

Soft Drinks Packaging - Top Europe Industry Trends in 2026

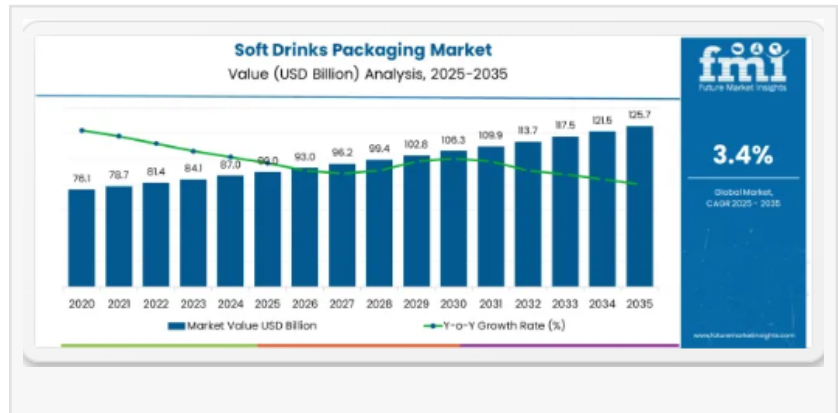
A rapidly evolving packaging landscape and rising demand for sustainable formats are set to boost the global soft drinks packaging market through 2035.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The global [soft drinks packaging market](#) is forecast to reach a valuation of USD 125.7 billion

by 2035, up from USD 90.0 billion in 2025, reflecting a steady compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.4 percent over the next decade. This growth trajectory underscores strong consumer demand for ready-to-drink beverages combined with increasing adoption of lightweight, recyclable, and smart packaging formats.

Key Market Insights at a Glance



The projected USD 90 billion market in 2025 is underpinned by robust demand for convenience-driven packaging solutions, particularly in on-the-go consumption scenarios. Plastic materials dominate, accounting for 53.8 percent of revenue share, driven by their versatility, cost-efficiency, and advanced barrier technologies. Meanwhile, bottles remain the preferred format, holding 46.1 percent of product-type share, thanks to their portability and ability to preserve carbonation. On the capacity front, medium-size packaging (251 ml–1 liter) is the fastest-growing segment, contributing 42.7 percent of market revenue, as it strikes a balance between value and convenience.

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Regional Overview

Across regions, Asia-Pacific is leading the charge, benefiting from rapidly urbanizing populations, rising disposable incomes, and a proliferation of beverage SKU innovation. Markets such as China and India are projected to generate higher-than-average growth, with China reaching a CAGR of 4.6 percent and India at 4.3 percent, as beverage brands invest in advanced PET

technology, lightweight preforms, and smart labels.

In North America, despite a slightly more moderate growth pace, packaging companies are expanding capacities for recycled-content PET bottles and aluminum cans, catering to sustainability mandates. Europe is focused on closed-loop recycling, mono-material designs, and deposit-return systems that align with stricter Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations.

Competitive Landscape

Market leaders are placing sustainability and innovation at the forefront. Amcor continues to push flexible and rigid recyclable packaging, while Ball Corporation, Crown Holdings, and CAN-PAK reinforce their positions in aluminum can manufacturing. Berry Global, Plastipak, and Graham Packaging dominate in PET-based solutions with advanced barrier improvements. In carton and aseptic formats, Tetra Pak and SIG drive demand in juice and functional-beverage segments.

Secondary packaging trends are shaped by companies like Smurfit Kappa, WestRock, and Graphic Packaging International, emphasizing corrugated, paperboard, and sustainable fibre solutions. Ardagh Group and Novelis strengthen innovation within metal packaging, while AptarGroup contributes through specialty closures and dispensing systems.

Segment Overview

Material-wise, the market spans Plastic, Glass, Metal, Paper & Paperboard, and Others, with plastic firmly leading due to cost-efficiency, formability, and recycling advances. In terms of product format, bottles, cans, cartons, pouches, and other novel formats each capture distinct demand pockets. By capacity, packaging is primarily categorized into small (up to 250 ml), medium (251 ml–1 L), and large (above 1 L), with medium-size bottles dominating. The soft drink types include carbonated and non-carbonated beverages, each influencing packaging needs — carbonated formats pressurize innovation around barrier films and closures, while non-carbonated drinks lean toward sustainable cartons or lightweight PET.

Market Outlook: Powering the Next Decade

Looking ahead, the next decade of the soft drinks packaging market will be powered by sustainability, innovation, and efficiency. Manufacturers are expected to intensify investment in bio-based plastics, barrier-coated PET, and lightweight aluminum designs to reduce carbon footprints without compromising performance. Smart packaging features like QR-code-enabled labels, oxygen-scavenging films, and resealable caps will proliferate, enabling traceability, freshness management, and greater consumer engagement.

The rise of e-commerce and direct-to-consumer (D2C) channels will drive demand for specialized

secondary packaging optimized for last-mile delivery. At the same time, regulatory pressures will catalyze adoption of circular packaging models, including deposit-return schemes and mono-material solutions, to enhance recyclability.

Key Players in the Sustainable Packaging Industry

A number of major players are actively shaping the future of sustainable soft drinks packaging. Companies such as Amcor, Ball Corporation, and Crown Holdings integrate recycled content into their core product lines. Plastipak, Berry Global, and Graham Packaging are further innovating with barrier technologies and returnable PET systems. In the carton space, Tetra Pak and SIG leverage renewable materials and aseptic solutions that minimize waste.

Secondary fiber-based providers such as Smurfit Kappa, WestRock, and Graphic Packaging are pushing for circularity in packaging design. On the metal front, Ardagh Group and Novelis remain pioneers in light-gauge aluminum and fully recyclable designs, while AptarGroup is investing in smart dispensing closures that reduce product loss and support reuse.

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Recent Strategic Developments

Over recent years, packaging companies have accelerated strategic moves to capture the growing demand for sustainable solutions. Several leading firms have launched 100 percent recyclable bottles featuring tethered caps, aligning with global regulatory trends. Others have introduced multilayer barrier films and oxygen scavenger technologies that extend shelf life and maintain flavor integrity. Partnerships with beverage brands for QR-based traceability and consumer engagement have become more common, strengthening brand loyalty and enabling real-time data collection.

On the supply side, manufacturers are scaling up post-consumer recycled (PCR) material usage in PET, while optimizing line speeds and bottle lightweighting to lower energy consumption and reduce waste. Meanwhile, investments in greenfield recycling infrastructure—such as deposit-return systems and re-melting facilities—are gaining traction in Europe and Asia, positioning the industry for a more circular and resilient future.

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