Question 1: “Why is it so difficult to recycle plastic?”

David Espinosa, founder of Altais Nova: “Plastics, like any other material, require an infrastructure to be in place to collect them, transport them, sort them and then turn them back into raw materials. In the case of plastics, this process is more difficult because there is a great variety of them with different properties, making it more difficult to process them together. As a result, in Europe for example, the recycling of plastics is currently just 25%, while worldwide the average is only 10%.”

Question 2: “What does the plastics recycling process you’re developing consist of?”

David Espinosa, founder of Altais Nova: “The first thing it does is to simplify the composition of the laminates. The fewer elements they contain, the easier they are to recycle. The solution gives the packaging several of the properties that the various layers gave it, which we achieve this with a single additive that also provides an additional solution - actually a property - which is that it makes the packaging magnetic”.

Question 3: “What’s the advantage of that?”

David Espinosa, founder of Altais Nova: “Specifically, since it has to replace other materials, it gives it greater resilience. It also represents a significant barrier to the passage of gases such as oxygen and humidity, which is important for packaging. Why? Well, the main function of packaging is to protect its contents, and that protection has to be against physical damage but also against oxygen and humidity, which can spoil the content of the packaging. One of the main requirements we seek in packaging is for it to keep the content fresh and unspoiled for as long as possible”.

Question 4: “How does your solution make packaging more recyclable?”

David Espinosa, founder of Altais Nova: “It’s currently estimated that about twelve million tons of plastic end up in the oceans every year. Some of this is laminated packaging, which is what our solution focuses on. If our solution is applied to the manufacture of packaging, what we will achieve is to simplify the packaging and make it easier to recover the raw material it contains. Also, as we’re making it magnetic, this will allow us to recover it at treatment plants or rubbish tips, using magnets, a very simple and cost-effective technology”.

Question 5: “Your idea has received a major award”.

David Espinosa, founder of Altais Nova: “Yes, it’s an award for the pursuit of circular materials announced last year by the Ellen McArthur Foundation with funding from Wendy and Eric Schmidt. What it sought was solutions to the problem of plastic waste in the oceans. It was announced at this year’s Davos Forum, together with other winners; and the prize took the form of cash to be able to start development and a business development programme with the support of mentors and business contacts”.
Question 6: “When will it be possible to apply it to industrial recycling processes?”

David Espinosa, founder of Altais Nova: “Realistically, it may be two or three years before the product reaches the market”.

Question 7: “¿How much is the laminated packaging market worth?”

David Espinosa, founder of Altais Nova: “About a hundred billion dollars a year. That’s from last year’s figures, we’re seeing increases of around 10% a year”.

Question 8: “A closing piece of advice?”

David Espinosa, founder of Altais Nova: “The main solution lies in reusing what we use instead of single use. Although there may be solutions, they will not work unless as consumers we’re all aware of the problem and reduce our consumption of plastic”.

Cuida del Medio Ambiente. Imprima en Blanco y Negro y sólo si es necesario.