

Consumer trends foresight becoming reality: Case examples from food packaging

Petri Vasara

Poyry Management Consulting Oy, UK, *E-mail: petri.vasara@poyry.com*

Abstract

To stay competitive in a global market, any organisation needs to anticipate the most significant consumer trends which shape the business. Consumer trends foresight produces information which can also be applied and adapted to food packaging. Poyry has a long history in trend foresight work within many industries using proprietary tools. In our presentation, we first discuss current and emerging consumer trends relevant for food packaging based on our foresight tools. The presentation will give an comprehensive overview of the consumer trends relevant for the industry and foresight on rising themes. In the second part of the presentation, we solidify the case for the trends by presenting case examples from early adopters where the emerging trends have been met by e.g. new technology, user interfaces, sustainability measures, new bio- and nanomaterial, software solutions and new business models. As a conclusion, we present theses on what this all would mean for food packaging. The methodology of this research is suitable for multi-client environments, where various industrial stakeholders work together and try to understand the logic of supply-chain networks and value networks of the future [2, 4]. Thus, this approach is not a conventional corporate foresight approach, but serves broader value networks. From this standpoint, the article provides new perspectives to the fields of strategic and participatory foresight. Drivers of change are analysed, and a broader discussion about driven and identified implications is presented. This approach provides new competitive intelligence for companies and corporations. The methodology is very close to the Driving Forces Analysis (DFA), one of the most used foresight methods in the field of company/corporate foresight [26–29]. The focus of this article is on foresight aspects; company-level strategic and value-network questions are left to other publications.

Conventional trend impact analysis [1] often focus on quantitative impacts. This article emphasizes the qualitative aspects and implications of megatrends instead. This kind of qualitative foresight approach is suitable when the futures of supply-chain and value networks are analysed. For companies and corporations, identification of discontinuities, disruptive innovations, the need of creative accumulation and changes in path dependencies are vital strategy issues [3, 4]. This kind of foresight helps companies pay attention also to their dynamic capabilities. Thus, the approach can provide many competitive benefits for companies. The origins of packaging date back to the early history of mankind. From the earliest times people have sought to preserve what they hunted and gathered. For this purpose our ancestors created earthenware and leather pouches to store their food. Packaging has evolved substantially since, along with the development of our civilization. Packaging today has a large impact on our society and plays a vital role in today's lifestyle of most consumers. Production, logistics and marketing systems performance and functionality are dependent on packaging.