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BENVIC

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Innovation, an effective growth lever



Recently Benvic Europe has focused much of its energy on consolidating its PVC compounding business and strengthening its leadership positions in target markets. The group is now clearly engaged in a development phase. And one of the major aims of its strategy can be summarized as growth through innovation.

Launched in early 2017, the Business Innovation Strategy is in the rollout phase and already visible in tangible initiatives:

- collaborations have been increased with academic research, as in France, but also with innovative startups and SMEs, as in Italy.
- training on «client responsiveness, innovation and creativity» has brought together all sales and technical staff from the three sites, aiming to add a new dimension to client relations.
- the major satisfaction survey conducted in October 2017 identified our clients' expectations of innovation and informed our new product policy (PVC compounds, alloys and other polymers).

Innovation is a growth driver for Benvic Europe, and we want to share our future successes more widely in 2018 and even build them with our clients.

I wish you all an excellent year.

Happy reading

Luc Mertens General Manager

Collaborative innovation in action

Benvic Europe formed partnerships with innovative startups and SMEs in 2017. The R&D collaborations reflect the group's new Open Innovation approach.

Being a major industry player tomorrow means adopting a more open attitude today, collaborating with the ecosystem. That is the aim of the Business Innovation strategy introduced by Benvic Europe in 2017, which has prompted initiatives throughout the group. Collaborations with innovative startups and SMEs were launched last year. They include exploratory projects on various subjects: investigating promising manufacturing processes such as 3D printing and examining the design of new generations of materials. Here is one example of the new technological partnerships developed by Benvic Europe.

The Ferrara site is working in partnership with the startup **Destetech**, which specializes in PCM (Phase Change Materials). These smart materials can store and release the heat within buildings, significantly reducing the need for air-conditioning. The objective is to study effective ways for PCM to interact with PVC and so increase their potential uses.

Investigating specific areas with innovative startups is part of the collaborative innovation approach to which Benvic Europe is committed. In France, collaborations with academic research have been initiated to enrich and expand its R&D teams' expertise. All these different but complementary initiatives have one ultimate goal: developing innovation within Benvic Europe, which is aiming to bring its clients ever-more innovative solutions and make its mark on future markets.



What can PVC add to PCM (Phase Change Materials)?

Benvic Italy and the startup Destetech have been pooling their expertise since spring 2017 to explore that avenue of research.



2018



Industrial projects at the 3 sites an active investment strategy

Benvic Europe is pursuing a dynamic investment policy in 2018 to develop and optimize its production facilities and accelerate its digital transformation.

Developing production capacities and new products

A sign of its dynamism, Benvic Europe is investing to develop its production facilities and increase its responsiveness to clients, reducing delivery timescales.

> **Montornès** : following success in the One Pack product market, a second production line will open.

> **Chevigny-Saint-Sauveur**: A line will gain a new turbo mixer, increasing the yields and production of rigid PVC compounds.

> **Ferrara**: the «polymer diversification» project is continuing in 2018, creating opportunities to develop new innovative products.

Industry 4.0

Benvic Europe's ongoing digitalization is being reflected in new investments in 2018.

> On the three sites: greater product traceability will be introduced to the production lines (addition of raw material barcodes). Product declarations will also be partially automated (weighing).

> Ferrara: the group's digital transformation is going further, with a pilot project in Italy: creating an online dashboard to oversee the entire process, from raw materials to dispatching products to the client.



Increasing the facilities' reliability and improving product quality

In 2018, Benvic Europe is continuing its pursuit of operational excellence, constantly striving to improve its industrial efficiency and reduce its energy consumption.

> **On the three sites:** the joint policy on strategic replacement parts (sheaths, reducers, etc.) is being strengthened. The parts, which individually require significant financial investments, are interchangeable between the three sites.

> **Chevigny-Saint-Sauveur:** the production lines' air compressors will be optimized.

> **Montornès:** the Spanish site will invest in the coloured One Pack production line to optimize final product quality and increase productivity.

HSE: further improving quality of life in the workplace

Safety in the workplace is a top priority for Benvic Europe. The group is also investing to improve staff wellbeing.

> **On the three sites:** Benvic Europe will continue its work to reduce physical demands, improve the usability of operators' workstations (particularly on preparing and packaging raw materials before production), and reduce noise exposure. The production lines will be adapted to continue compliance with safety standards pursuant to the Machinery Directive.





Working differently with clients

Twenty sales and client service representatives, technicians in contact with clients, came together for training on «client responsiveness, innovation and creativity», illustrating the group's strong ambition to add a new dimension to its relationships with its clients.



Shaping our future with our clients

How can we develop
innovative solutions
with our clients?

Training on that
topic brought
together sales
and client service
representatives from
Benvic Europe.

Benvic Europe wants to be more than a materials supplier. The group is also striving to shape future developments with its clients in a new facet of the Business Innovation Strategy launched in early 2017. Concretely, it is introducing new ways of interacting and working: anticipating trends and developments in major sectors like construction, identifying future possibilities with clients, and designing new generations of profiles that could be manufactured from the company's material mixes.

Innovating first means having something to offer: this new way of envisaging the client relationship cannot be established overnight. To facilitate its launch, training on «client responsiveness, innovation and creativity» was provided, bringing together all technical and sales teams.

Participatory training in two stages

The training, which was led by a consultancy company specializing in innovation using participatory techniques (brainstorming and work in

subgroups), was delivered in two stages: a first day in October, aiming to make the sales and client service representatives aware of the new approach to client relations and introduce certain methodological tools. The participants were then asked to work individually (intelligence on their own markets and interesting avenues with the potential to be developed with clients).

On 14 December, twenty sales and client service representatives were again brought together in Chevigny-Saint-Sauveur to present the individual work, which had been summarized.

This led to a discussion on the major themes, aiming to prepare for the phase interacting with clients and identify co-development projects in each country, some of which will be launched with pilot clients this year. Other meetings to oversee projects and share feedback will be organized in 2018.

Focus on three positions in the «safety induction» video

In the Chevigny-Saint-Sauveur site's «safety induction» video, safety risks and instructions are particularly detailed for three positions: forklift truck operators, manufacturing operators and mixing operators. The film was made by Graphito, a company specializing in safety prevention communication.



A more modern and effective safety induction

Benvic Europe has chosen videos, an engaging and educational tool, to update its safety induction.

How can we ensure that all new company employees are clearly informed of safety issues (risks, good practices, procedures to follow, etc.) before starting work? That question is crucial for a group like Benvic Europe, which operates in the plastics industry. The Chevigny-Saint-Sauveur site has recently updated its safety induction programme. A video specifically focused on this topic has been produced, which was shot in the plant with our operators.

Both general and position-specific video content

The video replaces a PowerPoint presentation, a format that had obvious limitations (too much information provided simultaneously from the first day, which was difficult to memorize) and required the presence of a HSE technician for two hours.

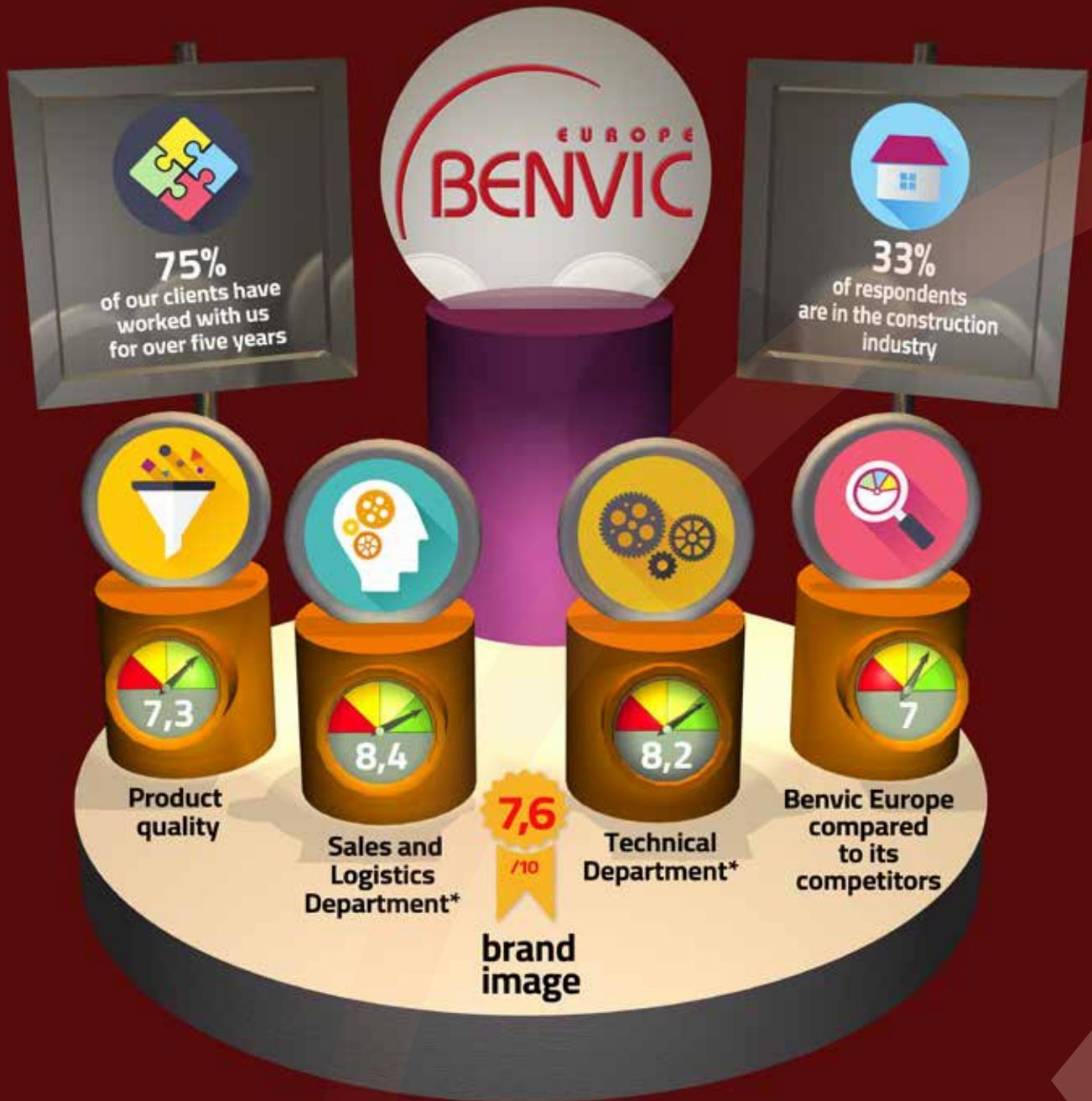
The highly practical content of the «safety induction» video has been designed to better provide the level of expertise on safety in the workplace required by all new employees. It has two parts: a general introduction and a section on the operators (protective clothing, changing room instructions, etc.), which is itself divided into three subsections on forklift truck operators, manufacturing operators and mixing operators, three positions representing the vast majority of recruited resources.

A strategy mentoring the operators

After watching the «safety induction» video, new employees complete a multiple-choice questionnaire to ensure that they have fully understood the key messages before being given their work clothes. But the Benvic Europe induction strategy does not stop there. In the different areas of the company, tutors mentor new staff members for a smoother integration, helping them in their day-to-day work. These exchanges also provide an opportunity to reiterate good safety practice.



The Chevigny-Saint-Sauveur site also produces its own short videos on specific safety instructions (forklift truck traffic rules), which are shown during HSE forums.



* Clients assessed the Benvic teams (sales representatives, client service representatives and logistics) on several items: the ease of reaching contacts, quality of relationships, acknowledgement of requests, etc.

Source : Client survey conducted in October 2017 on the basis of 86 respondents.



Customers barometer

What do Benvic Europe clients think?

Last October, Benvic Europe launched a major satisfaction survey amongst its clients in fourteen countries. The results will be used as a foundation to build action plans in 2018.

Listening to clients, measuring their satisfaction and identifying their expectations is essential for a group that has made client relations central to its strategy. Last October, Benvic Europe launched a major survey amongst its clients. It is unprecedented in scale (117 clients and 14 countries), with the last survey dating back to 2011 and focusing on a smaller sample of clients concentrated in five countries. The larger 2017 survey better reflects the company's client type, including SMEs, plastic extruders, affiliates of major groups, processors and final product manufacturers, and the wide range of related industries (construction, electronics, cabling, packaging, etc.).

A quality brand image and very loyal clients

To obtain accurate and in-depth insight into opinions on the group, respondents were asked to assess Benvic Europe on seven themes and various items on a scale of 1 to 10. The main lessons: the group enjoys

a good brand image (7.6/10) and is well positioned versus its competitors (7/10). It obtains very good scores on its product quality and the quality of relationships with its teams (sales representatives, client service representatives, etc.). Its credible reputation is reflected in a particularly high retention rate: 45% of the respondents have been Benvic Europe clients for at least fifteen years. The survey also aimed to identify areas for improvement. They include shorter delivery timescales and increased responsiveness to acknowledging and processing requests. Following the survey, the group will be able to build on its strengths and launch action plans within the group and affiliates in 2018, motivating its teams to pursue the continual improvement process benefiting clients.

An online survey in fourteen countries

From 2 to 15 October, 203 of Benvic Europe's client contacts (over half of whom were buyers) were asked to complete an online satisfaction survey. The result: a 42% response rate, which is very respectable compared to surveys in the B2B sector. The questionnaire was written by Benvic Europe, with its online availability and administration managed by the company Vocaza.



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