

Label Industry Award for Continuous Innovation

From adhesives supplier to innovation company

In 1947, Dr. Marcel Ebnöther founded an adhesives company in Olten, Switzerland, that over the following six decades evolved from adhesives manufacturer to global innovation company employing some 330 staff. In 2008, Collano structured its activities into three new strategic business units: Collano Adhesives, nolax and Collano Services. This pooling of forces has enabled Collano Adhesives to expand its specific core competencies in high-potential innovative applications, such as labels/tapes/packaging, lightweight construction, interior design/construction, technical textiles, apparel and foam.

Abandoning solvents

In addition to focusing on its strength of innovation, the Collano Group believes that a highly developed awareness of the needs of people, the environment and capital are key success factors. Accordingly, the company abandoned its research and development activities into solvent-based products in the late 1980s. Consequently, production within the Collano Group has been almost solvent-free for two decades. The company's product programme is instead concentrated on the following four adhesive technologies:

- Water-based adhesives and coating systems
- Hotmelt adhesives (classic and radiation-curable)
- Reactive adhesive systems (1C and 2C PUR and silanes)
- Adhesive films (thermoplastic single- and multilayer films) and coatings

Collano has been developing and producing hotmelt adhesives for the labels industry for 30 years.

Pioneer in UV-curable hotmelts

Just 20 years ago, solvents played a significant role in adhesive labels. Collano pioneered the replacement of solvent-based adhesives by UV-curable hotmelt adhesives – an area in which it is still a market leader.

In developing UV-curable hotmelt adhesives for the labels industry, Collano Adhesives is pursuing a number of different goals. For one, these products can serve as replacements for solvent-based adhesives. For another, they can boost heat resistance to over 150 °C and enhance resistance to UV light and chemicals. A further advantage is that they can be used to build up adhesive layers of very high transparency.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that “clear-on-clear” labels are a key application area for these innovative UV-curable hotmelt adhesives. Such labels are often used for packaging foods, beverages and cosmetics. The adhesives required must be highly transparent for the clear outer materials and strike a good balance between adhesion and cohesion. Collano Adhesives also offers specialty formulations that can be pasteurised and steam sterilized.

Product protection is another growth market where there is huge potential for innovation. Applications here include resealable label systems for wet wipes. The adhesives employed must be highly compatible with the liquid components of the wet wipes. They must seal reliably, but peel off smoothly and silently.



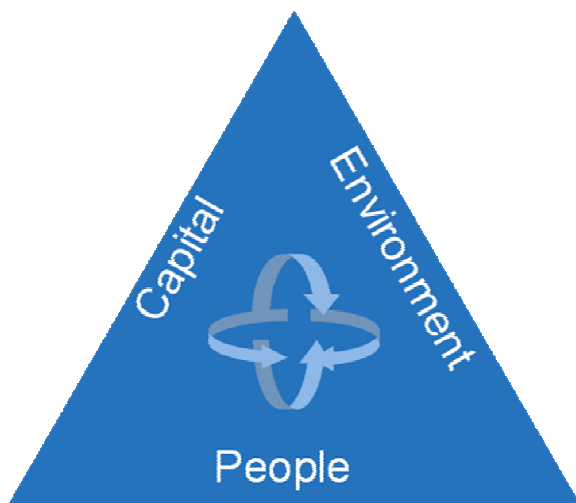
Adhesives from renewable resources

The development of adhesives derived from renewable resources characterizes Collano Adhesives' ongoing quest for innovative solutions. A most recent example is an adhesive with a renewables content of more than 75%, 17% of which is sunflower oil, and is used for eco-friendly adhesive tapes and specialty food labels.



An innovative approach to innovation

In order to expand the company's strength of innovation, Collano Adhesives continually seeks new ways that go beyond the traditional options, such as in-house development work. For example, all its employees are committed through various activities (brand ambassadors, behavioral branding, leadership development, etc.) to developing its strengths as an innovation company. The Collano Group also founded an Innovation Prize in 2003 as a way of gaining access to external inventions and research institutes.



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