

THE CLEAN GREEN VISION

By: *David Baumgarten, Vice President, Baumgartens*

The Janitorial and Sanitation (Jan/San) industries, more than most others, are fraught with obstacles to going green. Built right into this industry is a level of disposability and use of strong chemicals unmatched in the office supply sector.

Harsh chemicals are what founded and guaranteed things got cleaned at one point. Much like smoking was considered good for our health for millennia, or the insecticide DDT, for which its founder received a Nobel Prize, was great for the volume of our food crops, chemicals made for a revolutionary death of crop killers. Smoking and DDT have since been linked to many human illnesses and new studies are finding that many of the chemicals and compounds we have been using in the Jan/San industry such as ammonia are linked to ill health effects as well. While commercial and domestic Jan/San supplies and its impact on humans are under scrutiny consumers are asking whether the everyday use of certain chemicals is healthy or harmful to humans.

There is an increasing demand on manufacturers to produce a new world of products, best practices, and solutions for business and home life with an emphasis on health, safety and the environment. The demand calls for an aggressive move towards solutions that address long-term sustainability concerns along with many other areas of business. Decreasing the environmental cost of shipping through package reductions; using toilette paper made of post-consumer materials; and switching to biodegradable trashcan liners made of cornstarch are some of the ways this industry can reduce, reuse and recycle.

Times are changing and the Jan/San industry is making a fundamental shift towards cleaning for health rather than for appearance or that squeaky-clean bleach smell. It is time to give the public solutions that work and options that are better for the environment.

This is not an easy task for most manufacturers. The incumbent producers of non-green products have a very long history of selling items that don't live up to modern public demands for independent green standards or the coming EPA standards. In fact, NO mass marketed product can be made by anyone that does not harm the environment. The target right now is less and less harm.

According to a survey conducted by Harris Interactive, Americans are still willing to pay more for green products and services despite an economic downturn and respondents said they are willing to spend an average 17-19 percent more for environmentally-friendly products. Products that claim to be sustainable, environmentally friendly or eco-friendly doubled in 2008 compared to the previ-

ous year and Datamonitor's Product Launch Analytics report says the number of green products will have tripled in 2009 if the trend continues.

Wal-Mart has taken the lead and installed an initiative to reduce packaging by five percent by the year 2013. According to their website, a five percent reduction in packaging translates into 200,000 trucks taken off roads annually, not burning 60 million gallons of diesel fuel, and \$3.4 billion in savings for the company over a five year period.

The Jan/San industry could follow suite and do the same or better. Since a third of all consumer trash comes from packaging, why not start with this area? Aside from decreasing the use of harmful chemicals, decrease the harm associated with the logistics of shipping cleaning supplies from one place to the next. The biggest savings come from transportation...fit more on a container and save from transporting smaller packages.



Revolutionary technology is being invented every day to decrease harmful impact on our natural resources and to encourage the use of materials that are sustainable. For example, Baumgartens has introduced a new product that uses technology to have cleaners made without the heaviest ingredient, water. Conserve Cleaners, a line of spray cleaning products that use an innovative tablet, only requires the addition of water when the consumer is ready to use the product and comes with the bonus of four tablets to equal four bottles of cleaning solution for the price equivalent of one full bottle of conventional liquid cleaner. What does this mean?

Imagine taking eight trucks off the road for every one shipment of cleaning products for the Jan/San industry. For instance, one truckload (a 53-foot truck traveling 1000 miles) of Conserve Cleaners saves almost 1,500 gallons in fuel, which is eight times less fuel to transport the product! That's more than 25,000 lbs of CO2 not going into our atmosphere, and more than 100,000 plastic bottles not going into landfills. One thousand miles and 100,000 bottles are just a tiny fraction of what is being moved and discarded in reality. The real numbers of bottles and fuel saved is in the millions no matter how we look at it.

In fact, we are being asked by customers to do bulk tablets without bottles. Twelve tablets without bottles equals 48 truckloads taken off roads instead of eight! The increase in scale magnifies the posi-

tive impact. As our customers continue to tell us how to create packaging for the Jan/San industry, we will continue to reduce the number of emissions from the number of trucks.

There are many pathways for the Jan/San industry to go green. While we suggest the first step be a massive reduction of packaging, companies could start internally and offset power usage, recycle and reuse plastics, papers and cardboards, eliminate harmful ingredients, and look creatively at other ways the industry can clean green.

Baumgartens

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Websites: www.conservebrand.com and www.b3.net

Baumgartens is a manufacturer of unique, useful and environmentally-friendly products. The woman-owned, family business supplies products for the office, school, and home to thousands of retailers and wholesalers across the U.S.A.