

Van der Windt Group

Packaging Solutions and Services

The economic crisis has not passed packaging supplier Van der Windt Verpakking BV in Honselersdijk by unnoticed: In the first half of 2009 the company's revenue in the ornamental horticulture sector fell by 30%.

"The entire horticulture sector is under extreme pressure", says Managing Director (operations) Ruurd Ouwehand. "But, luckily, the fact that our revenue is spread evenly across our four business units and because we continue to invest in innovation has made us less vulnerable."

In the forty years since the company was established Van der Windt has expanded from a supplier of cucumber boxes to a leading international distributor of plastic (and cardboard) packaging for the agriculture and ornamental horticulture sector, the food and non-food industry and the retail sector. Van der Windt also supplies other segments including catering, food service, cleaning and health care. In 2008 the Van der Windt Group with over 200 employees achieved revenue of €154 million. The first of a series of acquisitions took place in 1978 with the acquisition of the German packaging manufacturer, Wentus.

Van der Windt now occupies a leading position in many of its markets. In the ornamental horticulture market, for example, Van der Windt is the world market leader in flower and plant sleeves and, certainly since its acquisition of Olsthoorn Verpakkingen last year, offers an extremely full range of packaging. Van der Windt is also the leader in the Dutch fruit & vegetable market with products such as boxes, trays, films, cover sheets and interleaf sheets.

In 1989 the Van der Windt Group was sold to Buhmann Tetterode and since 1996 has formed part of the Clondalkin Group - an international group of 45 packaging manufacturers in Europe and North America with annual revenue amounting to over €900 million. Van der Windt has sales and distribution organisations in the Netherlands, Belgium, Great Britain, Denmark and Ireland and, together with its associate company Wentus (manufacturing facilities in Germany and Slovenia), forms the Van der Windt Wentus Packaging Group.

Packaging in a single package

Large companies that used to purchase their packaging from up to forty different suppliers can now find everything they need at Van der Windt. One-stop-shopping for more than 15,000 different packaging products. Whether they need flower, plant and herb sleeves, cucumber shrink wrap, cardboard boxes, plastic crates, buckets, onion and potatosacks, disposables, coffee cups, carrier bags,

films, closures, filling and protection materials, pallet wrapping film or garbage bags, Van der Windt has it all. Van der Windt works with its customers to develop new packaging or improve existing packaging. Especially in difficult times such as these Van der Windt wants to continue investing in innovative packaging solutions that add value.

Ouwehand: "To be successful you have to think along with your customer, and your customer's specific requirement or packaging challenge has to be the core issue."

Concept creator

Van der Windt profiles itself as a concept creator within the packaging chain.

Asked for an example Ouwehand names the added-value for customers resulting from the recently-started cooperation with the PerfoTec company.

"In cooperation with PerfoTec we supply a patented laser system that enables the customer to perforate its own film," he explains. "A perforation pattern specifically geared to the product can extend the shelf-life of fresh produce, such as sliced vegetables, to four days. Customers can also experiment with optimising the perforation pattern themselves very simply.

Supermarkets can stand out from the competition because their produce remains fresh longer and there is less waste due to deterioration.

We work with a number of companies for which we have developed/marked specific concepts. This type of development is important, especially in less favourable economic times.

Customers look for savings or for ways to stand out from their competition."





A selection from Van der Windt Verpakking's product range.



extremely vulnerable to fraud and was unworkable," says Ouwehand. "As a supplier of point-of-sale packaging we wanted to fulfil our responsibility. So we sent our 6,000 Dutch customers an informative letter. This initiative was highly appreciated."

Developing the knowledge of its employees is also a high priority for Van der Windt. "All the sales staff have at least a good basic knowledge of packaging and can always call upon our product specialists. Our employees are the foundation of our success."

Bio-based plastics

Van der Windt is closely involved in the development of packaging made from renewable raw materials. Several years ago the company was still a relatively small player in this field. But then a specialist joined the company to support the outside sales force and now Van der Windt occupies a leading position. Ouwehand: "We now offer a wide range of bio-based packaging and concepts. And the range is expanding: we anticipate that by 2020 20% of plastic packaging will be bio-based.

"Fossil-based raw materials are becoming scarce and companies want to stand out by operating in a socially responsible manner. We are very happy to help them achieve this goal."

Knowledge development

Developing knowledge to serve its customers has made a major contribution towards Van der Windt Packaging's success. Not only knowledge of (international) developments in the field of packaging, but also knowledge in other fields, such as packaging tax on point-of-sale packaging.

Ruud Ouwehand, together with Anton Brouwer (NVGP) and Harry Lucas (VMK), has started lobbying the Dutch Ministry of Finance in order to bring about some changes. "The system proposed for the Netherlands was



Managing Director Ruud Ouwehand

Ruud Ouwehand is very confident that Van der Windt will come through the current recession well. "The company is extremely healthy, we have a strong parent company behind us and, above all, we have skilled and motivated employees. Which is why we anticipate expanding our strong market position still further in the coming years."