

PRODUCTS

Satino Black. It's so easy to go "green"

"To Dare" – the perfect verb chosen by Van Houtum, the Dutch company who has introduced on the market an ecological toilet paper that is as soft and white as traditional rolls. But this roll is obtained by using 100% recycled paper through a production process conceived in full respect of the environment.

Perini Journal

Curious to know why the color black was chosen to promote the Satino Black product on the market – a "green", 100% ecological product – we interviewed Nick op den Buijsch, Conceptmanager Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of Van Houtum. Surely, being in the vanguard in terms of marketing and communication also means breaking the canons typical of the association of ideas. Today, the color green automatically translates into the concept of ecological; in this case, Black becomes a challenge in order to really be ecological.

Perini Journal (PJL): Who is Van Houtum?

Nick op den Buijsch (NODB): Van Houtum has been an independent producer of hygienic paper products and innovative washroom solutions for 75 years and is a leader in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This family-owned company incorporates a deep sense of respect for people and the environment into its business operations. Van Houtum puts this CSR perspective into practice with equal consideration for People, Planet and Profit.

With roughly 200 employees, Van Houtum produces 45,000 tons of paper products annually, generating a turnover of ? 60 million. The head office and both production sites are located in Swalmen, the Netherlands. By consistently and effectively applying CSR principles in its business, Van Houtum has succeeded in turning matters around and converting former threats, such as environmental and personnel costs, into opportunities and sources of strength. Its successes in the area of CSR are a fantastic source of positive energy and motivation for all the employees, whose confidence and pride are increasing every day.

For over 40 years, Van Houtum has used only 100% recycled paper in its products, because it has always been convinced that disposable products should be produced only with the help of recycled fibers.

PJL: Satino Black: How was the idea born?

NODB: Satino Black is the only truly CO₂-neutral toilet paper made with 100% recycled paper and an environmentally friendly production process, and it is just as soft and white as normal toilet paper. Innovative technologies guarantee high paper quality and enjoyable softness. Satino Black is allowed to display the environmental labels: FSC recycled, European Ecolabel and Cradle to Cradle. Satino Black is greener than green, it is darkgreen! This range of products needs a statement and has to become completely different for what concerns communication. And so, the idea for the name Satino Black was born!

THE CRADLE TO CRADLE CONCEPT. Special expertise and knowledge are required to recycle paper into a new generation of products such as Satino Black. MBDC in the US is the agency established by Michael Braungart and William McDonough, the founders of the Cradle to Cradle concept. The core of their philosophy is that waste forms a source of new materials and that ecological efficiency is critical. A great many chemicals are used in the production of conventional tissue paper. Together with the EPEA research firm in Germany, we investigated the properties and effects of all these chemicals in detail, including concentrations of contaminations as well as biodegradability. All substances which did not comply with our strict specifications were replaced by natural and biodegradable materials. In short, Satino Black is designed and produced with respect for the biological cycles of nature.

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CO2 -NEUTRAL AND EUROPEAN ECOLABEL. The energy used to produce Satino Black is 100% green energy. Green energy is generated by wind, water and solar energy and by green gas supplied to our own co-generation plant. Green gas is sustainable gas, produced via biological processes and obtained from water treatment and fermentation installations. The use of green energy reduces CO2 emissions and saves fossil fuel. Finally, the amount of water and energy used in the production of Satino Black is already one of the lowest in the world for this sector.

100% RECYCLED PAPER. Satino Black is the end result of thinking ahead for many years about the issue of “How can we minimize our impact on the environment?”. Just before the environmental summit in Copenhagen, publications appeared to the effect that the use of toilet paper is among the top 5 domestic daily environmental ‘eco-crimes’. Many consumers don’t realize that most toilet paper is still made from live trees that are cut and processed for this purpose. This is completely unnecessary. Toilet paper itself is a disposable product that disappears down the drain, it cannot be recycled. Satino Black is made exclusively from 100% recycled paper, i.e. paper which has already been used one or more times before it is processed into new toilet paper.

PJL: What is your company policy regarding the environmental issue?

NODB: Our mission statement says it all: as a producer of hygienic paper products, Van Houtum develops innovative solutions for better toilet hygiene in combination with outstanding environmental characteristics. In our family-owned company, a deep sense of respect for people and the environment pervades all our business operations. Our unique service guarantees and also ensures that we are a very reliable and committed partner to you.

PJL: Why did you choose the campaign slogan: “Dare to be black? What is your message?”

NODB: It takes audacity and perseverance to make decisions that are not mainstream. But Van Houtum dares to follow this path and we can help our customers to make the switch to socially responsible products. We tell them: Raise your green quotient by switching over to Satino Black. Dare to be different. So, “Dare to be Black” is the slogan of the campaign. The payoff for Satino Black is: “It’s so easy to go green”, because Satino Black makes it as simple as possible for organizations to become a little bit more green by helping them. With one simple act, taking only a few seconds, organizations can help the environment and take a step towards realizing their sustainability targets.

PJL: The Away from Home Market: is it growing today?

NODB: Satino Black has been developed for a niche market, but this part of the market is the future and is growing very fast. Consumers, companies and governments worldwide are demanding ever more stringent product requirements while at the same time they want to make a contribution to the improvement of the environment. Satino Black has been developed to get a step closer to the set environmental objectives with one simple act. This makes it possible for everyone to make a contribution to breaking through the unnecessary exhaustion of our planet’s natural resources. Green is cool with Black.

PJL: Describe your ideal customer. What do you think the customer appreciates today (being environmentally friendly, quality, price, etc.)?

NODB: Consumers, companies and governments who want to make a contribution to improving the environment. Quality and price of a product are important for customers, but they also want to contribute to ending the negative cycle of unnecessarily depleting our planet’s natural resources.

PJL: How important is image for Away from Home products (packaging, advertising, etc.)?

NODB: Companies and governments are becoming increasingly and more corporate socially responsible and they want to communicate that fact to all stakeholders and especially to their employees. Therefore Satino Black developed a communication concept for the washroom: Satino Black will help organisations communicate their message in the washroom, through the use of Satino Black, the most environmentally friendly toilet paper in the world.

PJL: Why did you choose the color Black to identify a Green product?

NODB: To us, black is the new green. Consumers, companies and governments worldwide are demanding increasingly more stringent product requirements while at the same time they want to make a contribution to environmental improvement. Satino Black has been developed to get a step closer to the set environmental objectives with one simple act. This makes it possible for everyone to make a contribution to stopping the unnecessary exhaustion of the natural resources on our planet. Satino Black is really outgoing. The color Black is, too. Green is cool with Black.

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PJL: Describe your company, its ideals, in a few sentences.

NOBB: What you stand for as a company and the ideals you represent as a person have great importance.

For the sake of our world, we must all change our behavior. Van Houtum does so effectively and sustainably.

PJL: How has the market reacted to Satino Black?

NOBB: Very positively. With Satino Black, a new generation of tissue products is launched, clearly recognizable and highly distinctive. Customers appreciate this and their evaluation translates into a strong upward turnover for Satino Black. •

For more information about Satino Black, download the product's leaflet from the website: www.satinoblack.com.