to offer their customers with what they want. Corin says ‘New trends, developments and products are emerging, and these will be seen at Propak Africa.’ And that ‘Industry players need to look at eco-friendly sustainable packaging to meet consumer demand, but these have to be carefully evaluated, as for every change to packaging there are both positive and negative consequences to be considered.’

A 2008 Datamonitor survey showed the majority of consumers across 15 countries agreed that contemporary packaging has become excessive. Ecological issues are firmly in the mainstream of society with over 75% of consumers stating that protecting the environment is important to them.

As more people look at environmentally friendly products new trends, developments and products emerge, forcing companies to adapt. The 2009 Propak Africa, Pro-Plas Africa and Print Expo is where all these trends will be showcased, giving companies a starting point.

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