



## Condiments – the power and potential of packaging

### More than just a sauce

Condiments and sauces can be seen on dinner tables across the globe. Although often overlooked, they can be key in adding colour, texture, taste and flavour to what is being consumed. However, the actual taste experience is often determined as much by the packaging and branding of the product as by its contents<sup>1</sup>. With packaging playing a key role in customer satisfaction and purchasing decisions<sup>2</sup>, what can manufacturers learn from consumer purchasing behaviour and how has packaging evolved to cope with the many demands now being placed on it?

### A growing market

Since salt and vinegar were first used to enhance the flavour of foods in ancient times, people have been hooked on condiments. From the Roman practice of crushing the innards of various fish and fermenting them in salt to create garum, to today's brightly coloured ketchups and mustards, a flourishing industry has grown.



A brief walk through any food store shows just how popular condiments have become over the years. Much time and investment is given to attracting the attention of shoppers in the condiments aisle and keeping them coming back for more. Despite its significant size, the global condiments market is projected to continue to expand, reaching USD 98.3 billion by 2024 and growing at a significant CAGR of 5.4% during the forecast period, 2019–2024.<sup>3</sup>

### The psychology of condiment packaging

With competition fierce for shelf space, condiments producers have had to get ever-more creative in how they attract shoppers to their products. Here are some of the ways that psychology plays a part in condiments packaging design.

Capturing consumer attention:

- Condiment colour – colour is typically used to guide a shopper's product search; whether it is the colour of the packaging, or the product itself, if it is in transparent packaging
- Iconic packaging shapes – the original octagonal glass Heinz ketchup or the Kikkoman soya sauce bottles show that having a distinctive shape can make an item stand out on the shelf
- A weighty solution – quality tends to be communicated via the weight of a product when the shopper picks it off the shelf, which is why many condiment producers choose glass to convey premium quality
- Punchy labels - it has been shown that if a packaging label is too 'busy', consumers will skip over it. This means a balance needs to be achieved between education and attractiveness on product labelling.

## Rising condiment stars

The popularity of condiments rises and falls. Here are the top 5 condiments in the UK and top 6 in the US at the moment.



## The changing face of condiment packaging

Even since the introduction of the octagonal glass Heinz ketchup bottle in 1889, packaging has played an important role in the marketing of condiment products. Although most condiments were originally packaged in glass, consumer convenience and the cost of transporting and storing heavy items have driven the growth of PET/HDPE bottles.



Squeezable condiment pouches have also begun to make an appearance. This is because they are light to transport and easy to use. Although in the present climate, the fact that they are single-use might impact their popularity. As well as convenience, consumer demographics are also driving continued change in condiment design, with the rise in single-person households increasing demand for smaller pack sizes.

The benefits of glass for condiment packaging:

- Glass conveys a premium image to consumers
- It is seen as easier to recycle or re-use and thus more sustainable by consumers

The benefits of HDPE and PET plastic for condiment packaging:

- Inverted bottles with plastic dispensing closures are easy to use
- Plastic condiment containers are more flexible, durable and lightweight than glass containers
- They are unbreakable and seen as more portable than glass

## Responding to changing demands

Originally most condiments were packaged in glass. The shift over recent years to plastic packaging has occurred due to the fact that it is cheaper than glass to produce and transport and offers customer convenience.

It wasn't until the early 2000's that the plastic bottle was turned on its head and a dispensing cap incorporated into its design. In fact, makers of Hunt's and Heinz ketchup had to educate customers on the benefits of an inverted bottle when the new packaging was launched to US consumers in 2002. The container's banner featured the strapline: 'Easy Squeeze! Stay Clean Cap with Squeeze Control.'

Although highly convenient for consumers, the inversion of condiments did present product integrity issues for producers. This is where a match made in heaven was formed – the plastic condiment bottle and the induction heat seal. As well as enabling a hermetic seal when the bottle is inverted, induction heat sealing also allows the plastic container to be light-weighted. This is of particular importance as producers seek to show improve their sustainability credentials.

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### Convenient condiments and induction heat seals

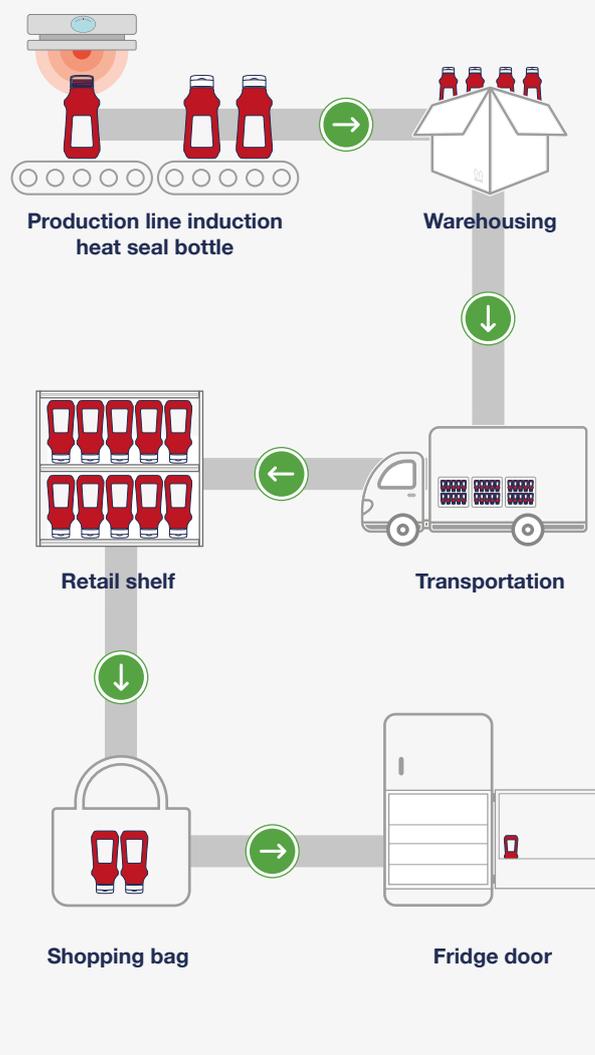
Induction sealing is a non-contact heating process. It works by attaching a liner seal material to the bottle neck of a container. As well as enabling the creation of a hermetic seal, induction heat sealing requires little, if any, modification to a producer's existing packaging line and promotes the product's shelf-life by protecting against moisture and oxygen ingress.

### Benefits for plastic and glass condiment packaging

While leakage prevention is often the primary driver for the adoption of induction foil seals in condiments packaging, there are other benefits to consider as well:

- It helps maintain the freshness of product
- It prevents accidental product contamination via moisture ingress during transportation or storage
- It provides tamper-evidence – the consumer can see if the product has been compromised in any way
- It promotes an 'easy open' experience - Selig's Lift 'n' Peel™ easy to open liner is particularly popular with condiment producers for this reason
- It offers the opportunity for brand reinforcement - through the use of bespoke branding on seals
- It enables the light-weighting of plastic packaging – by using an induction heat seal, the plastic packaging around the neck and cap can be reduced whilst maintaining the product's integrity
- It seals even the most oily condiments – thanks to Selig's GlassFuze™ technology, induction seals can even be used on oily condiments in both large and small glass containers. This enables a hermetic seal to be formed every time.

## Factory to fridge - the condiment journey



### Selig - tried and tested

As a global leader in induction sealing solutions, Selig has helped many producers resolve their condiment packaging seal challenges. Thanks to induction heat sealing, both plastic and glass condiment bottles and jars containing oily and non-oily foods alike can be sealed securely, with no leakage.

Although only a small part of the condiment packaging mix, the induction heat seal brings peace of mind to many manufacturers, so why not see if Selig can help you improve seal integrity, extend shelf-life and keep your customers happy too?

1 Source: The psychology of condiments: A review, Charles Spence, International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science 11 (2018) 41-48. <https://www.fortunebusinessinsights.com/industry-reports/food-packaging-market-101941>

2 <https://www.euromonitor.com/sauces-dressings-and-condiments-packaging>

3 <https://www.marketresearchfuture.com/reports/condiments-market-2799>

4 Source: Uber Eats, UK's favourite condiments, May 2019

5 Source: <https://qz.com/172019/ketchup-isnt-the-king-of-american-condiments-mayonnaise-is/>



### About Selig

Selig is a leading worldwide manufacturer of tamper evident cap and closure lining materials for use across a broad range of applications, such as food and beverage, pharmaceutical, agrochemical, cosmetics and healthcare. Selig's comprehensive range of both one- and two-piece structures means that they can manage even the most challenging applications with one of their customised aluminium foil/heat seal combination products. In addition, Selig offers a range of easy open products, which offer greatest convenience and product freshness to the consumer as well as product differentiation to the brand owner.

### Further information

For further information contact:

#### Selig Americas

184 Shuman Blvd  
Suite 310  
Naperville  
IL 60563  
USA

**T** +1 (630) 922-3158  
**E** [sales@seligsealing.com](mailto:sales@seligsealing.com)  
**W** [www.seligsealing.com](http://www.seligsealing.com)

#### Selig Europe

635-637 Ajax Avenue  
Slough Trading Estate  
Berkshire  
SL1 4BH  
UK

**T** +44 (0)1753 773000  
**E** [sales@seligsealing.com](mailto:sales@seligsealing.com)  
**W** [www.seligsealing.com](http://www.seligsealing.com)



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