

PRESS RELEASE

UNITED CAPS Unveils Industry-First ‘Define Your Circle’ Initiative

Simplifies life cycle sustainability metrics by combining elements of Life Cycle Assessment and Sustainability Certification

Wiltz, Luxembourg, 15 March 2021 – UNITED CAPS, an international manufacturer of caps and closures, today unveiled a new initiative, ‘Define Your Circle.’ As part of the company’s ongoing commitment to sustainability, ‘Define Your Circle’ is designed to provide UNITED CAPS customers and their customers a simpler way to calculate full life-cycle environmental impact of their products, from before the materials enter the plant right through to its performance in the hands of the end user. In addition, ‘Define Your Circle’ offers a means to customers of contributing to the development of a truly circular economy, in which plastics are too valuable to waste, and are wasted when they are considered single-use.

“At UNITED CAPS, sustainability has always been at the core of our values,” said Benoit Henckes, CEO. “We are constantly looking for actions we can take to reduce the environmental impact of our caps and closures – how they are made, the materials they are constructed from, their weight, how they are sold and how they are distributed. With our industry-first ‘Define Your Circle’ initiative, we have extended that ability to our customers, providing easy-to-use tools that allow us to help them calculate their carbon footprint more accurately, taking actions where appropriate to reduce their life cycle environmental impact and make data-driven informed decisions about their products. We consider this to be a responsible approach to doing business in this era of climate change and negative human impact on the environment.”

What Makes ‘Define Your Circle’ Different?

UNITED CAPS are seeing a growing interest in the use of sustainability certified bio-based and recycled resins as part of an approach to product composition. At the same time, both customers and consumers have been seeking to better understand the weight of decisions they make in the realm of sustainability.

One way to measure environmental effect beyond just making assumptions about impact, which is probably the most frequent approach, is through a process called Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) that assesses the environmental impact of food packaging, including material used, end of life (waste), as well as other environmental impacts, such as the overall effects of fossil-fuel-based or bio-based feed stocks. The process also shows the impact on the overall carbon footprint by using lighter-weight (but equally as effective) caps and closures, smaller neck sizes and more.

Especially for smaller to mid-sized companies, this can be a challenging, complex and expensive process that requires specialists to complete. In addition, there are many misconceptions about the lifecycle environmental impact of various types of plastics, including those manufactured from fossil-fuel feed stocks and those manufactured from bio-based feed stocks.

“Our goal with ‘Define Your Circle’ is to give our customers a tool to make informed choices in consideration of their environmental impact and to compare our products with each other and with competitive products to reach the most sustainable solution possible,” Henckes explained.

Instead of depending on the complexities of a full LCA assessment, UNITED CAPS has chosen to leverage one of the industry’s largest life cycle assessment databases, GaBi, which is constantly updated as new technology and new insights come to the fore.

GaBi stems from the German words “Ganzheitliche Bilanzierung” for holistic balancing and has been around for a quarter of a century with the goal of easing the process of life cycle assessments. The UNITED CAPS ‘Define Your Circle’ tool gives customers access to this extensive database, delivering insight and guidance that leads to better sustainability decision making.

As part of this holistic approach, ‘Define Your Circle’ allows customers to analyse the environmental footprint of caps, closures, and the containers they are used with, making better decisions about many aspects of product manufacture and distribution.

“It’s important to recognise the complexities that surround making the right sustainability choices. UNITED CAPS have adopted an approach that places an emphasis on data-driven transparency to aid decision making,” says Henckes.

“Take for example, our KINDCAP for infant nutrition products” adds Henckes. “We designed it to be the lightest product on the market, but we wanted to dive deeper to help people understand what that really means”.

“By comparing our KINDCAP closure using the GaBi indicator with a standard 99 PE snap cap from Competitor X, we can see that KINDCAP is more than 20% more environmentally friendly in pretty much all aspects. From Water Scarcity to Climate Change and Resource Use, it is verifiably better for the planet.”

“But then if you wanted to go even further, we could ask the question, “What if, a customer wanted to make that closure from bio-based or recycled resins?”

It is a common belief that bio-based feed stocks that can be used for making plastic resin, such as corn or sugar cane, are the most sustainable approach.

“If we further compare a typical PE snap cap made in the normal way versus a KINDCAP made with 50% bio-based resin, we can now have much greater understanding of the trade-offs involved in that decision. For example, the effect of reducing climate change would be substantial but the use of fertilizers and other chemicals can contribute to drinking water contamination.

This unique-in-the-industry approach that has been taken by UNITED CAPS and enables fact-based decision making quickly and easily.

The end-user solution adopted was to work with ISCC Plus Certified bio-based and recycled resins. Suitable for food applications, this certification allows brands to communicate the partial use of certified resin (less than 100%). So, for example, a closure may have been produced with ISCC Certified Resin but the bottle was not. In this example, the closure certification can be displayed on the packaging, aiding the consumer in making an informed choice.

“We often talk in terms of caps and closures that have to perform in the plant and in the hand; it is our hope that ‘Define Your Circle’ will also encourage people to talk about performing for the planet as well”!

For more information about other products and services from UNITED CAPS, please visit www.unitedcaps.com.

Images and captions

SCENARIO OVERVIEW | COMPETITOR X SNAPCAP vs. 99 KINDCAP



Caption: ‘Define Your Circle’ offers manufacturers a data-based decision-making process to sustainability of product packaging.



Caption: UNITED CAPS KINDCAP: A proven sustainable alternative to standard snap cap solution

ABOUT UNITED CAPS

UNITED CAPS is a global industry reference for the design and production of high-performance plastic caps and closures. Extensive innovative capabilities and a broad portfolio of advanced standard and bespoke solutions make UNITED CAPS a preferred partner for the world's leading companies. We support our customers' value chain by safeguarding product integrity, assuring safety and consumer health, and ultimately protecting brand reputation. As a highly dynamic and flexible family-based group, UNITED CAPS offer end-to-end solutions to serve a wide range of applications and markets around the world. The company is headquartered in Luxembourg and has manufacturing facilities in Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Spain and the United Kingdom. Employing almost 750 people, UNITED CAPS's turnover amounts to 156 million Euros (as at end 2020).

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