



CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS ON FOODSERVICE PACKAGING

REPORT

2019 Executive Summary



FOODSERVICE PACKAGING
INSTITUTE®

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INTRODUCTION

The spotlight on single-use foodservice packaging continues to grow, and the Foodservice Packaging Institute sought to better understand consumer perceptions around these packaging products. To achieve this goal, FPI conducted a survey of consumers in the United States and Canada in April 2019.

Participants were asked questions about how frequently they use single-use foodservice packaging; their beliefs about the importance of performance attributes in single-use foodservice packaging; benefits and concerns they have about single-use foodservice packaging and their reusable counterparts; their behavior choices related to foodservice packaging; and environmental issues. Each question was analyzed looking for significant differences in responses across different demographic groups and frequency of using single-use foodservice packaging.

In order to achieve a diverse sampling of the population that could be accurately extrapolated, United States and Canadian residents between the ages of 18 and 60+ were surveyed. The 800 respondents were balanced across income, education level, gender and region, and approximately evenly split between U.S. and Canadian residents. This sample provides a statistically representative view of the beliefs of the United States and Canadian populations with a 95 percent confidence rate with a plus / minus 5 percent margin of error.

The results of this survey were compiled to create FPI's Consumer Perceptions on Foodservice Packaging Report. The full 165-page report is available for FPI members only. This Executive Summary contains publicly available highlights from the report.

Please contact FPI's Lynn Dyer, ldyer@fpi.org, with any questions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are varying thoughts and opinions on single-use foodservice packaging and its importance to consumers. In order to better understand the general consumer's use and perception of single-use foodservice packaging, FPI commissioned a third-party entity to conduct a survey to find out how frequently people use single-use packaging and their perceptions and behavior choices related to food packaging. For each question asked, analysis was performed to identify significant differences in response across demographics and frequency of use.

Survey results showed that roughly 65 percent of adults in the United States and Canada use single-use foodservice packaging at least once each week. Within U.S. respondents, those with the highest income were most likely to use single-use foodservice packaging every day, and higher education appeared to correlate to higher use. The survey revealed that there are significant differences among both U.S. and Canadian consumers' perceptions of foodservice packaging based on how frequently they use single-use items.

Performance attributes of single-use foodservice packaging were found to be of varying importance for different types of respondents. In both the U.S. and Canada, being leak or spill proof and stopping grease or oil from soaking through and staining clothes, car seats, etc. were the most important attributes, with the ability to see the food inside the packaging being the least important attribute.

Respondents in the U.S. and Canada were also in agreement on the most important benefits of single-use foodservice packaging items. The convenience of being able to take food on the go was the most important benefit in both countries, with the cleanliness and the sanitary nature of the packaging a close second in importance. The most concerning issue with single-use packaging was the possibility of it ending up as litter on land or in waterways.

Respondents were also asked about the benefits and concerns they see in reusable options. The environmental attributes of reusables were seen as the top benefit by respondents in the U.S. and Canada, while limited concerns were expressed about the potential they might not be clean and sanitary.

When asked about environmental attributes of single-use foodservice packaging, two-thirds of respondents in the U.S. and Canada reported that being recyclable was a very important attribute, followed closely by being compostable. Being made with renewable or recycled materials was rated as slightly less important.

Additional opinions on consumer behavior and purchasing decisions are included in the full report available to FPI members.