

PET FOOD

Insights from our experts

Xavier Montan
Industrial Marketing Director



Adapting to new tastes: pouch meets modern Pet Food demands

Meet our expert and discover how evolving consumer tastes are reshaping Pet Food pouches.



Xavier Montana
Industrial Marketing Director

Xavier Montana is an Industrial Market Director with 12 years of experience in the industrial packaging sector at Volpak, a Coesia Group. With an engineering and Executive MBA background, he has driven global initiatives in Engineering and R&D development, product innovation, and market strategy. He brings a mix of strategic thinking, creativity, and cross-functional collaboration to every project.

Pet owners want convenient, clearly labeled packaging and ingredients they trust — like single-serve or resealable pouches.

How has the market evolved in recent years, and what are the main trends driving innovation in the sector?

The market has changed a lot in the last years. **People care more about what their pets eat** — like they do for themselves. There is strong demand for better quality, natural ingredients, and even special diets. This also means packaging must improve: **smaller portions**, easier to use, and more attractive. We see many new product formats, and **brands want flexible machines** to keep up with that.

How are consumer behaviors influencing the development of products?

Today, pet owners expect the same quality as human food. They look for convenient packaging —like **single-serve or resealable pouches**—and care about **clear labels and origin of ingredients**. This pushes producers to offer **more variety and personalization**. Packaging must reflect that: flexible, safe, and sometimes premium-looking.





How important is automation in production lines, and what are the key benefits it offers?

Automation is very important. It helps make production faster, more stable, and more efficient. With fewer manual steps, there is **less risk of error or contamination**. For large players with high volumes, automation also helps **change formats quickly, improve quality control, and reduce costs**.

Which production technologies do you consider most strategic for ensuring quality and safety in Pet Food?

We believe **horizontal form-fill-seal (HFFS) and premade fill-seal pouching machines (FS) are very good packaging solutions for Pet Food**. They offer **strong control during filling and sealing**. Also, with the inspection systems integration, it can improve the inline quality processes.

Also, hygiene is one of the most critical aspects of production—especially for wet and semi-wet products. The most challenging parts to keep clean are the product contact areas, particularly the filling system, sealing jaws, and dosing components, where residues can accumulate during operation.

Both dry and wet require a hygienic machine design—especially when dealing with powders, fats, or allergens—but wet food is far more demanding. Its viscous, sticky consistency and higher moisture content make it prone to microbial growth, requiring more frequent and thorough cleaning cycles to ensure safety and freshness.

That's why **Volpak machines are engineered with full accessibility**, allowing operators to reach every key area quickly and easily. We also offer **dedicated hygienic-design models** that use **smooth surfaces, special materials**, and optimized **layouts** to reduce product buildup and cross-contamination.

Compared to other packaging formats like cans or trays, **pouches offer clear advantages in hygiene**. Their flexible structure minimizes contact surfaces, simplifies product transfer, and enables faster cleaning and changeovers. This not only ensures higher product quality but also **supports efficiency and sustainability goals** across the production line.

What materials and technologies are being adopted to make packaging more sustainable? Are you engaged in any research initiatives in this area?

Yes, sustainability is growing fast. Many customers want to use **recyclable or mono-material films**. These materials are more challenging to run, but we are adapting our machines to work with them.

We also **test with film suppliers and support projects to reduce material use and lower energy consumption** during sealing.

Since 2019, Volpak is a pioneer to support our customers with a professional Laboratory created with this purpose, where year after year we expand our services and capabilities.

Are there any recent innovations in processes or materials that are changing the way Pet Food is produced?

Yes, definitely. We see more use of **smart packaging**—like QR codes—and **new barrier films that help keep food fresh for longer**. Machines also now offer better flexibility, which is important when brands want to launch new product lines or change pouch shapes often. This also helps reduce downtime.



Volpak, a Coesia company, designs and manufactures automatic packaging machines to form, fill and seal pouches of all types and sizes for a wide range of industries, including Pet Food. We work closely with the market's leading producers to develop innovative and versatile solutions for dry and wet formulations.

Volpak solutions are designed to produce high-quality, appealing pouches and can work with monomaterial and paper-based films.

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In your opinion, what is the most important technical or strategic skill needed today to drive innovation in the sector?

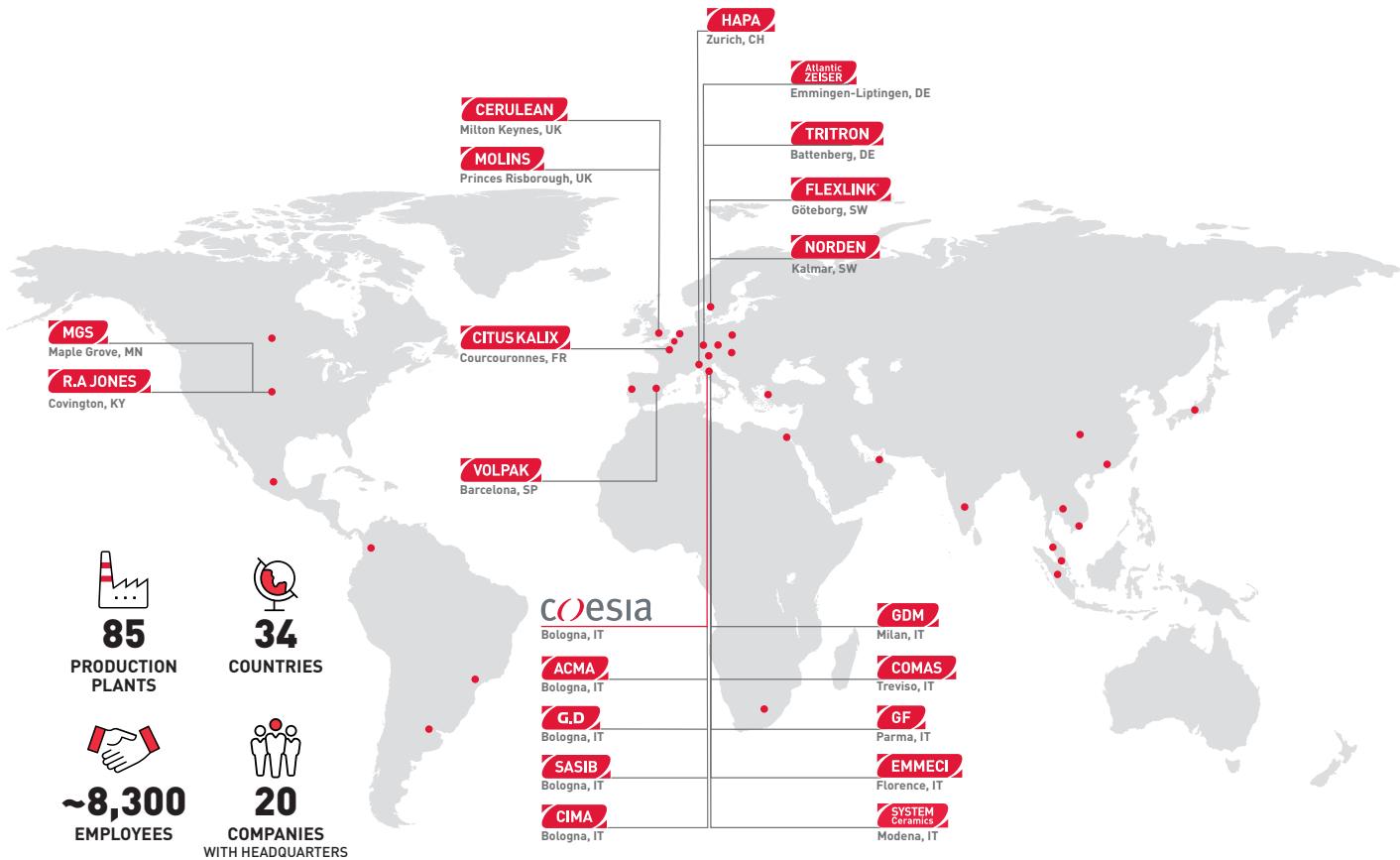
I think **it's important for brand owners to connect innovation goals with what's actually feasible on the production floor.**

The most forward-thinking companies are those that involve packaging teams early, align marketing and engineering internally, and work closely with machine suppliers to co-develop solutions that are scalable, sustainable, and clearly differentiated. In a fast-moving market like Pet Food, **collaboration across functions and agility in decision-making can really make the difference.**

What strategic initiatives has your company planned for the sector in the coming years?

There are **three pillars of innovation** to support sector: **flexibility, sustainability and digital.** At Volpak, we are investing in more flexible machines that can adapt to recyclable films and new formats. We also work to improve our digital services — like remote monitoring and predictive maintenance. **For our customers we aim to be a long-term partner,** supporting growth and innovation in packaging.

Coesia Group in the world



COESIA is a group of innovation-based industrial and packaging solutions companies operating globally, headquartered in Bologna, Italy.

Coesia's companies are leaders in the sectors of:

- Advanced automated machinery
- Industrial process solutions
- High-performance transmissions

Coesia's customers are leading players in a broad range of industries, including Aerospace, Ceramic Tiles, Consumer Goods, Electronics, Energy Storage Systems, Healthcare & Pharma, Luxury Goods, Racing & Automotive, Tobacco.

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COESIA S.p.A.
Via Battindarno 91
40133 Bologna
+39 051 647 4111

www.coesia.com

Volpak S.A.U
Pol. Ind. Can Vinyalets
C/ Can Vinyalets 4
08130 Santa Perpètua de Mogoda
Barcelona, Spain
main@volpak.com

www.volpak.com

