

# Two Sides North America Press Release

## ***Two Sides North America Survey Shows U.S. Consumers Believe Paper-based Packaging is Better for the Environment than Other Packaging Materials***

DAYTON, Ohio, June 26, 2023 – If you recently made a purchase online, you're not alone. The U.S. Department of Commerce reports that retail e-commerce sales topped \$272 billion in the first quarter of 2023, up 7.8% from the same period last year. Along with this continuing growth in online purchases comes an increasing awareness of the materials used to package and ship products, and the impact these materials have on the environment. A new survey commissioned by Two Sides North America and conducted by international research firm Toluna found that U.S. consumers believe paper-based packaging is better for the environment than other packaging materials.

### **Paper: The preferred and sustainable packaging choice**

Survey respondents were asked to rank their preferred packaging material (paper/cardboard, plastic, glass and metal) based on 15 environmental, aesthetic and practical attributes. Overall, paper/cardboard packaging was preferred for 10 of the 15 attributes, including all environmental attributes, with half of respondents saying paper/cardboard is better for the environment than other types of packaging. Consumers also preferred paper/cardboard packaging for being home compostable (59%) and easier to recycle (43%).

Glass packaging was preferred by consumers for four practical and aesthetic attributes, including being reusable (39%), having a preferred look and feel (39%), providing a better image for the brand (38%) and better protection (35%). 45% preferred metal packaging for being strong and robust. Plastic packaging was not preferred for any of the 15 attributes, and only one in 10 respondents believes plastic packaging is better for the environment.

### **Consumers demand that brands and retailers do more**

Brands and retailers play a crucial role in driving innovation and the use of recyclable packaging. In response to increasing consumer pressure to operate more sustainably, brands and retailers in many sectors, from wine, spirits and soft drinks to candy, cosmetics and apparel are shifting from plastic to paper packaging.

The survey found that 55% of consumers would buy more from brands and retailers who remove plastic from their packaging, up from 49% in 2021. 50% said they are actively taking steps to increase their use of paper packaging, up from 41% over the past two years. 47% said they would consider avoiding a retailer that is not actively trying to reduce their use of non-recyclable packaging, up from 39% in 2021.

“As the call for circular product life cycles grows louder, paper has always had a head start,” says Two Sides North America President Kathi Rowzie. “The paper industry’s longstanding and continuing investment in recycling infrastructure, support of community recycling programs and consumer education on what and how to recycle have transformed the circularity of paper-based packaging from vision to reality. At a time when there is growing alarm about the low recycled rates of other packaging materials, paper recycling is a striking exception.”

68% of paper and paper-based packaging in the United States gets recovered and recycled into new products, and that jumps to more than 91% for corrugated cardboard. In comparison, the U.S. Environmental Protection reports that plastics, glass and metals are recycled at just 9%, 25% and 34%, respectively.

*The 2023 Two Sides Trend Tracker Survey queried 1,000 respondents over age 18 across the United States. It is the second of Two Sides’ biennial trend tracker studies designed to explore and better understand consumer perceptions, behaviors and preferences related to the sustainability of paper products.*

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#### **About Two Sides North America**

Two Sides North America ([www.twosidesna.org](http://www.twosidesna.org)) is part of the non-profit Two Sides global network which includes more than 600 member companies across North America, South America, Latin America, Europe, Australia and South Africa. Our mission is to dispel common environmental misconceptions and to inspire and inform businesses and consumers with engaging, factual information about the inherent environmental sustainability and enduring value of print, paper and paper-based packaging.

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