




## Liberty Coca-Cola Beverages Eliminates Plastic Packaging with Recyclable Clip-style Cartons

As an independent bottler and distributor in the tri-state metro area, Liberty Coca-Cola Beverages (LCCB) provides popular drinks to retailers throughout New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia. In support of Coca-Cola’s vision for a “World Without Waste,” LCCB partnered with Graphic Packaging International to replace plastic rings on its mini-can multipacks with clip-style recyclable paperboard clips.


### Case Study overview: Sustainability | Elevated Experience | Operational Efficiency

**Challenge** 

- **Sustainability**  
Replace plastic rings on mini-can multipacks with more sustainable packaging.
- **Convenience**  
Offer customers a convenient alternative for carrying cans.
- **Scalable Production**  
Introduce new packaging solution without adding production headaches.

**Solutions** 

- **Recyclable Clip-Style Carton**  
Sourced from renewable fiber, the paperboard packaging provides a recyclable alternative to plastic rings.
- **User-Friendly Design**  
Center panel secures cans for dependable delivery, with fingerholes for easy transport.
- **KeelClip™1600 System**  
Efficient, high-speed machinery automates LCCB’s packaging line.

**Results** 

- **Reduces Plastic Waste**  
Clip-style carton will eliminate 75,000 pounds of plastic packaging annually for 3.1 million beverage cases.
- **Strong Pack Performance**  
Robust pack performs well through supply chain.
- **Operational Efficiency**  
Equipment streamlines multipack application while meeting demands for speed and scale.

## Challenge

As part of its vision to create a “World Without Waste,” Coca-Cola launched an ambitious sustainability goal to make 100 percent of its packaging recyclable by 2025. To support these goals while meeting the demands of customers and retailers, Liberty Coca-Cola Beverages (LCCB) set out to replace the plastic rings on multipacks of mini cans with a more sustainable packaging solution.

## Solution

LCCB introduced a clip-style paperboard packaging system at its Elmsford, NY production facility. Although the clip-style carton technology is already being used by other Coca-Cola bottlers throughout Europe, LCCB became the first bottler in the U.S. to implement this solution.

The innovative multipack design features a center panel that secures cans for transport, locking the products in place for consistent orientation. The packaging completely covers the tops of the cans to keep the can tops clean and features fingerholes that make packs easy to carry. Made from renewable fiber from sustainable sources, the paperboard carton is easy to recycle after use.

To automate this solution, LCCB installed KeelClip™1600 equipment at its Elmsford facility, which distributes multipacks to markets in New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia. The fully integrated system efficiently constructs and packs the cartons, which arrive flat-packed so more can be transported in each delivery. Once the clip-style carton is applied, multipacks can be direct palletized for ideal operational efficiency.

## Results

Consumers love the clip-style carton for multi-packs of mini Cokes from LCCB. They say the paperboard fasteners are comfortable to carry, strong enough to secure the product in place, and it is easy to remove (and even reattach) cans when needed. The innovative packaging design stands out on retail shelves, offering an expansive surface for brand messaging that reminds consumers to “Recycle Me” when finished.

By replacing plastic rings with an innovative paperboard alternative, the solution exceeded LCCB’s expectations. The new packaging will eliminate an estimated 75,000 pounds of plastic per year from 3.1 million cases.

As a recyclable replacement to single-use plastic can rings, this fiber-based solution from Graphic Packaging supports LCCB’s goals to help Coca-Cola create a “World Without Waste.” Consumers are much more likely to recycle paper and paperboard (66% in the U.S. and 84% in Europe<sup>1</sup>) than they are plastic (less than 10%<sup>2</sup>). This moves the company closer to its goal of entirely recyclable packaging by 2025.

“Liberty Coca-Cola Beverages is thrilled to be Graphic Packaging’s first partner in the United States to implement this innovative packaging system,” said Paul Mulligan, co-owner of Liberty Coca-Cola Beverages. “We are committed to producing sustainable products across our territories that eliminate waste and develop a circular economy. We know that the most valuable change to reduce plastic waste occurs when bottlers and packaging producers work together in partnership, and we look forward to partnering with Graphic Packaging on this sustainable packaging for years to come.”

1. Eurostat/American Forest & Paper Association
2. National Geographic, 2018.