

Securing a Food Packaging Expert Witness for a Polystyrene Sustainability Case

Sustainability cases can require expertise across several disciplines, particularly when the product at issue is food packaging. It is not enough to know whether a material can be recycled or its environmental impact. The right expert also needs to understand why a particular material is used, how it performs, and the trade-offs that come with available alternatives. Our recent expert witness search involving polystyrene foam egg cartons provides a good example.

The Case Challenge

Our client was defending a consumer and environmental matter involving the sustainability and recyclability of polystyrene foam egg cartons. They sought an expert witness to evaluate whether the packaging was recyclable, explain the environmental advantages and disadvantages of polystyrene, and address the sustainability of alternative packaging materials.

However, the issue was broader than simply finding an environmental expert. Egg packaging must protect a fragile product while maintaining food quality, withstanding transportation and distribution, and meeting consumer expectations. Thus, the client needed someone who understood food packaging and could speak to the practical reasons behind material selection.

Together, those requirements significantly narrowed the expert witness search. We needed to find someone who could credibly opine on both areas: the environmental considerations surrounding polystyrene and the practical realities of selecting packaging for a food product.

The Expert Solution

Our custom expert witness search team identified and evaluated 10 potential experts with backgrounds spanning packaging science, environmental sustainability, recycling, waste

management, and food protection. From that group, we presented the four candidates we believed were the strongest fit. The client interviewed all four.

Following those interviews, the client retained an expert with a PhD in food science and an MS in packaging science who leads a university consortium focused on polymers and food protection. His research, which includes food packaging and recycling, has been funded by the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, Food and Drug Administration, and private industry partners. He also regularly presents on the advantages and disadvantages of different food packaging materials and has specific expertise in polystyrene packaging.

Rather than looking at polystyrene only through an environmental lens, he could address recyclability and sustainability while also explaining material performance, food protection, and the trade-offs of alternative packaging options.

The Outcome

This matter was resolved through a settlement agreement.

The IMS Expert Witness Advantage

This custom search showed the value of looking beyond the basic expert profile. An environmental sustainability expert may have addressed part of the question, but this case required someone who understood the full picture. By focusing the search on the intersection of sustainability, recycling, food science, and packaging performance, we gave the client four relevant options and enabled them to quickly engage an expert whose experience closely matched the issues in dispute.

Every case raises its own technical questions, and the expert who can answer them is rarely found through a directory alone. The IMS custom expert witness team starts with the specific issues in your matter and builds the search around them. We identify and vet candidates across every relevant discipline, then present a focused shortlist of the best-aligned experts. Our approach saves you time, reduces the risk of retaining an expert who can speak to only part of the case, and gives you strong options to interview before retaining.



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If you are working on a matter that involves sustainability, product design, or another specialized field, IMS can help you find the expert whose experience fits your case. Contact us today to get started.

IMS knows the subject matter authorities across every industry and discipline. No matter your specific needs, IMS will locate and deliver the best-aligned expert witness.

Let's find your expert: contactus@imslegal.com

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