

## Symphony Environmental Briefing Paper

### Overview

- Almost all the plastics ever made can still be found on the planet somewhere today
- The amount of rubbish on our streets has increased by 500% since the '60s
- Around 60% of our household waste comes from packaging
- About 96% of dead Fulmar seagulls in Orkney were found to have an average of 28 pieces of dumped plastic waste in their stomachs
- The UK disposes of 120 million tonnes of waste a year
- In the UK approx 80% of post-consumer plastic waste is sent to landfill, 8% is incinerated and only 7% is recycled

At last month's G8 summit, the leaders of the planet's eight wealthiest countries failed to make a decision on setting global targets for improving our environment. This provides the backdrop to the challenge facing Symphony Environmental, which aims to improve the nation's environment by instigating change amongst UK businesses, which are in a position to make a meaningful impact on this.

Currently the UK disposes of 120 million tonnes of waste a year and over 1 million tonnes of plastic. At present the UK recovery of waste (energy recovery, recycling and materials composting) is fairly low. The predominant disposal route for most waste in the UK is a landfill site and a substantial proportion of municipal waste is disposed of in this way.

Symphony Environmental is attempting to solve the problem of non-degradable plastic waste in the UK with simple, cost-effective business solutions. It develops and supplies environmentally responsible plastic packaging products, which are distributed primarily to the retail, local authority and health-related sectors. The Group's main technology, d<sub>2</sub>w<sup>®</sup>, allows plastic to degrade totally and safely, leaving only water, a minimal amount of carbon dioxide and trace amounts of non-toxic biomass over a short time period.

The technology uses an additive, which is blended with standard plastic resins during the production process. Symphony's development of d<sub>2</sub>w<sup>®</sup> technology means that the cost impact of the additive to the customer is negligible and the finished product retains all the dynamic qualities of standard plastics including strength, clarity, sealability and print.

### Impact on businesses

The issue of degradable plastics has a direct impact on UK business. According to the Confederation of British Industry, UK retailers recorded their biggest year-on-year fall in sales for 22 years during June, and high street stores are finding it increasingly important to distinguish themselves from the opposition.

One opportunity being explored by more and more businesses is environmental marketing. Many UK businesses have a corporate environmental responsibility (CER) plan, but few communicate this directly to consumers. Those that do find consumers are receptive, sympathetic and, most importantly, positively influenced if they encounter a company that is proactively doing its bit for the environment.

### EU targets

The EU is looking to reduce significantly the amount of waste that is currently being generated through new waste prevention initiatives, better use of resources and encouraging a shift to more sustainable consumption patterns. It wants to reduce the quantity of waste going to 'final disposal' by 20% from 2000 to 2010, and by 50% by 2050, with special emphasis on cutting hazardous waste.

## **The Executive Management Team**

### **Michael Laurier (56), Chief Executive Office**

Michael's career began with his long established family packaging business, Brentwood Sack and Bag Co.Limited. He took over responsibility for sales and production in the mid-1970s and changed the emphasis of the company's business from jute products to polythene packaging, introducing the then innovative high density and medium density polythene bags into the UK market in 1975. He was appointed managing director of Brentapac UK Plc, which formerly owned the Tuffy trademark, in 1985, with continuing responsibility for national and international sales. He co-founded Symphony Plastics in 1995.

### **Allan Blacher (59), Chief Operating Officer**

Born in Cape Town, South Africa. An Honours graduate in Marketing. Allan spent his early career with Rothmans International and Thomas Cook before being appointed Commercial Development Director at the airports operator BAA. Subsequently he held Executive Board positions at Time Products plc and Zetters Group plc and was principal shareholder and Chairman of Charbonnel et Walker plc. Allan was also a non-Executive Director of Marling Industries plc and Chairman of the Otto Schiff Housing Association.

### **Ian Bristow FCCA (37), Finance Director**

Ian co-founded Symphony in 1995 having spent seven years in private practice. He qualified as a Chartered Certified Accountant in 1992 and specialised in small company business planning and implementation.

### **Websites:**

[www.degradable.net](http://www.degradable.net)

[www.degradable.co.uk](http://www.degradable.co.uk)

[www.symphonyplastics.co.uk](http://www.symphonyplastics.co.uk)

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