



Mighty Solutions for Mighty Squirrel: Paper Trials Pave the Way for Biodegradable Plastic

OVERVIEW

Mighty Squirrel Brewing Company, known for its wide range of unique craft beers, faced significant challenges as its popularity soared. Tasked with a commitment to the environment, Mighty Squirrel initially set out to reduce plastic in its packaging, hoping to find a greener alternative in paper-based can carriers.

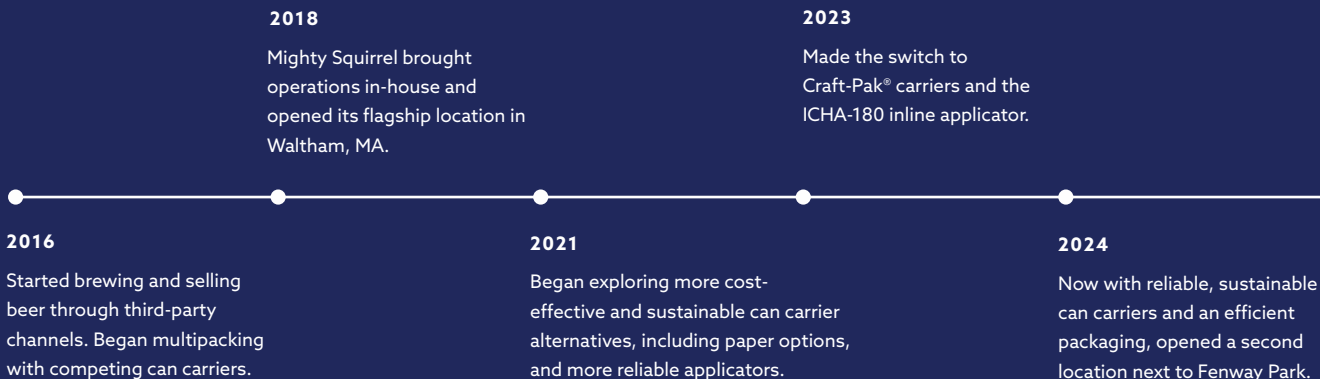
However, the brewery soon discovered that many paper options were not entirely free from plastic coatings and posed challenges in durability and application, especially in its limited production space.

Seeking an effective solution, Mighty Squirrel turned to Roberts PolyPro, a trusted provider of sustainable, efficient packaging solutions. Roberts PolyPro introduced Mighty Squirrel to our biodegradable* Craft-Pak® can carriers, along with an advanced applicator system designed to optimize production efficiency.

This partnership not only supported the brewery's "going green" initiative but also streamlined its packaging process, reduced product loss, maximized output, and offered additional cost savings.

Now equipped with a solution that meets both its sustainability goals and production demands, Mighty Squirrel Brewing Company is well-positioned to continue its growth, all while staying true to its values.

A timeline showing the brewery's exploration of paper alternatives and then choosing biodegradable plastic as the solution



Meet Mighty Squirrel

With over 70 different beers on tap, Mighty Squirrel is known for its wide range of quirky and unique flavors that attract people from all over the country.

Focused on quality and innovation, the brewery has significantly upgraded its equipment and infrastructure over the years to stay competitive in the craft beer market. Its popularity, coupled with the improved efficiency and sustainability brought about by an enhanced packaging line, has led to continuous expansion and even the opening of a second location.

Problem: Lack of Sustainability, Packaging Efficiency, and Innovation in a Small Space

Mighty Squirrel's leadership wanted to reduce its plastic usage to align with its core values and explore more sustainable packaging options.

Initially, the team considered several paper options, hoping to reduce the brewery's reliance on plastic but encountered performance issues and higher costs that didn't meet its needs for efficiency or durability.

While the Mighty Squirrel team actively searched for alternatives, the brewery's commitment to sustainability led them to consider biodegradable can carrier solutions, looking for an option that would help them reduce their environmental footprint without compromising on quality.

As its craft beer gained popularity, the brewery faced increased demand and a desire to stay committed to its sustainability goals. Mighty Squirrel's leadership wanted to reduce its plastic usage to align with its core values and explore more sustainable packaging options.



Adding to these challenges, the brewery faced operational complexities during its testing phase. The team explored paper-based can carriers but encountered significant limitations. Cans often slipped out of the paper carriers during handling, creating inefficiencies and forcing the team to repack products. The testing phase with paper highlighted the need for a more reliable solution to streamline their multipacking process.

Another challenge was the brewery's facility setup. Brewing and packaging operations were housed in a compact space, making it crucial to have an efficient applicator that would fit within the taproom while minimizing noise. Their previous applicator was loud and disruptive, which affected the atmosphere in the taproom. The team needed an applicator that could handle their growing demand, without sacrificing efficiency or disrupting the environment.



We have limited production space for our canning line. And a lot of the competitors' units just weren't going to fit where we needed it to."

- JOHN BARNES, PACKAGING LEAD AT MIGHTY SQUIRREL

Ultimately, the brewery wanted a solution that checked all the boxes: reducing plastic usage, improving operational efficiency, increasing speed, and saving costs — all while supporting its sustainability initiatives and staying ahead of the curve in the green packaging movement.

Everything began falling into place when the brewery connected with the Roberts PolyPro team at the Craft Brewers Conference in 2021. It was here that Mighty Squirrel learned about Roberts' reliable multipacking solutions, commitment to sustainability, and game-changing customer service.

SOLUTION:

Optimized Production and a Paper-to-Plastic Pivot

Going Green With 100% Bio* HDPE Multipacks

Sustainability was a major priority for Mighty Squirrel as its team explored alternative paper can carriers that would have less environmental impact and align with its eco-friendly values.

Initially, the team considered several paper options, hoping to reduce the brewery's reliance on plastic but encountered performance issues and higher costs that didn't meet its needs for efficiency or durability.

*While our certified biodegradable products are made of 100% recyclable materials, items accepted by recycling/composting centers can vary. Please check with your local facility to see what is accepted in your area.



In 2021, Mighty Squirrel connected with Roberts PolyPro at the Craft Brewers Conference and began learning about the unique advantages of the Craft-Pak HDPE can carriers. By 2023, the brewery decided to make the switch, driven by Craft-Pak's 30% reduction in plastic usage, commitment to 100% biodegradable carriers, faster packing speeds, and lower energy consumption.



Sustainability is a main focus in the industry right now. So, we want to make sure that we're staying on the front edge of that."

- JOHN BARNES, PACKAGING LEAD AT MIGHTY SQUIRREL

This focus on a more sustainable packaging solution perfectly aligned with Mighty Squirrel's goal of leaving a smaller footprint. Not to mention, its sustainability expectations were not only met but exceeded once the brewery discovered Roberts' fully biodegradable can carriers.

REDUCING PRODUCT LOSS

After partnering with Roberts PolyPro, Mighty Squirrel's packaging efforts transformed. Once the ICHA-180 automatic applicator was installed in the brewing facility, the team went from experiencing frequent issues with cans slipping out or being damaged due to improperly applied can carriers, to being able to apply the carriers with precision on the first try, preventing breakage and ensuring secure packaging.

In 2023, when Mighty Squirrel adopted Craft-Pak can carriers, product loss became a thing of the past. Craft-Pak's patented T-tabs kept cans securely in place during packaging, handling, and transportation, preserving the flavor of Mighty Squirrel's unique brews and providing a reliable, hassle-free experience for customers.

This not only eliminated downtime but also increased packing speeds, allowing the brewery to operate more efficiently without the risk of misaligned applications causing product loss.



Craft-Pak keeps the cans very secure. That helps us for moving palettes around, and we've gotten good feedback from customers that cans don't fall out onto the ground."

- JOHN BARNES, PACKAGING LEAD AT MIGHTY SQUIRREL



OPTIMIZING SPACE

Mighty Squirrel's canning line operates in a compact production space within its flagship location. Due to this limited space, many competitors' units were not feasible options as they simply wouldn't fit.

This spatial constraint required the brewery to be particularly selective in choosing equipment that could accommodate its production needs without compromising on efficiency or quality.

The ICHA-180 can handle applicator was the perfect fit, integrating seamlessly into the brewery's limited space and preventing excess noise in the customer-facing areas. John Barns, Packaging Lead at Mighty Squirrel, notes "We don't have a lot of downtime with it. It's definitely one of the most reliable parts of our canning line."

The Mighty Squirrel team was even able to work with Roberts PolyPro engineers to ensure the applicator was perfectly customized for the facility. Plus, any time the brewery experienced an equipment issue, the Roberts team was responsive and eager to help.



It was very helpful speaking with Roberts PolyPro's engineers and figuring out where the problem was coming from and then helping us find a solution for it."

- JOHN BARNES, PACKAGING LEAD AT MIGHTY SQUIRREL

RESULTS:

Increased Sustainability and Efficiency, Decreased Costs

By implementing Roberts PolyPro's Craft-Pak biodegradable can carriers and applicator system, Mighty Squirrel has significantly boosted its efficiency and productivity, while simultaneously reducing plastic usage by approximately 30%.

This switch not only aligns with sustainability goals but also delivers notable cost savings, as the innovative system streamlines operations and reduces waste, and offers more affordable handle options compared to previous solutions.



Operationally, it's increased our efficiencies with plastic usage and speed. We've definitely seen a decrease in time usage as far as applying the materials and carriers go."

- JOHN BARNES, PACKAGING LEAD AT MIGHTY SQUIRREL



The automated system seamlessly applies can carriers to each beer can, eliminating the need for manual labor and significantly reducing packaging times. As a result, Mighty Squirrel has been able to increase its production capacity and meet growing consumer demands.

This has saved the brewery time, resources, and money, while also enhancing its reputation for delivering high-quality products efficiently.



We've gotten really great service from Roberts PolyPro. The product itself has really streamlined a lot of things for us. It goes on quickly, and we never have to spend time reapplying missed heads."

- JOHN BARNES, PACKAGING LEAD AT MIGHTY SQUIRREL

GET IN TOUCH WITH OUR TEAM TODAY TO DISCOVER HOW THESE SOLUTIONS CAN BENEFIT YOUR BREWERY.

Mighty Solutions for Mighty Squirrel

Partnering with Roberts PolyPro has allowed Mighty Squirrel to streamline its packaging line and enhance the efficiency of its processes, all while increasing sustainability, reducing issues with cans slipping out or being damaged due to improperly applied can carriers, and providing room for them to grow and expand.

We're proud to provide beverage carrier and applicator solutions tailored to the specific needs of craft brewers, ready-to-drink beverage manufacturers, and other industries.

Who Is Roberts PolyPro?

Roberts PolyPro is the preferred choice for plastic bottle and can handles, as well as application systems among beverage, food, and consumer goods companies large and small. Our innovations are meticulously designed to tackle the contemporary demands of multipacking and convenient carrying in today's dynamic market.

Operating within the ProMach Bottling & Capping business line, Roberts PolyPro plays an integral role in helping our packaging clients safeguard and enhance their reputations and instill confidence among their customers.

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