

# SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING

BY ERIC SCHWARTZ



Market research company GlobalWebIndex reports that 42 percent of U.S. consumers seek out products that are recyclable or that use sustainable materials when making day-to-day purchases.

**ONE OF THE HOTTEST TRENDS IN CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY** is when a business is committed to enhancing the environment, not contributing to its destruction. The focus on sustainable packaging is one area that all design-build professionals should be aware of, as consumers become conscious of the need to reduce unnecessary waste in their purchasing decisions. Walmart, one of the largest retailers in the world with more than 11,000 stores in over 25 countries and e-commerce websites in over 10 countries, recognizes its influence and has taken steps toward a leadership role in sustainable packaging.

Walmart's Chief Sustainability Officer Kathleen McLaughlin says Walmart's goal is to take an assertive approach in transforming the retail sector for sustainability. By 2025, Walmart aims to have 100 percent recyclable, reusable and/or compostable packaging. Which means suppliers need to be on board if they wish to continue to do business with Walmart.

Samsung also believes the integration of sustainable practices across each stage of production is crucial to minimizing environmental impact and building a better future for communities around the world and the next generation of

innovators. Samsung will work to achieve its initial goals by 2025, and it will aim to evolve its commitments to address new challenges beyond 2025:

- Incorporate recycled material in all new mobile products by 2025
- Eliminate all plastics in mobile packaging by 2025
- Reduce standby power consumption of all smartphone chargers to below 0.005W by 2025
- Achieve zero waste to landfill by 2025

And consumers are willing to spend their money on sustainable products. Market research company GlobalWebIndex reports that 42 percent of U.S. consumers seek out products that are recyclable or that use sustainable materials when making day-to-day purchases. Eco-conscious consumers care about sustainable packaging because they are concerned about the environment. This, coupled with their awareness of their role in the supply chain, means they are willing to switch to support their values.

As we continue to explore the world of performance homes and technology strategies that enhance today's modern design goals, sustainability plays a key role in multiple facets of major remodels and new home builds. And if the homeowner

decides they want energy management and a lower carbon footprint for their new digs, all design-build stakeholders need to implement a green attitude in their selections of materials and integration processes.

One example of designing elegantly, as well as responsibly, is Salamander Designs, a recognized leader in specialized A/V furniture and accessories. With a lean manufacturing ecosystem and a premier network of authorized dealers, Salamander has become the go-to vendor for wall-mounted cabinets and thermostatically controlled cooling to improve the performance and prolong the life of electronics.

## *making a difference starts at the top*

Salamander's deep commitment to sustainability is not new. Since 2013, they have had a holistic green initiative that emphasizes environmentally responsible company and manufacturing practices. They recognize their impact on the planet and society and take it seriously. From their 100 percent solar powered, USA manufacturing facility to sustainable materials used to build the furniture, to achieving the latest compliance from RoHS, CARB and others, Salamander is steadfast in their environmental goals and investments.

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**Sustainability is part of the Salamander DNA. It is more than what we do, it is who we are. We build every product to last a lifetime and not end up in a landfill. We tread lightly on our environment, from the materials we select, to the manufacturing process we employ, to partners who we align with for specific waste programs, to our factory that runs completely on solar generated power. We'll continue to take bold steps, to leave the world a better place.**”

**SALVATORE CARRABBA**

**PRESIDENT + FOUNDER  
SALAMANDER DESIGNS**





SALAMANDER IS OFF THE GRID, CONSUMING ZERO ENERGY FROM THE USE OF THESE 400 SOLAR PANELS IN BLOOMFIELD, CONNECTICUT. THE ARRAY IS SET TO DOUBLE IN 2022.

## 100 PERCENT SOLAR POWERED PROCESS

Salamander is always going green and off the grid. They've implemented a plan that has taken them off the grid with photovoltaic power generation, making a significant difference:

- Over the course of one year, their net energy consumption is zero.
- They have over 400 solar panels on their roof in Bloomfield, Connecticut.
- In 2022, they will add to and double their solar array. Because they have been growing and increasing their manufacturing capabilities, and their power requirements are greater, they are investing in this addition.

## TAKING ACTION THROUGH COMPLIANCE

What do their compliances mean? The standards they've achieved include RoHS and CARB to name a few:

- RoHS compliant: a product compliance based on the European Union's Directive 2002/95/EC, which restricts use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment.
- CARB compliant: produces less harmful emissions, toxins and particulates while resulting in cleaner and safer air quality.

## THEY LIVE BY THE THREE "R'S" — REDUCE, REUSE AND RECYCLE

At a time when climate crisis threatens our planet, Salamander constantly challenges themselves to minimize consumption of natural resources whether it's packaging or factory

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electricity. They upgraded all lighting in their 85,000 square-foot facility to high-efficiency fixtures with energy saving automatic sensors that reduce their overall carbon footprint.

They also collaborate closely with suppliers to design transport packaging which allows them to return for reuse. When reuse isn't an option, their programs recycle byproducts of their manufacturing including wood, steel, aluminum, packaging and office paper.

## **MATERIALS AND SUPPLIERS MATTER — AND THEY CHOOSE CAREFULLY**

All of their fine furniture products are handcrafted using sustainable materials that last a lifetime and make a pathway for the future. Just some of their eco-friendly goods include:

- Woods harvested from managed forestry programs and composite materials that comply with rigorous certification standards.

- Furniture frames made from energy-efficient recycled aluminum.
- Advanced, environmentally friendly finishes and coatings meet or exceed stringent air quality standards, such as their water-based finishes.
- They've partnered with pioneers of the wood finishing industry, so wood coating technologies include powder coat finishes and UV coatings on components. The carbon footprint of a powder coated wood part is less than 20 percent of a traditional solvent-based finish, yet incredibly durable.

Combining a sustainable and low-carbon mindset in the manufacturing process and packaging/shipping phases of distribution has become a standard for the most progressive companies on a global scale. Design-build professionals should consider how every builder and design firm can adopt these practices on a local level in order to play a role in performance home trends that are happening today in every phase of new builds and major remodels. Go green where you can. Sustainable packaging is a key first step.

