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PackFed's Tory conference stand pays dividends

Josh Brooks, [packagingnews.co.uk](#), 09 October 2009

Dick Searle has declared the Packaging Federation's presence at the Conservative Party Conference a success after councillors and political players were convinced of the industry's importance.

The Federation exhibited at a party conference for the first time at this week's event in Manchester in the hope of telling packaging's positive story to Tory politicians, future parliamentary candidates and councillors.

Chief executive Dick Searle told *Packaging News* that positive feedback from visitors to the stand, who included junior ministers, MPs, influential city councillors and other political players had made the exhibition a worthwhile exercise.

"We took the stand because somehow or other we needed to break the vicious political circle of attitudes against packaging. We made some friends there and had some very influential people on the stand, such as leaders of council waste teams."

Searle added that he was encouraged that many visitors to the stand themselves questioned the media attention given to packaging and its environmental impact.

"All the comments about packaging were about produce packaging. There's obviously lots of lightweight plastic for which people can't really see the purpose until it's explained to them."

Helping Searle spread the message on the stand were Chris Harrison, chief executive of Global Closure Systems, Norman Lett of Ball Packaging Europe and representatives of other packaging sector bodies including Peter Davis of the British Plastics Federation, David Workman of British Glass, Andrew Barnetson of the Confederation of Paper Industries, Rick Hindley of Alupro and Stephen Wilkins of the Child Safe Packaging Group.

They distributed copies of *Packaging in Perspective*, the document published last year by the government's Advisory Committee on Packaging, and *Table for One*, published this summer by Incpen.

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