WHY USE PAPER COFFEE CUPS?

The UK in the 21st century, along with much of the rest of the world, is characterised by ever increasing pressures on time, driving the need for convenience and a 24/7 culture. These pressures have fuelled the growth in the ‘away from home’ sector, seeing the growth and multiplication of high street food and drinks brands and consumer reliance on being able to pick up food and drink on the go whenever and wherever. As a result some 2.5 billion (PCRRG estimate) paper cups are used each year in the UK, largely for ‘on the go’ coffee.

Why do retail, foodservice and catering operators use paper cups?

1. Paper cups are light for the consumer to carry and easy for the operator to stack and store.
2. Responsible UK manufacturers produce paper cups in strict food standard manufacturing facilities and in accordance with all regulations for food contact packaging and as such are completely hygienic and safe for the customer to use.
3. Responsible UK manufacturers produce paper from sustainable forest resources - all members of the FPA and PCRRG source sustainable paper board produced from certified managed forestry (PEFC or FSC) and fully comply with EU Timber Regulations.
4. Used paper cups can be and are recycled, where facilities exist.
5. Used paper cups are a high value source of recoverable material
6. Paper cups are convenient for the customer to take away - the majority of coffee purchased in retail branded stories and independents is consumed away from the store
7. Paper cups offer high quality branding and messaging on cup, which is easily changed for seasonal and promotional messaging and so is completely flexible.
8. Paper cups deliver a high quality feel
9. Paper cups are available in a wide range of sizes to suit every serving occasion

How many paper cups does a tree produce?

One tree from a certified sustainably managed forest produces approximately 100 000 paper cups
History of paper cups

• The paper cup was invented in the US in 1907 by Lawrence Luellen with the launch of his ‘Dixie’ Cup
• Paper cups become commonplace as a result of the world-wide 1918 flu pandemic when they were widely adopted by hospitals to avoid cross infection.
• In the 1930s patents were granted for the addition of handles to paper cups
• In the 1940s wax coated paper cones cups were launched by the Paper Container Manufacturing Company for water drinking
• In 1969 on Long Island New York, convenience chain 7-Eleven became the first chain to offer fresh coffee in to-go cups. The idea rapidly caught on.
• In the 1970s Solo Cup launched its plastic Red Cup and plastic cups soon became the staple for vending machines and institutional service for the next 20 years
• In the late 1980s coffee brands began to adopt paper cups as a more economical, safe and hygienic option, driven by consumer perception of higher quality and better print quality
• In 1987 Howard Schultz CEO of Starbucks adopted paper cups as Starbucks cup of choice
• In the 1990s the use of paper cups for ‘to-go’ coffee and hot beverages became commonplace
• In the 2000s consumer need for convenience drove the growth of high street coffee retailers and take-away brands
• This growth continues in the second decade of the 21st century and is set to continue with brand globalisation and a constant pipeline of innovative new concepts
• Currently, 20% of global wood consumption goes to paper/wood pulp, of which a fraction is used for the production of paper cups

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