

Recycled Materials Instead of New Plastics

SIMTEK Is Systematically Transitioning Its Tool Packaging to a Recycling-Based Model

Mössingen, May 19, 2026 – Tool manufacturer SIMTEK made a fundamental decision regarding its packaging strategy about two years ago: to move away from newly produced plastic and toward recycled materials. What initially sounds like a classic sustainability project turns out, upon closer inspection, to be a profound transformation of large parts of the packaging system. The switch to recycled materials now affects nearly 70 to 80 percent of the product portfolio - and serves as a prime example of a practical path toward a circular economy in industry.

This step was initiated by Bernd Ganter, Head of Logistics and Supply Chain at the precision tool manufacturer based in Mössingen, Germany. For him, the project was more than just an image campaign from the very beginning. “Our goal was to extend the life cycle of the packaging and thus significantly reduce our dependence on new plastic,” explains Ganter.

In fact, the change is primarily visible only visually: the dark blue packaging previously used has been replaced by gray packaging due to the recycled material. This color scheme is not a design decision, but a direct consequence of the material. The recycled materials used are primarily based on polyethylene (PE) and polypropylene (PP) from household waste. Since the material is not sorted by color there, the result is a neutral gray. For SIMTEK, this represents a deliberate step away from brand-specific color identity - in favor of sustainability. “Gray is the new blue,” says Ganter, summing up the most visible change.



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The customer feedback was overwhelmingly positive, even though the transition was deliberately carried out without extensive communication. “The increased awareness of environmental issues in the industry plays a key role in ensuring that such changes are regarded as necessary progress,” explains Ganter, “especially since we don’t have to make any compromises in terms of quality or functionality.”

The use of recycled materials extends the lifespan of the packaging, reduces the use of new resources, and brings it a decisive step closer to a closed-loop material cycle.

Gradually reaching 90 percent

The transition took place in stages. As existing inventory was exhausted, it was replaced with packaging made from recycled materials. The percentage varies depending on the product group. For toolholders and indexable inserts, it is now around 90 percent; for cutting inserts, it is currently about 50 percent. “This brings us significantly closer to our goal of a complete transition,” says the Head of Logistics with satisfaction.

The biggest challenges were not so much the appearance as the technical implementation. Carbide tools are sensitive to impact and pressure - so secure packaging is crucial to prevent damage during transport. The testing phase was correspondingly extensive: In live tests, tools were shipped under realistic conditions to identify potential weaknesses at an early stage.

Material cycle closed

The results were clear: The test tools shipped showed no signs of damage whatsoever. This is largely due to the precise design of the packaging. The tools are secured in such a way that they are either firmly in place or have only minimal room to move. This reliably prevents collisions within the packaging. Damage to cutting edges or coatings is particularly critical—and this is precisely where the recycled material solution proved its worth. “Damage and material wear should only occur during the machining process, not during transport,” emphasizes Ganter.



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The transition has also stabilized from an economic point of view. While initial costs were about 20 percent higher, prices have since largely aligned with those of the previous packaging. This eliminates a common objection to the use of more sustainable materials.

Another advantage lies in reusability. While earlier solutions could often only be thermally recycled, the new recycled packaging can be recycled up to seven times. A classic single-use product thus becomes part of a functioning material cycle.

This approach is supported by additional features: The labels used can be removed without leaving any residue, which facilitates single-material sorting and improves recycling quality. Furthermore, the packaging complies with relevant standards such as VDI 9001 and ISO 14001, thereby underscoring its industrial practicality.

Sustainability Is Not Yet Over

The motivation behind the project is not solely of a technical or economic nature. Bernd Ganter explains: "As a sailor, I have first-hand experience of the increasing pollution of the oceans with plastic waste over the years. These experiences have reinforced my decision to take active countermeasures by using less new plastic and keeping existing materials in circulation for as long as possible."

At the same time, SIMTEK does not view the current solution as the end goal. Recycled materials are an important step in the right direction, but not the final answer to the plastic problem. This is because even recycled plastics can end up in the environment over the long term and contribute to microplastic pollution.

The long-term goal is therefore clearly defined: the transition to fully biodegradable materials that leave no harmful residues. "Such solutions are not yet established on an industrial basis, but we are monitoring developments very closely and actively seek out alternatives," says Ganter.

The gray of the recycled materials is thus more than just a new color for SIMTEK packaging; it represents a fundamental shift in thinking within the industry.



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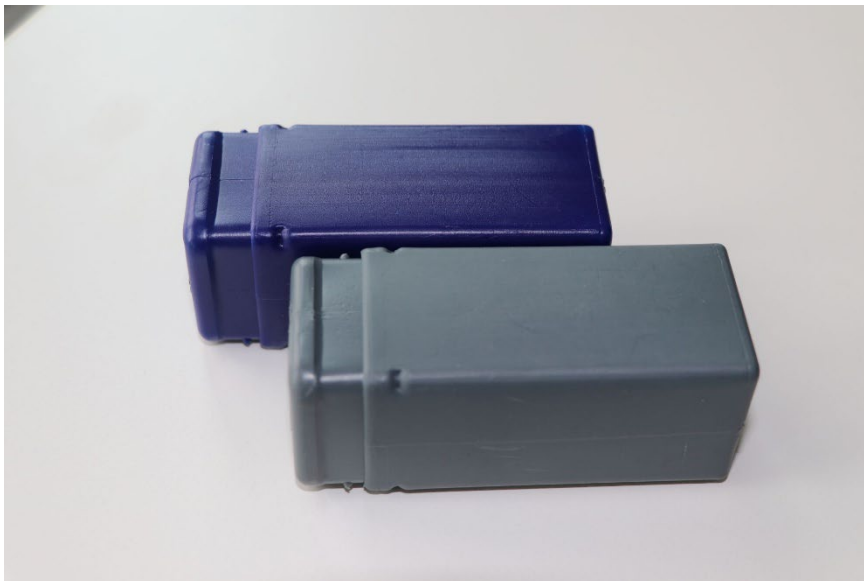
((All images: Courtesy of SIMTEK AG))



Image 1: Bernd Ganter

Caption: Bernd Ganter, Head of Logistics and Supply Chain at SIMTEK: "Increased environmental awareness in the industry ensures that such changes are seen as necessary progress - without having to compromise on quality or functionality."

Download image: https://www.pr-x.de/fileadmin/download/Simtek_Bernd_Ganter.jpg



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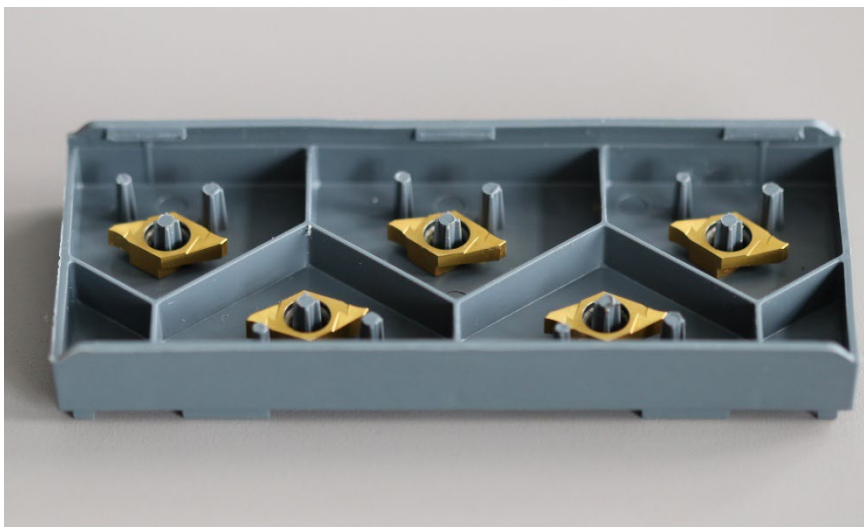
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Images 2+3: Before and After

Caption: Resource-efficient packaging: At tool manufacturer SIMTEK, the previously blue packaging is being replaced with gray recycled solutions that can be recycled multiple times.

Download image: https://www.pr-x.de/fileadmin/download/Simtek_neue_Verpackung1.JPG
https://www.pr-x.de/fileadmin/download/Simtek_neue_Verpackung2.jpg



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Images 4+5: Packaging / Application Details

Caption: Securely protected: The recycled packaging fixes the tools in place precisely and prevents damage from impacts or movement during transport.

Download image: [https://www.pr-](https://www.pr-x.de/fileadmin/download/Simtek_neue_Verpackung3.JPG)

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About SIMTEK

Founded in 1994, SIMTEK Präzisionswerkzeuge GmbH, a central part of the SIMTEK Group, employs almost 600 people worldwide at six production, sales and logistics locations and is present in 50 markets around the globe. The tool specialist, headquartered in Mössingen, Swabia, develops, manufactures and sells carbide precision tools of the highest quality and performance. The extensive standard range currently includes around 16,000 tools for grooving, turning, circular milling, grooving, thread whirling and polygon milling. Tools for machining bores with a minimum diameter of 0.3 mm are just as much a part of the standard range as highly complex, multi-row side milling cutters with a diameter of 200 mm. Thousands of successful customer-specific individual tool developments testify to our extensive development expertise.

More information: www.simtek.com

Proof of publication requested.

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