SNACK PACKAGING UNWRAPPED

Insights, Innovations & Industry Expertise

Challenges Shaping the Snack Category

Meet a packaging partner that will help you stay ahead

The global snack category–including sweets, chocolates, salty snacks like chips and crackers, nuts, dried fruits, and on-the-go baked goods–is navigating a complex and rapidly changing environment.

Several factors are putting pressure on these manufacturers and brands to rethink their strategies.

In the Nordics, snacks are worth **€ 43 million** and are expected to grow by **4.3%** in value by 2029*.

That means packaging and product placement are key to **winning** in-store.

source:
*Euromonitor 2024

In this whitepaper, you'll find:

- What challenges are shaping the snack category
- Insights into Nordic consumer habits
- Packaging that drives sales and meets sustainability goals
- Meet the experts and their tips for the category

If you want to grow your snack business, improve your packaging strategy, or learn what shoppers have in mind for this category, this whitepaper gives you the insights you need.

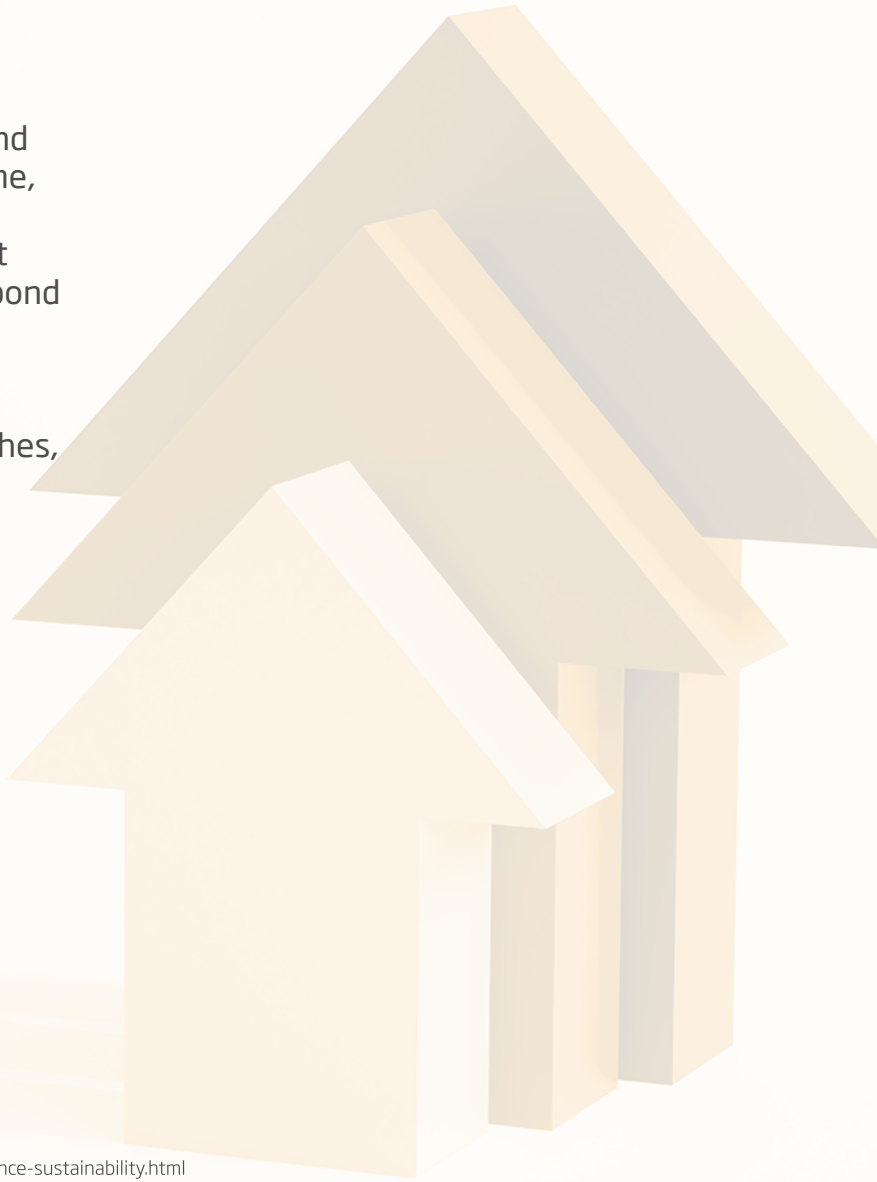
Turning Challenges into Growth

Costs are climbing, competition is fierce, and regulations are tightening. At the same time, consumers demand healthier options, convenience, and sustainability – and most producers are already taking action to respond to the changing landscape.

Growth now means more than price hikes. Brands must innovate with seasonal launches, premium formats, functional ingredients, and digital commerce – all while staying compliant and cutting carbon.

DS Smith helps you lead this change. Our sustainable, circular packaging solutions boost shelf impact, protect products, and meet evolving consumer, supply chain and regulatory demands.

We turn pressure into progress, so **your brand stands out and grows**.



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What Nordic consumer demand from the Snack Market

The insights presented in this report are derived from a **comprehensive consumer survey** conducted in December 2025 across four Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

The survey, carried out by **Toluna**, a leading market research firm, gathered responses from 2 241 participants, with 469-620 respondents from each country (DK 620, FI 589, NO 469, SE 563). The survey covered diverse demographics to ensure a representative view of Nordic snacking behaviors.

In the land of "hygge and fika", snacking is more than just a habit – it's a **cultural phenomenon**.

This recent survey has revealed fascinating insights into Nordic snacking behaviours, shedding light on what makes consumers reach for that extra treat.

The Snack Landscape

Imagine walking down a bustling Nordic Street. What snacks would you see in people's hands?

Chances are, it's either a sweet confectionery or a savoury treat. The survey shows that nearly **70%** of Nordic consumers regularly indulge in both categories.

Swedes, in particular, seem to have a sweet tooth, with almost **74%** reaching for confectionery products monthly.

But it's not just about sweets. Savoury snacks are equally popular, with Norwegians leading the charge: **74%** of them pick up items like crisps or nut snacks every month.

Interestingly, when forced to choose, about a third of Nordic snackers would opt for something savoury over sweet.

The Snack Landscape

Key findings

Confectionery products are purchased by **68.44%** of Nordic consumers monthly (Sweden highest at 73.76%)

Savoury snacks are bought by **68.79%** of Nordic respondents monthly (Norway highest at 74.26%)

Almost **1/3** (28,74%) of respondents in the Nordics would buy savoury snacks as their preferred snack

Bakery and pastry products are purchased by **54.3%** of Nordic consumers monthly (Swedes highest at 60,28%)

The Art of Snack Shopping

Nordic consumers approach snack shopping with a mix of spontaneity and planning. Over half of the respondents admit to buying snacks on impulse.

It's easy to imagine someone picking up a chocolate bar at the checkout counter or grabbing from a display when passing by.

Equally common is the planned treat, with many seeing snacks as a reward, perhaps a bag of crisps to celebrate the end of the workweek.

Key findings

52.53%

of Nordic consumers buy snacks on impulse

52.37%

purchase snacks as a treat or reward (e.g. Friday evening)

41.95%

include snacks as part of their planned weekly shop

Low Natural Interest in New Products

Nordic consumers generally stick to their favourites, showing a low appetite for novelty.

Only about **10%** of Nordic snackers actively seek out new products. However, the real game-changer is **promotions**: nearly a third of Nordic consumers are willing to try new snacks when they're on sale, and more than a third buy them randomly – suggesting that a well-placed product combined with discounts could be the key to introducing innovative offerings.

Since the results indicate a low desire to try new things, **prominent in-store displays** for new products become even more important.

Key findings

Only 9.75% of Nordic consumers always try new snack products

9,75%

35.40% of Nordic consumers buy products randomly

35,40%

Swedish consumers show the highest interest in trying new products (11.35%)

11,35%

The Price of Indulgence

How much are Nordic consumers willing to pay for their favourite snacks? Quite a bit, it turns out.

Over **40%** would pay a premium, with some even accepting up to **30%** price increases.

This loyalty to preferred brands is a golden opportunity for manufacturers. However, it's worth noting that a significant portion of consumers would opt for a smaller pack size rather than pay more, highlighting the challenge manufacturers have to provide choice, without increasing complexity and costs.

The Price of Indulgence

Key findings

43,7% of Nordic consumers are willing to pay more for their favourite snacks

22.65% would pay up to **10% more**

16.46% would pay between **10-30% more**

4.59% would pay **30% more**

22% would not pay more but are okay with buying a smaller pack size for the same price

Future
Snacking Trends

Looking ahead, about a fifth of Nordic consumers plan to increase their snack purchases. What's driving this growth? Promotions, new flavours, and healthier options top the list. Danish consumers (**35,29%**), in particular, seem price-sensitive, with many indicating they'd buy more if prices decrease.

On the flip side, a smaller but significant group plans to cut back on snacking. The main reasons? Expected price hikes, a lack of healthy options and changes in taxation.

Key findings

52,84% cite promotions and discounts as a key factor to increase buying, but same time **50.73%** says price increases as a reason to buy fewer snacks

48,89% are interested in new flavours and products

35,06% would buy more if there were healthier options available, and **44.61%** mention a lack of healthy options being reason for buying less

This shows that bringing new flavours and new products to the market is a way to increase sales.

These insights offer valuable guidance for manufacturers and retailers in the Nordic snack market, highlighting the **importance of innovative packaging, right positioned display solutions, strategic pricing, and a focus on health and sustainability** to meet evolving consumer preferences.

Packaging matters and can help **save** costs

Speaking of packaging, Nordic consumers have clear preferences.

While there are some variations between countries, overall trends are similar across Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

Easy-to-open and resealable packaging are highly valued by most respondents, with over **70% preferring easy-to-open options**.

Paper-based packaging is moderately popular, with about **40%** of respondents favouring it.

Preferences for multipacks and individually packed snacks vary more significantly between countries, with Finland showing the highest preference for both.

This presents an opportunity for brands to **reduce packaging materials and cut costs**.

Regarding sustainability, approximately one-fifth of respondents indicated that more sustainable packaging would encourage them to buy more snacks, while a smaller but notable portion said unsustainable packaging would discourage purchases.

These findings suggest that while functional aspects like ease of opening and reseal ability are primary concerns, **sustainability is an important factor in consumers' snack-buying decisions** across the Nordic region.

Key findings

1
Ease of Opening

Three-quarters (**74,09%**) of snackers want packages they can open without a struggle.

2
Reseal ability

60.43% prefer packs they can easily reseal for later. This indicates that consumers want to enjoy only a small amount at a time.

On-the-Go Options: **47.31%** prefer individually packed snacks for on-the-go consumption

3
Multipack Dynamics

Nordic consumers (**52.63%**) prefer multipacks without products being individually wrapped inside.

Finnish consumers (**60.43%**) stand out with an even stronger preference for multipacks without individual wrapping inside these larger packs.

4
Sustainability

Only **9.59%** do not want paper packaging for snacks. This indicates that resistance to paper-based solutions is relatively low.

However, almost 50% have no clear opinion. This is an opportunity for brands. Brands can educate undecided consumers and marketing can focus on sustainability benefits.

How packaging influences buying decisions in retail and e-commerce

"Packaging does more than protect – it influences what shoppers notice and buy. From store shelves to online carts, smart design boosts sales and meets sustainability expectations."

When snacks move from the factory to store shelves or online carts, packaging does a lot more than just protect, they influence what people notice and, often subconsciously, decide at a glance.

Packaging design is very important. Bright colors, clear branding, and quality finishes help products stand out and increase impulse purchases.

Brands need to avoid 'brand blocking' by retailers. They must ensure product visibility in stores.

For online, packaging must be strong and practical. Over half of e-commerce shoppers report damaged goods. Durable, compact, easy-to-open designs are essential. **Great unboxing experience** prevents returns and builds brand perception.

shoppers say packaging appearance affects purchase decision	72%
shoppers pay attention to packaging material	67%
shoppers make unplanned purchases depending on category	52-70%

Displays are important too. Eye-catching snack displays and self-ready packaging drive sales.

Sustainability matters. Consumers prefer recyclable packaging. Brands embracing this gain trust, shelf advantage, and meet legal requirements.

sources:
https://enterpriseleague.com/blog/important-statistics-you-should-know-about-packaging-design/
Toluna research for DS Smith, December 2025

Insights from the Experts

Fredrik Johansson
Design & Innovation Manager
Nordics & Baltics, DS Smith

Touch & feel is essential in packaging innovation

Fredrik Johansson has spent two decades driving packaging design and innovation. For him, true innovation means courage, limitless thinking–and learning from mistakes. His mantra for the whole design team is **"Always try something new."**

At DS Smith, innovation is hands-on and collaborative.

Through **PackRight Centres**, customers join interactive workshops, explore ideas, and leave with prototypes tailored to their needs.

These sessions combine creativity with structure, following a clear process from ideation to commercialization.

Fredrik emphasizes sustainability as a core part of every solution. His team helps customers meet environmental goals with precise material choices, calculations, and full traceability – long before sustainability became a buzzword.

Recent recognition includes three **ScanStar awards** in 2025 and three global **WorldStar awards** in 2026, showcasing packaging solutions from retail displays to humanitarian projects. For Fredrik, the most rewarding moment is seeing customers walk out inspired: "When customers visit us, they always want to come back. That's the true strength of our PackRight concept."

Read a full interview in Danish, Finnish or Swedish from the websites.

Nicolai Fredsgaard Dam
Design & Innovation Manager, DS Smith

Doing More with Less in Packaging

At DS Smith we strive to create or tweak packaging to be the most supply chain optimized, thereby ensuring the **best cost basis** and in most cases also the **least CO_2e immersive**.

Especially within the snack category we see interesting possibilities in pushing the envelope to reduce unutilized air, push every fiber to its limit and match every product to the ideal type of packaging to achieve more with less.

It is in our DNA to continuously push on how to achieve the same or more with less fibers and fewer material.

We push to be as holistic as possible in our **analysis of packaging**, trying to understand the journey it has to go through and how that defines demand for what and how we design a pack that is a cost efficient both in CO_2e and DKK as possible, whilst retaining high quality on the shelf in the store.

Innovative features like **Centralisers** and **Safe Tray** help us push towards that target, where **DD Wrap** is a good example of a packaging design where certain market looks needs to be achieved as efficiently as possible, again, doing more with less.

Mette Staal
Cluster Creative Lead, DS Smith

Maximising opportunities the legislative landscape presents

As the creative lead at DS Smith, I firmly believe in our **commitment to sustainability and the circular economy**. We embrace legislative changes related to sustainability as opportunities to enhance our leadership and promote a circular economy. In the snack category, the impending Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) is driving a shift towards compressed packaging designs that **minimize waste and material usage**, aligning with our focus on **resource efficiency**.

This packaging is a great example of the work we do with customers to help them achieve their goals.

More information from dssmith.com

Additionally, we observe a growing emphasis on paper- based materials for products that don't require airtight packaging, resonating with our commitment to sustainable solutions.

At DS Smith, we leverage our expertise to develop innovative packaging solutions that meet regulatory requirements and contribute to a more sustainable future.

Jenny Holmqvist
Creative Graphical Specialist, Sweden

Optimising brand impact with shelf-ready packaging

Shelf-ready packaging is a powerful way to optimize brand impact. Our solutions ensure products are easy to find, easy to shop, and simple to remove from the shelf-ready packaging format. Clear communication on the packaging helps store staff quickly restock, while the sturdy yet sustainable design keeps products in perfect condition.

At our PackRight Centres, we collaborate closely with brands to develop impactful packaging concepts. Through interactive workshops, 3D simulations, prototypes, and printed mock-ups, we combine creativity and expertise to create a true **"wow" effect** on the shelf – aiming for a touch of humour to make the concepts even more engaging.

"Colour plays a vital role too. It attracts attention and builds brand recognition, but maintaining consistency across different packaging materials can be challenging.

We have proven methods to manage colour consistency and are ready to help optimize your brand's impact with shelf-ready packaging solutions."

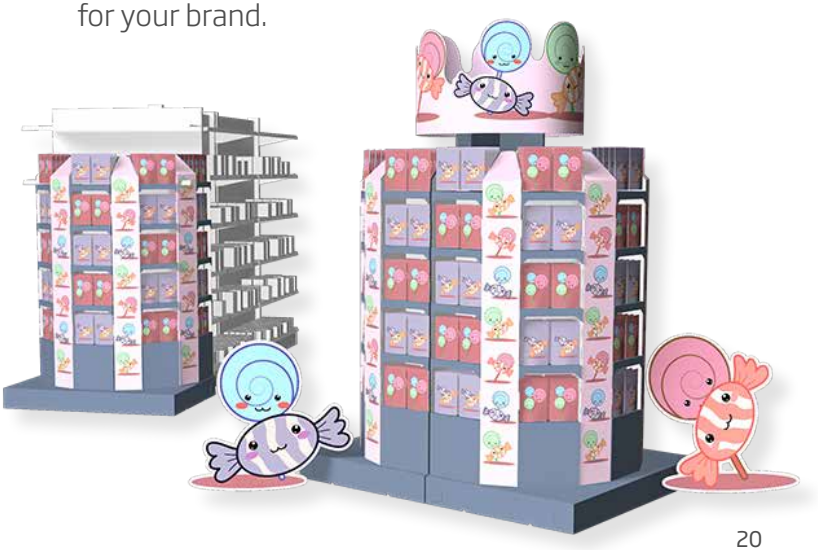
Emelie Karlsson
Innovation Specialist, Sweden

Win in retail with impactful display solutions

In today's retail environment, you only have a split second to **capture attention**. Impact displays make that moment count by grabbing the shopper's eye, making the product easy to understand, and driving impulse purchases.

Success starts with collaboration – we work closely with customers from the very beginning, using market insights, interactive workshops, prototypes, and testing to create solutions that truly perform.

As the market moves toward circular packaging, sustainability is key. Our designs focus on **circular ready solutions** adapted to every individual production line while remaining flexible for campaigns and markets. We deliver innovative packaging every day – ready to make an **impact** for your brand.



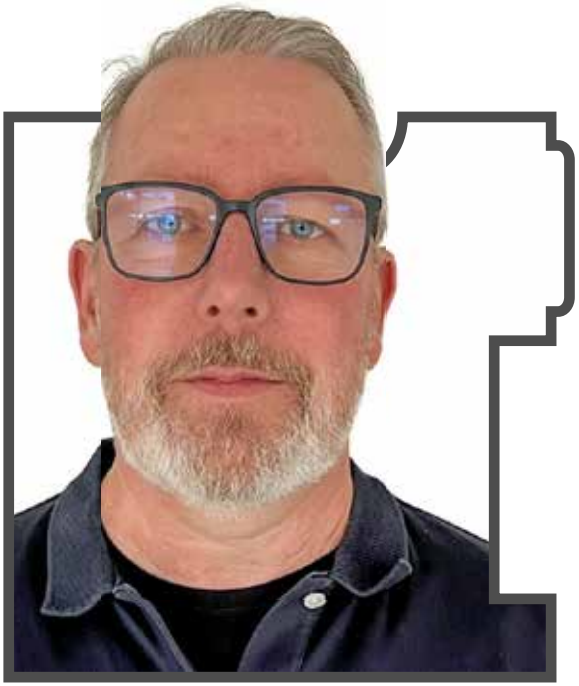
"In retail, you have seconds to win attention. Smart displays make products easy to spot, understand, and buy - driving impulse sales. As the market moves toward circular packaging, sustainability is key: recyclable, mono-material designs that perform and protect your brand."

Patrik Riis
SMI POS Manager, Sweden

Boost your retail performance through powerful displays

At DS Smith, we live and breathe Displays and Point of Sale. We notice every display in-store–and so do shoppers. Data consistently confirms what we see every day: an **effective display drives sales, builds brands, and captures consumer attention** when it matters most.

Our role is to turn that attention into measurable results, and we do it together with our customers.



We believe that **insights spark innovation**. Every part of our organization contributes to creating innovative solutions that truly make a difference. Our designers are experts at transforming challenges into smart, functional concepts. They carefully balance **budget, product characteristics, transport efficiency, and assembly needs** to ensure every display meets expectations and requirements. They use tools, such as **IrisPOS**, to measure visibility and shopper impact before your display hits the store, recommending improvements to maximize performance.

Meanwhile, our Account Managers and Customer Sales teams guide customers throughout the entire journey, making sure the final solution performs at its best.

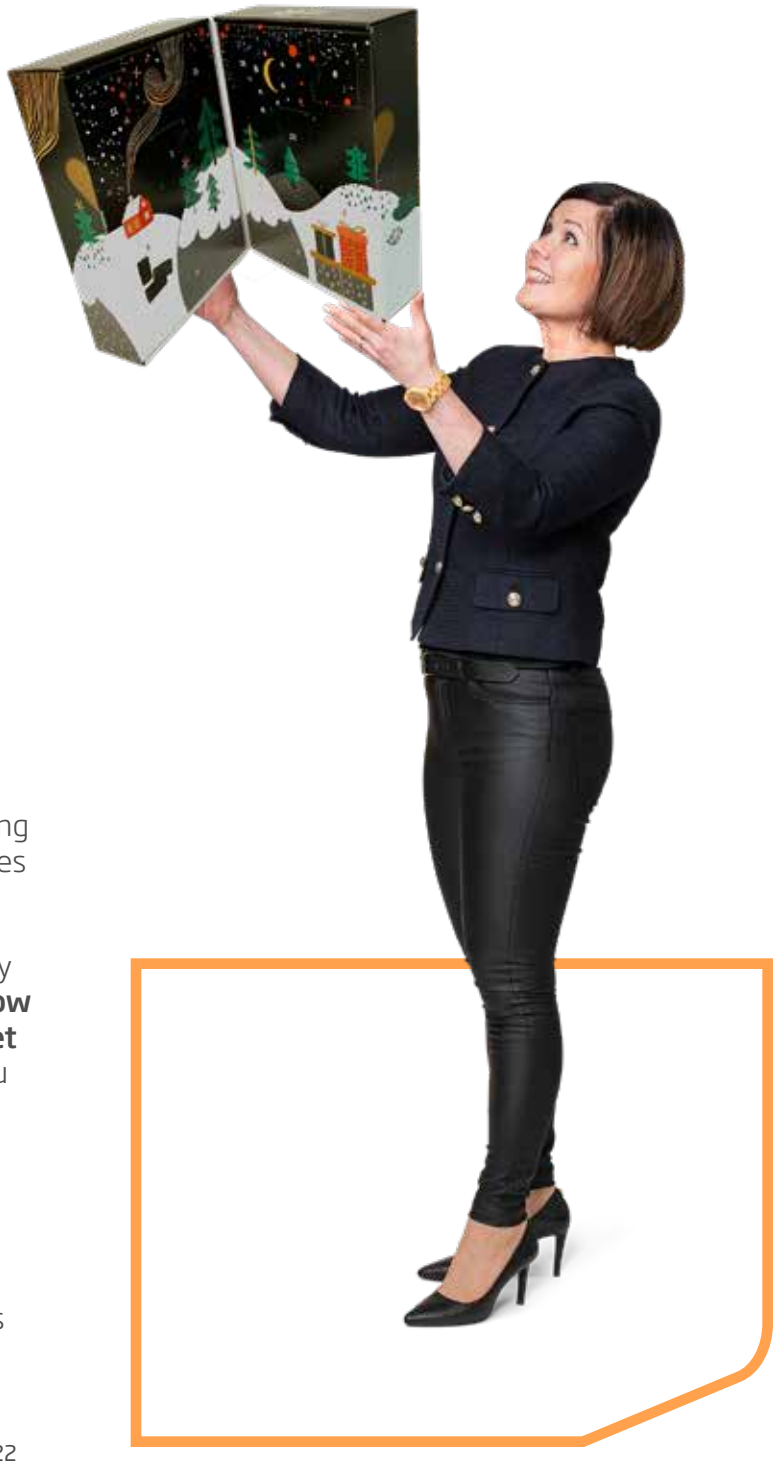
Once the design is ready, our production teams bring ideas to life with **precision and quality**.

Tiina Kiiskinen
Account Manager, Finland

Innovating Growth with a Seasonal Calendar

In 2020, together with Kouvolan Lakritsi, we prepared for a **new market** when they boldly pursued growth through seasonal liquorice calendars.

Recognizing consumer interest in indulgent products, our role at DS Smith was to create packaging that met **production needs, showcased the brand's premium nature, and captured the Christmas spirit**.



We designed a plastic-free structure that optimized both packaging and sales processes, while ensuring supply chain efficiency and standout printing. Year after year, the seasonal calendar has sold out, proving that understanding trends and consumer preferences can turn ideas into success.

Together, we've ensured that the packaging not only meets technical requirements but also delivers a **wow factor** for consumers. When you understand **market trends and changing consumer preferences**, you can turn them into successful products.

I have found it extremely rewarding to explore new growth opportunities with our customers. Kouvolan Lakritsi's seasonal calendar is a perfect example of how a great product can open doors to even more possibilities – in this case, a traditional liquorice was reinvented through **innovative packaging and smart targeting**.

Packaging innovations to meet the **demands** of a changing market

Don’t see a solution above that is the right fit for your business?
Do not worry!

At **DS Smith**, our designers create solutions tailored to your specific needs. Every concept is developed with your business goals in mind, while ensuring compliance with legislation and optimizing performance across the entire supply chain.

With **DS Smith**, you get solutions that help your brand stand out and succeed.

Stand Out in Snacking with DS Smith – get in touch with us

DS Smith is where our customers are. Whenever you need the expertise of professionals in corrugated packaging and retail displays, we are ready to help.

Get in touch with us to discover innovative solutions that make your products stand out, optimize your supply chain, and meet today's market demands.

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Let's create packaging that drives growth, together.