

UFLEX

SHIELDING PHARMACEUTICAL BRANDS THROUGH END-TO-END PACKAGING AND ANTI-COUNTERFEITING INNOVATIONS



Amit Shah,
Joint President, Flexible Packaging business



Yogesh Kapur,
Executive Vice President, Holography business

Claimed to be the third largest in the world by volume, the Indian pharmaceutical industry has recorded remarkable growth over the years. But this sector, which hinges on authenticity and trust, has also witnessed a significant rise in the number and sophistication of counterfeiting, particularly in the wake of the pandemic, due to the high demand for drugs and medical supplies. The key for pharmaceutical companies to combat this challenge lies in recognizing the problem and partnering with an efficient flexible packaging solutions provider who can understand evolving market needs and leverage comprehensive packaging solutions under one roof, in turn equipping them to retain their brand value, credibility, and market position, without the hassle of working with multiple players. Serving as the very definition of such an enabler is Uflex, the largest multi-award-winning multinational flexible packaging solutions company in India.

Established in 1985 in Noida by Ashok Chaturvedi, an illustrious first-generation entrepreneur and a thought leader, Uflex initiated its journey in the FMCG domain by introducing first-of-its-kind unit pouches for mouth fresheners, shampoos,

candies, and tomato ketchup in the country, setting the stage for a potential legacy of pioneering first-of-its-kind advancements in the Indian as well as global packaging manufacturing and exporting realms. Slowly expanding its geographical presence and business operations, the company has emerged as a dominant force through its array of comprehensive solutions, innovations, and patented technologies. Today, the firm has expanded its global presence with state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities in India, the UAE, Mexico, Egypt, the USA, Poland, Russia, Nigeria, and Hungary, with Flexible Packaging and Holography plants in Noida and Jammu, apart from its four government-certified R&D labs. Owing to its remarkable contributions, the \$2 billion group, Uflex, has garnered various prestigious awards and the trust of clients in over 150 countries spread across North America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

Engine Room for Breakthroughs

Highly renowned for its end-to-end flexible packaging and holography solutions, Uflex has also carved a niche in the

pharmaceutical industry, working closely with brands to protect their identity while incorporating both overt and covert tamper-evident anti-counterfeiting features into their product designs. This allows the consumers to clearly differentiate between genuine and spurious drugs or medical devices, avoiding subsequent health risks. "Although a fairly recent entrant, we bring innovations and maximum value that the pharmaceutical industry seeks. All our customer engagements have evolved over time. Our customers recognize us for the bandwidth of our products and extreme innovation that can deter counterfeiters and provide convenience," explains Amit Shah, Joint President-Flexible Packaging business. The company's defining strategy is its expertise in engaging with a cross-section of teams within the customer organization to understand not only their visible but also latent needs to integrate the best technologies and solutions to build and preserve brands.

Understanding the customers' vision in detail, Uflex collaborates with its business and allied teams to create a documented product development plan and starts making samples. The success of this effort, however, depends on the preferences of the brand owner, which are often iterated and refined as the project evolves. Considering the growing awareness of counterfeiting, the firm prioritizes educating the customers by providing additional insights on the possibilities of technology and prowess through scheduled interactions, which can also lead to modifications in needs. The samples undergo rigorous testing in both its labs and the customer's labs before proceeding to semi-bulk trials or a soft launch. The entire process can take anywhere from 60 days to six months depending on its complexity, wherein the customer-facing activities and the upgradation of existing packages are quicker, while new product launches, especially with the sensitive packaging, relatively take longer.

The R&D competency of Uflex is equally shouldered by its skilled personnel, who are backed by vast experience and shared passion to fuel the company's mission of innovation. They are encouraged to constantly augment their knowledge base, by extensive experiments and actively participating in customer meetings and knowledge exhibitions. In addition, Uflex designs its products through vertical and backward integration of its unique products and solutions, giving its workforce the flexibility to develop first-in-market products, like embossed flexible packaging, which was once deemed unfeasible. "We understand the significance of upgrading technology. Since its inception, my predecessors and I have striven to continuously invest in procuring a wide range of technologies, from generic to leading-edge equipment, adding them to our existing in-house portfolio. Our dedicated and excellent innovation and

R&D teams further integrate these technologies into making unreplicable solutions for pharma cartons, like HRI coatings on outer packs or holography transparent films, Holography Lidding Foil and Alu- Alu, which empower pharmaceutical customers to stay ahead of counterfeiters," shares Yogesh Kapur, Executive Vice President, Holography Business. The company also specializes in applying holography to different packaging components, encompassing PVC blister packs, foil backing, and entire medicine carton packaging. This vertical integration also adds an edge in maintaining customer IP protection and world-class quality standards throughout the process flow and supply chain, thereby underpinning Uflex's position as a preferred business partner.



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Beyond Packaging

Uflex firmly believes that being a market leader comes with great responsibility and has incorporated multiple environment-friendly measures, even before they were mandated by the government, regulatory bodies, or law. This can be evidenced in its endeavors to make its plants toluene-free in 2020 and recycle multi-layer plastic waste. In fact, the company was lauded for being the first in India to establish a recycling plant for flexible packaging waste, as noted by the eminent Davos Recycle Forum in 1995. Apart from its sustainable manufacturing processes, the company is also recognized for its global sustainability drive, 'Project Plastic Fix', which aims to convert 'waste to wealth' with the 4R approach: reduce, reuse, recycle, and return. Uflex has developed revolutionary technologies and methods, such as post-consumer-grade PCR films, ReLAM 250, the pyrolysis process, and Flexzyme, reinforcing its broader dedication to the welfare of the industry as well as the environment. **PO**