

“LISTEN HARD” WITH DAVID HAYSLETTE, WESTROCK’S SENIOR DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CRAFT BEVERAGES

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNIE ATWELL FROM JUNESHINE HARD KOMBUCHA



DAVID HAYSLETTE
Senior Director of Business
Development, Craft Beverages

David Hayslette does a lot of listening and occasionally, a bit of taste testing. As the leader of the WestRock craft beverage practice, he’s the guy who pulls together all the resources that WestRock offers—from cartons to corrugated, to labels and more—to provide holistic solutions for his customers. **“We ask a lot of questions and listen hard around what our customers’ objectives are,”** he explains.

Each solution in his toolbox is almost as carefully crafted as the beverages of those with whom he speaks—designed to lower cost, boost sales, minimize risk and advance sustainability goals. It’s a shared ambition and therefore, always grounded in a partnership. These deep partnerships are focused on solving customers’ specific challenges while educating them about how packaging can help deliver on their unique brand promise.

For [JuneShine](#), a San Diego-based hard kombucha maker, sustainability is a huge part of its story. So is authenticity in branding. WestRock partnered with JuneShine to deliver on both.



ANNIE ATWELL
Director of Marketing
JuneShine Hard Kombucha

Here’s David’s conversation with Annie Atwell, director of marketing for JuneShine. Cheers!

Q: David: Annie, thanks for talking with us today! We want to share the story of our partnership to help others learn about how fiber-based packaging can help all types of brewers meet their sustainability goals and communicate their brand stories. Tell us about JuneShine.

A: Annie: Thanks so much, David. We appreciate the opportunity to share our story with other craft beverage makers and the sustainable packaging community. Our purpose at JuneShine Hard Kombucha is to brew honest alcohol for a healthier planet. From our brewers to our CEO, Greg, everybody thinks about sustainability all the time. For us, it’s bigger things like local sourcing, organic ingredients and water use in our operations, to everyday things like carpooling and re-useable utensils—we provide a kit with a reusable fork, knife, spoon, tumbler and straw at onboarding! Our commitment to sustainability is at the forefront of all that we do because it’s also who we are.

Q: David: How is JuneShine approaching sustainability in packaging?

A: Annie: We knew we wanted to get away from the plastic six-pack ring holders. We started to research other options. Greg asked me to find a partner that shared our values around sustainability in a really authentic way. We spent a lot of time with the [WestRock GRI Report](#), and we were impressed with the depth of knowledge and commitment to sustainability—from responsible forestry to supply chain. When we met with you, we felt you really listened to our goals. You seemed to understand us.



Q: David: In addition to sustainability, JuneShine had another big priority you wanted to achieve specifically with your packaging, right? Can you tell us a little about that?

A: Annie: We were looking for a packaging solution that would help us deliver on our commitment to sustainability and also give us some billboard space to share our brand story. With more and more choices at the shelf, it's so important for our packaging to stand out, again, in an authentic way.

With the guidance of our WestRock team, we selected a **fully enclosed, recyclable paperboard carton**. For us, it's about more than just eliminating plastic; it's also about replacing the resources it takes to make the cartons. Chris Davidson, WestRock's director of Corporate Sustainability, walked us through your careful process of sourcing fiber from responsibly managed forests and explained how these forests are regenerated after harvest. But we wanted to do more, and he helped us with the math. In partnership with WestRock and the National Forest Foundation, we plant trees to help replace those that are used to make our cartons! We are actually planting more trees than we are even using—our packaging is as sustainable as it can be today. And we get to use the carton itself to tell this story!

Q: David: What did you learn through this experience that you would share with others in the craft beverage community or other brands interested in sustainable packaging?

A: Annie: We learned that packaging is a really simple and meaningful way to both achieve our sustainability goals and share that story with our customers. We still have work to do in eliminating plastic from our supply chain, but our new packaging is a big step in the right direction. Thank you for your partnership in supporting us and our planet!

LOOKING FOR SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING SOLUTIONS BUT NOT SURE WHERE TO START?

David and the craft beverage team offer a sustainable packaging assessment tool to help small batch producers take a good look at the responsible sourcing of packaging materials and offer suggestions for ways to improve. This new diagnostic tool is often a helpful way to start a conversation.

“Our customers choose to work with us in part because we deliver them the right solutions based on their unique needs,” David explains, “But mostly it's because we approach them with an educational mindset. We don't just knock on their door and hand them a catalogue. We listen hard.”

To learn more, please visit the [WestRock beverage webpage](#) or contact 804.444.5282.

