

# Naked is no solution either: confectionery and sustainable packaging

Florian Klaus and Dr. Uwe Lebok from K&A BrandResearch AG discuss the actual significance of sustainability as a reason to buy confectionery.

Almost in endless loops, we are reminded by the media that climate change is the

The world is changing, and this change will have an impact on the economy, society and our own children. Sustainability is the order of the day. Many societies in the western world are striving to reduce or even avoid waste, energy and the unlimited exploitation of raw materials. What relevance does this have for confectionery and its consumers?

We only have to look at the statistics of different (reputable) sources: In more and more product sustainability is defined as responsible relevant decision-making criterion. If we leave these results unreflecting, we come to the conclusion that sustainability is an unwritten law. The consumer wants it! Maybe not (yet) for confectionery, but the trend seems unstoppable. But beware: expressing an opinion and actually doing something are usually not the same thing.

If we ask consumers what they expect from food and brands, then aspects of sustainability, regionality and health are always at the top of the list - even in our own market research. However, we know from behavioural economics that there is a so-called attitude-behaviour gap between attitudes and behaviour. A recent study by the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW) suggests that such a gap exists for sustainability issues such as CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, transparency, and the environment,

of a brand and fair wage and working conditions is particularly large. In everyday life, these and the other gaps measured are significantly larger. This is because attitudes that people express in direct surveys are once again different from the attitudes that people really carry within themselves. We humans like to experience ourselves

as prosocial, rational and sustainable. So we also express ourselves in this way, without deliberately lying. Our real attitudes often look different, and our behaviour in turn follows other, intuitive rules; a double attitude-behaviour gap.

We can observe this effect very well in ourselves in numerous everyday texts: Even if we personally for more

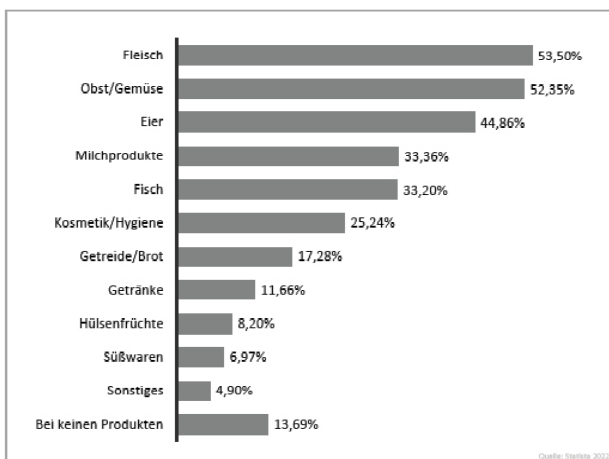
sustainability, we may fly on holiday several times a year, use the car for journeys that could also be made on foot, continue to ski with relish despite reservations, take longer hot showers and do not want to do without the bathtub, or leave the heating running throughout the house for cosy temperatures. Everyday situations sometimes make us forget our affinity for sustainability very quickly. Because the context is simply "closer" to us at the moment than a socially desired behaviour. The mind is willing, but likes to be in a different mood.

## There are many definitions of sustainability

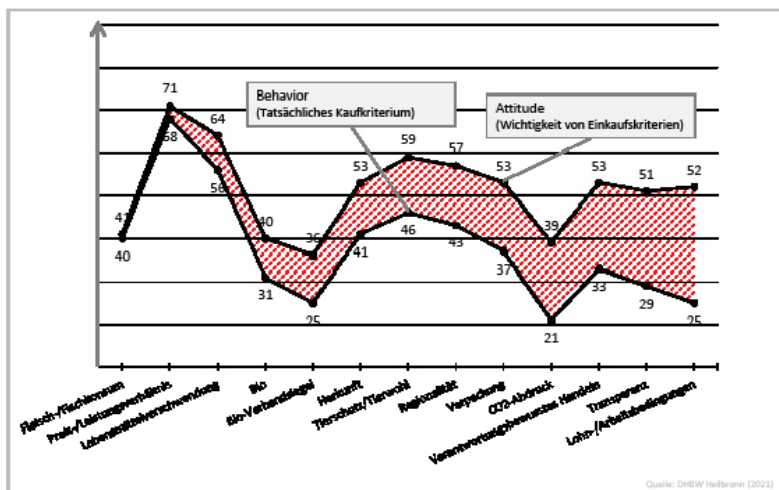
There are also numerous definitions of sustainability. This makes it even easier for consumers to more or less consciously remove themselves from responsibility. Although we have a rough feeling of what we should understand by sustainability, there is a bouquet of options in the social discourse. For many aspects of sustainability, we are often not even aware of the interrelationships in their entirety, e.g. the energy certificate for the production of e-cars, and we like to ignore partial aspects, e.g. nuclear and coal-fired electricity from the socket.

Officially, is spoken of as a principle of behaviour, according to which no more of something may be consumed than can grow back or regenerate. The Federal for Civic Education refers to the so-called sustainability triangle of ecological, economic and social sustainability.

Consumers are much simpler,



Importance of sustainability as a reason for purchase (Source: Statista 2022)



Discrepancy between wanting and doing: the attitude-behaviour gap (Source: DHBW Heilbronn 2021)

Sustainability is what is good for the environment. When buying sweets, the packaging, the ingredients of the product, the manufacture in some cases, social sustainability in the sense of Fairtrade are of particular importance.

**Sustainable packaging alone is not a key reason to buy**

Imagine if the confectionery wasn't wrapped, was naked. We would be missing something. Nudity has an erotic component for people, but the real pleasure factor in sweets lies more in the "Psychology of undressing" the products that can promise us everything from reward to (small) sin in an attractive dress (= package).

The psychological effect begins with the haptic itself. What is packaged, possibly even several times, is worth protecting, special, fragile and is therefore associated with a particularly desirable experience. But because desire and remorse, craving and guilty conscience are always two sides of the same coin when it comes to sweets, the industry also interacts with haptic packaging accordingly: what is individually packaged, or at least pre-portioned, as the ribs of the chocolate bar suggest, is limited and rationed per se.

"I don't want to and won't eat all this immediately and/or on my own" is the implicit message that makes the purchase of pleasure justifiable. You could call it rationalisation through rationing. And we haven't even started to talk about the design of the "dress".

Sustainability can play an effective role in confectionery right from the unpacking stage. Namely then,

when the right impression is a counterweight to sweet indulgence, legitimising it "sustainably" without limiting it as a result.

For many brand owners, assets would be lost if unpacking were to occur. Because only a few brands are about the shape distinctive. This z. For example, for the square bar from Ritter Sport, M&M's with their colourful faces and the Super Dickmanns. But then the air quickly becomes thin in terms of recognisability without packaging. In addition, people are creatures of habit. This applies to chocolate, lozenges, fruit gums, crisps with or without chakalaka, as well as to packaging and the haptic unpacking of sweet pleasure. Sustainable packaging alone is also not a central reason or benefit for buying confectionery, even less for higher prices. In fact, all packaging will eventually be sustainable(er), provided that product-specific problems such as barrier functions in paper packaging are solved. The sustainability of a "pleasure-inducing" wrapper will therefore certainly become a must-have if the technology is developed accordingly and can be produced in series - i.e. cheaply.

Positioning confectionery and snacks solely on the basis of sustainable packaging as a unique reason to buy and expecting a higher price for this compared to conventional packaging is rather counterproductive from a behavioural economics point of view. However, in order to continue to be "emotionally allowed", must

Sweets increasingly provide rational reasons for a good conscience. There are numerous examples of such rationalisation. However, it is particularly exciting beyond the classic sustainability categories. Because people are not only creatures of habit. When justifying an intuitive, possibly not very sensible decision to ourselves, we show ourselves to be mentally impressive.

flexible. The phenomenon of mental accounting describes how we define our own mental accounting items and weigh them against each other.

The "emotional of confectionery consumption is similar,

applies if the Fairtrade chocolates are from Tony's Chocolonely - free of slave labour and exploitation of cocoa farmers, and supposedly free of advertising, as long as their own packaging is described as non-advertising. The whole thing is topped by brands like nucao, their chocolatey snacks are all 100 per cent organic, vegan and Fairtrade. So they already exist, the examples of disproportionately more sustainability than the average. The factor has also gained importance in terms of generation. However, a general change in behaviour towards the preference for sustainable confectionery will only manifest itself when sustainability can be achieved without a price explosion or when the legislator's requirements leave manufacturers no other choice. -

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