



INTERVIEW



Mr. Gordan Millar
Founder Virtu~Pack

"Industry should change their perception that high quality & technically sophisticated packaging should be cheap"

PackagingConnections: What is your educational background? How did you get involved in the Packaging industry?

Mr. Millar: Educated in Scotland with further training to DMS and numerous commercial and technical training courses on a vocational basis. Although Virtu~Pack is a relatively new business, I and my associates each have over 25 years involvement in primary packaging and drug delivery.

PackagingConnections: Your key activities at work? What is the most rewarding part of your work?

Mr. Millar: Key activities at Virtu~Pack are product development with particular focus on drug delivery, packaging design and development. The consultancy side of the business is especially rewarding as it allows a complete overview and the ability to contribute to customer developments rather than only a part of it.

PackagingConnections: The most prestigious awards you have received? And the awards which meant the most to you.

Mr. Millar: We don't put ourselves forward for awards as most of our business is conducted in strict confidence. However, we are listed as a preferred specialist contractor by a number of major companies due to our range of expertise.

PackagingConnections: Your key achievements? Have you, or your organization, been recognized in any way for your great work?

Mr. Millar: Our key achievements are subject to confidentiality agreements so we rely on our clients being kind enough to spread the word. The most satisfying form of recognition is in knowing that clients return and depend on us for specialist advice and development work.



PackagingConnections: What unexpected costs and headaches have you had to deal with?

Mr. Millar: We have not yet met any unexpected costs as we are pretty thorough in researching project criteria and deliverables before commencing and are totally open with clients so nobody has any unpleasant surprises. IP protection and patenting can be prohibitively expensive but some Government funding is available with certain conditions attached. Oh, there was one. A prospective supplier "forgot" his wallet having invited me to lunch so I had to pick up the bill.

PackagingConnections: What is one thing about the industry that you would change?

Mr. Millar: The perception that high quality, technically sophisticated packaging should be cheap.

PackagingConnections: Where do you see the packaging industry in next 5 years?

Mr. Millar: In five years, I expect we in Europe will face many more restrictive and costly ill-considered regulations. There will be another round of mergers to achieve critical mass so that the packaging industry can shadow its key global customer base. I also envisage more customers pulling back from Chinese suppliers due to supply chain, quality and patent-infringement concerns whilst some will expect European manufacturers to match prices from the Far East. As a cost base, Europe will always be higher and this means the focus has to be on innovation, quality and high levels of customer service rather than "me too" products. That's what we work towards providing. Some of the large global companies will find this impossible as they need long-run machine fodder so

we hope to benefit due to our flexibility and responsiveness.

PackagingConnections: Could you share with us your key plans for the future?

Mr. Millar: Having started out as a development consultancy and facilitation business, we intend to concentrate on growing the packaging sales side. We see each as being complementary and supportive of the other and this will enable us to make an even more appealing offering to our clients. We are also looking at unique, innovative design work for drug delivery and dispensing and intend to seek appropriate manufacturing partners to adopt our concepts. . It is essential that we build on our growing reputation and key values which will always be quality, service, response time and flexibility. To date, most of our business has involved what may be described as a high degree of difficulty. It's quite nice to be recognized as "fixers" as anyone can do "simple" Our aim is to make it easy to deal with Virtu-Pack and if we can promote our niche expertise and grow from that platform, we should be in a good position.

PackagingConnections: What has been your biggest challenge? How did you overcome?

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Packaging Connections: What are three important tenets (Principles) that you work by when beginning a new packaging project?

Mr. Millar: Firstly, we ask questions and listen to the answers carefully so that all the criteria are fully understood. We like to spend time on the shop floor to gain an appreciation of how the client's factory operates and what is both possible and not really feasible. We only ever undertake work if we are entirely confident of delivering what has been agreed.

Packaging Connections: Your packaging dream?

Mr. Millar: The perfect, "intelligent" golf bag. This would keep clubs dry in the rain, incorporate a hot/cold blower responsive to temperature conditions, provide shade from the sun, select the correct club for each shot, keep the score of playing partners with a video replay to resolve disputes and give an encouraging cheer every time I make par or birdie. It would then automatically clean the clubs after the round has been completed and replenish itself with fresh balls and tees.

Packaging Connections: Any tips you want to share with the packaging professionals across globe?

Mr. Millar: Work only with quality companies and partners.

Innovate but don't go too "Blue Skies". Dreams are only profitable when they become reality. Otherwise they can become nightmares. Value the relationships you have built. They are your best advertisement. If things look impossible, try, try and try again – then go and play golf!

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For Disclaimer:

<http://www.packagingconnections.com/policy.htm>

