



Cleaning tools across borders

Supermarket and hypermarket chains, DIY stores, discounters and other large retailers are increasingly expanding across borders. This presents challenges for suppliers including own-brand (or private label) suppliers, who need to provide uniform stock for stores which may be thousands of kilometres apart. As a one-stop-shop for private label cleaning equipment, Belgian company PDC BRUSH has gained a competitive edge by rapidly adapting its business to this new trend.

The pivot towards a more international stance is being spearheaded by CEO Filip Lepoutre, a man who has crossed many borders himself, in a varied and global career. “All those international experiences have improved my methods for adjusting PDC BRUSH to the changing needs of retailers in their supply chains. One need only look at the issues surrounding Brexit to know companies are increasingly reliant on complex cross-border interaction,” says Mr. Lepoutre.

However, transnational supply chain management is no easy task, and requires understanding of the complex needs of a rapidly moving market, as the CEO notes: “The key aspect of our approach is to make changes to our business

offering in line with what our customers tell us is important to them, as they know their business better than us. From talking to our customers, two trends have emerged, convenience and uniformity. This has led us to change the way we

position our staff. For example, our salesmen used to be organized on a country-by-country basis, liaising with clients in a national market, processing orders for our range of brushes and other private label cleaning supplies.” That country-

by-country approach is not practical today, as the CEO explains, “in this market climate, it’s more important to have an intimate knowledge of the specific retail network a specific supermarket or DIY store is operating in, rather than



The company's main factory in western Flanders first opened its doors in 1946, and has been specializing in brush production ever since



Currently, 70% of PDC BRUSH's product range is available internationally



Our clients gain personal contacts who understand the range of products they want in every store and are familiar with their particular set of cross-border challenges.

the overview on a national level. PDC BRUSH is not a catalogue company.”

Today, PDC BRUSH operates a different model. “We have one Key Account Ambassador per customer group, responsible for orders and deliveries of our products across the whole chain or alliance,” notes Mr. Lepoutre. “That way we can ensure continuity across borders and uniformity in our stock capabilities. Our clients also gain personal contacts who understand the range of products they want in every store, and are familiar with their particular set of cross-border challenges and demands.”

The second key aspect, convenience, is something Mr. Lepoutre personally believes is key. “PDC BRUSH’s approach means that our clients can concentrate on other aspects of running a successful business, without having to dedicate resources to providing a common product offering across their branch network,” he continues. “Our clients don’t want to waste time ensuring they have a similar range of products in France as they do in Russia for example.

Making things easy for these large organizations has been the key factor in our success.” This approach has resulted in important growth for the business. Turnover topped 23 million EUR in the last financial year.

For Mr. Lepoutre, convenience even extends to simplifying the acquisition of products. “We simplify the purchasing process of our clients,” remarks the CEO. “It’s not a priority for them to set up complex supply chains with multiple parties, so our ability to source products we do not make ourselves consolidates all of our clients own-brand cleaning products into one package. Sourcing private-label cleaning products we don’t make ourselves has really become key, as it makes us flexible to our customer’s needs. Our office in China is a very important part of this approach.”

Building a multi-national business has also meant that PDC BRUSH can learn from one country and develop innovative products which are ahead of the curve in others. “Something we are investing in at the moment is a shift towards more

environmentally friendly materials, especially for higher-end partners in northern European countries and Scandinavia. Environmental concerns mean that natural and recycled materials are becoming more popular in many of our markets,” Mr. Lepoutre adds. “It’s usually big brands that lead the market, but we aim to be excellent followers of the trends. This gives us an advantage over purely national private-label manufacturers, because we can spot trends before they become mainstream, and be ready to deliver when they enter into new markets.”

PDC BRUSH is finding great success in a flexible company culture



that has adjusted to changes in the way its customers operate. Despite the challenging and changing market environment, and the fact that volume, sharp prices and flexibility are key in a private label approach, PDC BRUSH has achieved impressive growth beyond its regular markets and still has huge potential.

PDCBRUSH®
YOUR PARTNER IN CLEANING TOOLS

PDC BRUSH

Maislaan 10
8800 Roeselare
Belgium

+32 51 312602

+32 51 312842

info@pdcbush.be

www.pdcbush.be