

ECOVER

From a small idea to a global impact

TYPE OF MIMICRY

Systems Level (Closed Loops, Open & Transparent, Sense of purpose)

Ecover was a pioneer in environmental advocacy and has upheld its values until today to become the world's largest green cleaning products company by sales.

Ecover is a medium-sized Belgian company specialized in the manufacture of ecological household products. With only 300 employees, it has an annual turnover of \$250 million. It is the world's leading manufacturer in this domain, producing innovative, plant-based products with reusable, recyclable and renewable packaging. Its products are distributed worldwide, with Europe and the United States (including brand name "Method"), as its main markets. In 2008, its CEO, Mick Bremans, was awarded the title "Hero of the Environment" by the magazine TIME for working towards a greener future.

Evolving from the small company fighting for Environmental advocacy to a leader in its market, Ecover has put Nature first in all of its strategies. In 1979, long before the terms «sustainable development» and «respect for the environment» became commonplace, Frans Bogaerts and his ultra-motivated team of pioneers in environmental advocacy developed their vision. They found out that chemicals in washing powders and cleaning products, especially phosphates, polluted water and destroyed aquatic life. They decided to do something about it, and Ecover was born. Their Vision was to produce a washing powder free of toxic chemicals, including phosphates. Since the creation of this state-of-the-art washing powder, their commitment to greening cleaning products continues to grow. Using the natural powers of plants, today, their range of cleaning products is both effective and respectful of the Society and Nature. Ecover continuously strives to follow its core values. For instance, the concept of "externality" does not exist in their company.

All aspects of the life cycle of its products (including supply chain and post-consumption) are integrated into the business decision-making. Nothing that would normally be "externalized" falls outside of Ecover's responsibility. This way of thinking forces Ecover to be innovative and to add value to its products. For one of its most common products, Ecover came up with a viable green container; made from bio-inspired material, composed of 75% of Plantastic (a sugar cane derivative) and 25% post-consumer recycled plastic, making the product 100% renewable, reusable and recyclable.

Evolving from the small company fighting for Environmental advocacy to a leader in its market, Ecover has put Nature first wherever possible.

Thanks to their holistic Business approach, they are now Industry leaders as much as they are Business leaders. Ecover sees its own Business as an Ecosystem that needs to be nurtured, and the life-supporting innovative products and facilities are proof of it. Moreover, Ecover takes a larger scope towards their Industry Ecosystem by leading policy improvements in their sector. A clear example is when Ecover, together with one of their suppliers,



developed a new reusable package design for one of their products. Ecover did not stop there. With a strong will to make its own industry ecosystem more environmentally friendly and resilient, it allowed the supplier to share and produce the new packaging design with other organizations across the same industry. The creation of such an open environment among its stakeholders, where sharing and collaboration is nurtured, has been a key element of Ecover's success. It has ensured the company remains to be a leader in its industry, and to provide the best possible value to their customers.

Their vision is to create sustainable products for people today and for generations to come, and contribute to the economic, social and ecological change that will allow the construction of a sustainable society. Ecover sets an example that helps inspire other companies.

Indeed Ecover's activities and success is a real life case study of what can be achieved

to make the shift that needs to happen in the business environment and in the society.

SOURCES

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WHAT INITIATIVES COULD YOUR COMPANY DEVELOP THAT COULD NURTURE THE SYSTEM YOU DEPEND ON, AND DOWN THE ROAD ALLOW YOU TO BENEFIT FROM THEM?

