



The pressure may not be coming from the street – at least during a pandemic. But from large investor groups.

This was most recently apparent at this year's Amazon annual general meeting: under item 8 on the agenda, a non-profit organization representing shareholders' interests wanted first to force the group to disclose its own business operations'

annual plastics consumption (in the same way as the retailer Walmart), and then to gradually reduce it. Off the cuff, 35 percent of the voting shares backed this resolution – a thunderbolt, if you consider that Jeff Bezos alone owns 14 percent.

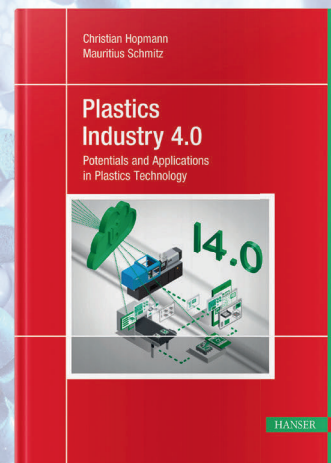
Shareholders Oppose Disposable Packaging

The non-profit foundation "As You Sow," founded in 1992, which proposed the resolution, had some smart arguments: by using vast amounts of plastic packaging, which endangers marine ecosystems, Amazon runs the medium-term risk of harming its reputation and suffering considerable financial damage. In this context, the self-appointed campaigners for corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability by way of stock corporation law referenced a study by the environmental protection organization Oceana, which asserts that 10,000 of the 210,000 tons of plastics packaging waste that Amazon generated in 2019 ended up in waterways. Although the world's biggest online trader rejected these figures as inflated, they struck a nerve with the shareholder activists.

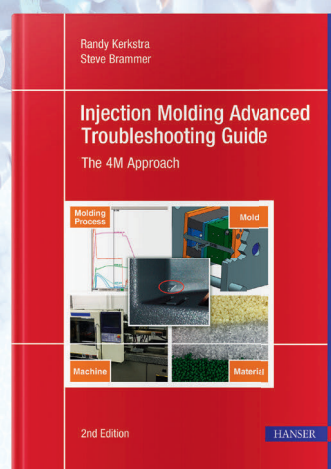
True, the demand for a transparent plastic footprint did not prevail. But anyone who thinks these are all just eco-dreamers or cranks is underestimating the growing influence of such factions. They have already made their presence felt with other corporations, too. In a similar vote at DuPont's annual general meeting, 81 percent supported the motion; Groups such as Unilever and Pepsi consented to drastically reduce their plastics consumption and to increasingly use recycled material for packaging. This may be the plastic industry's last chance to decisively and proactively design a circular economy – instead of always being driven by public opinion.

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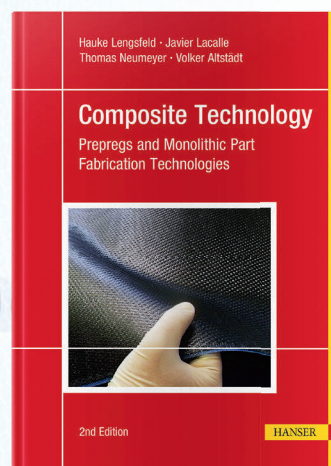
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