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SHAREHOLDERS PUT PRESSURE ON THE FASHION INDUSTRY TO MOVE TO SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING

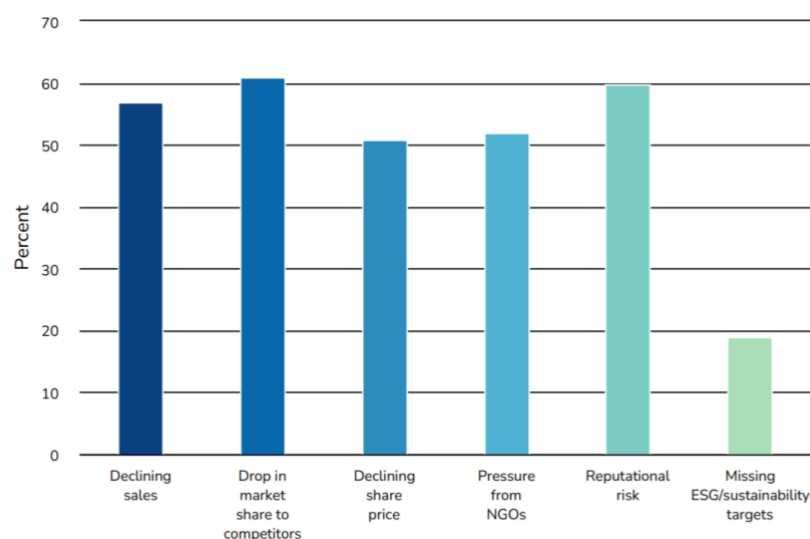
- *Research shows that failure to do so will result in loss of market share and reputational risk -*

Pressure from shareholders to use packaging which is more sustainable has increased over the past three years, according to a new [report¹](#) with board directors and senior executives who work for fashion brands and retailers in the UK, US and Australia, by Aquapak Polymers Ltd, which specialises in polymer-based material technologies. Almost three quarters (74%) said that pressure had increased, with a further 15% saying it had stayed the same, and just 11% said that it had decreased.

Furthermore, 28% expect shareholder pressure to switch away from plastic to more environmentally friendly materials such as paper to increase significantly over the next three years and 55% expect it to increase slightly. Just 15% expect it to remain the same and only 2% expect pressure to decrease.

The impact on their business if the environmental performance of the packaging used is not improved is significant, with executives identifying a drop in market share, reputational risk and declining sales as the three most likely negative outcomes. These are followed by pressure from NGOs, declining share price and missing sustainability targets.

If the business does not improve the sustainability of its packaging, what do you think the impact on the business will be?



The study also shows that executives are taking the adoption of sustainable packaging seriously, although there is room for improvement. One fifth said it was 'very good', three quarters described adoption as 'good' and 7% said it was 'average'.

Mark Lapping, CEO of Aquapak, comments: "The fashion industry is under pressure from a number of different stakeholders to improve packaging sustainability, not least its shareholders. Our research shows that this is set to increase over the next three years. The consequences of not embracing environmentally friendly materials will mean a negative effect on the bottom line as a result of losing market to share greener competitors and a serious dent in sales."

To help reduce plastic packaging pollution Aquapak has developed Hydropol™, a unique new polymer which is soluble and non-toxic to marine life. Hydropol™ can be used as an alternative to conventional plastic in a wide variety of applications as it provides the same functionality and performance but without the associated environmental problems. It is currently used to make products such as garment bags, offering all the necessary features of traditional polybags: strength and puncture resistance; clarity of film; and protection from leakages and dirt.

Crucially, Hydropol garment bags present zero end-of-life issues for consumers and brands. They can be disposed of in existing domestic waste streams without contaminating other recyclable products or they can be dissolved immediately in hot water at home without producing harmful micro-plastics. They are also compostable and degrade harmlessly on land or in the ocean.

To download the report, visit [New study reveals fashion retailers and brand are exploring sustainable packaging but there's room for improvement – aquapak \(aquapakpolymers.com\)](https://aquapakpolymers.com)

To find out more, visit www.aquapakpolymers.com

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Notes to editors

- 1 Research conducted by PureProfile with 100 board and senior executives, including CEOs, Retail Directors, Chief Operating Officers, Sustainability Directors and Finance Directors, in the UK, US and Australia in November 2023.

About Aquapak

Aquapak develops and manufactures a range of adaptive polymer-based material technologies that deliver both performance and environmental responsibility at scale. For example, it has developed Hydropol, an enabling technology for the circular economy, which is biodegradable, compostable and marine-safe, and used in a range of packaging materials. Aquapak's HQ and manufacturing centre is in Birmingham, UK, with its main geographical markets in the US, EU and Asia.

About Hydropol™ - Accelerating the transition to the Circular Economy

Who is using Hydropol?

Consumers and businesses are increasingly concerned about plastic pollution and environmental sustainability. Packaging producers need solutions. Aquapak has partnered with a growing base of clients in apparel, fashion, hospitality, healthcare, food packaging, logistics packaging, industrial, nonwovens, and other packaging.

What is Hydropol made from?

The base plastic is currently used for dishwasher tablets, ingestible pill casings and soluble stitches. Hydropol™'s resistance to low temperature solubility and high barrier to elements adds functionality, providing a wider range of uses. It can be recycled, re-pulped, composted and is distinctively compatible with anaerobic digestion. Furthermore, if unintentionally released into the natural environment, Hydropol™ – which is non-toxic and marine safe - will dissolve and subsequently biodegrade, leaving no trace.

What is Hydropol being used for?

Extrusion coatings and laminates for paper/board applications are commercially available and in customer production trial stages, including a number of home delivery and ecommerce applications, packaging for dried pet food, snacks, cooked meat and convenience food applications.

Blown film products commercially available and made from Hydropol™ include garment bags, ESD bags, organic waste disposal bags and laundry bags for infection control. These can be disposed of at home by the consumer in hot water or added to the recycling where they dissolve during the recycling wash processes.

Other applications under development with customers and development partners include injection moulded parts such as golf tees, nonwoven fibre for applications such as flushable wet wipes and cellulose combinations for thermoformed trays.

Contact

Clare Anderson

email: clare@andersoncommsconsultancy.com

mobile: +44 (0)7958 665 883 telephone: +44 (0)208 870 6412

twitter: @ClareLooker

