

Choosing an optimal sustainable packaging strategy is vital for businesses in the food and drink industry. However, packaging is a hugely complex area, especially in such a diverse sector in which each category has its own standards and requirements.

[What is the best sustainable packaging strategy for my business?](#)

Sustainable packaging could mean different things to different people. Some might consider an alternative as sustainable because of the raw materials used to produce it, or how environmentally friendly and energy efficient the production process is. Others might think as a sustainable strategy the uses that are given to packaging throughout its life and the alternative end-of-

After in-depth consideration of the description and functionality of a product then businesses can research key factors and start asking relevant questions such as: could those components be totally or partially eliminated, reduced or substituted by other types of materials?

Some actions could include reducing, eliminating or replacing non-recyclable or difficult-to-recycle materials such as single-use or difficult-to-recycle plastics or materials with poor waste collection streams; reducing or removing unnecessary packaging; using sustainable alternatives and keeping materials in use if possible; reusing packaging where suitable waste streams exist, are all ways that can produce a more sustainable food packaging system.

Could the component be redesigned to be easily recyclable or compostable? This decision will depend upon a mix of different characteristics such as purpose, functionality and end-of-life.

For example, if a product needs single-use packaging which is not possible to redesign to be reusable, comes into contact with food, and for which there are no current collection or recycling

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

All plastic packaging CANNOT be recycled. The disposal of plastic will vary from one type of plastic to another. For example, some types of plastic such as PET or PE are widely recycled, but others such as flexible plastic packaging are extremely difficult to recover.

Using and designing optimal packaging that considers all the environmental impacts throughout its life cycle is important to reduce the current exploitation of natural resources and raw materials. It is one step forward in the right direction to creating more resilient food systems and economies.

If you are considering changing your packaging strategy for one that is sustainable and tells your story or want to evaluate whether a new strategy in place is the right one for you, contact us. Our team has expertise in resource efficiency, Circular Economy, carbon assessments and sustainability and can apply this to food and drink businesses all over Scotland.

Visit our website to find more resources on packaging: recyclable packaging, understanding labels and the overall environmental impacts of packaging.