

## PACKAGING

## *The Evolution of Food Packaging: A Blend of Tradition and Innovation*

By Cath Isabedra



The food packaging industry has long been a dynamic field, balancing practicality, safety, and aesthetics. However, as we step into the modern era, companies like **Dow Packaging & Specialty Plastics** and **Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd. (DNP)** are redefining this balance through innovation and sustainability.

We spoke to **Bambang Candra of Dow** and **Yusuke Suga of DNP** to explore traditional approaches in food packaging while integrating modern innovations highlighted in the recent Packaging Innovation Awards (PIA).

The food packaging industry

stands at a pivotal crossroads, balancing traditional methodologies with innovative, sustainable practices. These insights provide a compelling narrative of this transformation. Let's explore the nuanced shifts and groundbreaking developments reshaping food packaging.

### **Bridging Traditional Methods with Modern Innovations**

Historically, the focus in food packaging has been on protection, preservation, and convenience. Materials like glass and plastic were popular for their durability and ease of use, but often at an environmental cost.

**Today, the industry is undergoing a significant shift, prioritizing sustainability alongside functionality.**

Candra highlights this evolution, emphasizing the Asia-Pacific region's emerging role as a hub of packaging innovation.

## DNP's Functional Film Complex PET Bottle: A Case Study in Sustainable Packaging

DNP's Functional Film Complex PET Bottle exemplifies this new era of packaging innovation. Suga describes their product as "a thoughtful use of packaging as a problem-solving medium," blending the best properties of glass with the practical benefits of PET.

**This product challenges the norms of traditional packaging by addressing environmental concerns without compromising user experience.**

### Consumer Response and Global Market Trends

The consumer reception to innovative packaging solutions like DNP's is a clear indicator of changing market dynamics. Suga notes that the surprise and positive customer feedback highlight an increased demand for packaging that balances functionality with environmental friendliness. This shift in consumer preferences is a critical signal for companies worldwide to adapt their packaging strategies accordingly.

Candra shares, "Dow believes that innovation is key to value chain collaboration, and the Packaging Innovation Awards is one example of how Dow facilitates innovation by inspiring the packaging industry with innovative ideas from different regions."

He adds, "Another example is Pack Studios, a unique platform designed to promote collaboration and accelerate the development of innovative packaging solutions that support the circular economy. This platform allows value chain partners to leverage Dow's technical expertise, broad product portfolio, and leading application testing capabilities. It also allows value chain partners to simplify the communication process between each other, diagnose the issues, and solve the problem, all whilst accelerating innovation speed."

The APAC region currently hosts three Pack Studios in Shanghai, Mumbai, and Singapore. This strategic vision demonstrates Dow's commitment to leading the industry toward more sustainable and collaborative practices.

### Quality Preservation and Sustainability: Striking a Balance

Packaging is crucial in preserving food and beverages with a rich heritage. Dow's work in Thailand and China showcases an acute understanding of balancing tradition with sustainability. Developing recyclable packaging that maintains product integrity while being environmentally responsible sets a new standard in the industry.

Designing packaging solutions requires a comprehensive approach. Factors like user accessibility and inclusivity are essential, as emphasized by Suga's focus on varied user scenarios.

Dow's dedication to recyclability and using post-consumer recycled plastics further illustrates a holistic approach to packaging design, intertwining environmental responsibility with functionality and user experience.



## Technology as a Catalyst for Future-Ready Packaging

The transformative role of technology in packaging is undeniable. As Suga indicates, DNP integrates various technological advancements to address the entire packaging lifecycle. Similarly, Dow's technology portfolio, focused on recyclable and high-performance packaging, is pivotal in driving the industry forward.

The transformation in the food packaging industry reflects a significant shift in societal values and technological advancements. Moving beyond traditional methods, the industry now embraces sustainability, innovation, and technology as cornerstones.

This evolution is not merely a reaction to environmental challenges but a proactive strategy to reshape consumer experiences and set new standards for the future of food packaging.

**Yusuke Suga**



**Bambang Candra**



With insights from Bambang Candra, Commercial Vice President for Asia Pacific Packaging and Specialty Plastics, The Dow Chemical Company and Yusuke Suga, Product Development Division, Business Creation Center, LifeDesign Operations, Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd

Bambang Candra is responsible for the strategic direction, marketing, and regional business performance of an industry-leading portfolio of innovative products leveraged across multiple high-value markets like food and industrial/consumer packaging, health and hygiene, transportation, and infrastructure applications.

Yusuke Suga joined DNP in 2008 after obtaining a master's degree in organic chemistry from Chiba University. Since then, Suga has handled the development and later the sales of PET bottles in the company.