



Tata Steel Europe has created a new polymer laminated steel, Protact, that is already winning awards as a packaging material.

THE CONTEXT

The traditionally conservative steel packaging industry tends to be inward-looking and focuses on incremental technical improvements alone. In contrast, Tata Steel Europe introduced a technically innovative polymer laminated steel, Protact, and made a huge investment on a new production line for it. But it faced the challenge of increasing the sales of Protact. It needed to position and differentiate its Protact cans against competing packaging materials such as cartons and plastic.

THE INNOVATION

To tackle this challenge, the team needed to engage with packaging material decision-makers, that is, major brand owners and retailers or customers of its customers. The Tata Steel Europe team developed an inspirational style guide to showcase award-winning concept designs of cans across the base, tailored and premium categories. The can prototypes were designed with the help of a leading global design agency to tell the Protact story to brand owners based around key consumer trends such as convenience and circularity. The team then designed and launched a detailed marketing and communications campaign focused around its target audience and presented the guide to brand owners.

KEY CHALLENGES

TO INFLUENCE BRAND OWNERS, WHO WERE THE CUSTOMERS OF ITS CUSTOMERS (THE CAN MAKERS)

It was critical to engage with the brand owners since the final choice of packaging material rested with them. The team did so by working along with the company's direct customers to avoid any conflict.

TO ALIGN THE STEEL INDUSTRY'S CONSERVATISM WHEN IT COMES TO NON-TECHNICAL INNOVATION WITH THE BRAND OWNER'S PROGRESSIVE APPROACH

The company resolved the dichotomy by evolving a very clear plan and message, which met with early success.



THE IMPACT

Protact has won the prestigious Dieline Packaging Award. The company's unconventional approach to market it has resulted in several face-to-face meetings with global brand owners and a written endorsement from Nestlé. The company has also received strong coverage in trade publications and over 160,000 impressions on social media, many from concerned parties at brand owners. Besides, it is exploring the possibility of getting the Tata group companies in the foods and beverages sector to use Protact as a packaging material.