

G8

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FROM LA MADDALENA TO L'AQUILA



Sustainability - Henkel's competitive edge



For more than 130 years, Henkel has worked toward achieving sustainable development. Sustainability and corporate social responsibility are part of the company's core DNA. Through its brands and technologies, and as an employer, Henkel works hard to meet the needs of people today without compromising the development opportunities of future generations. Christian-André Weinberger, Corporate Senior Vice President, Global Chief Marketing Officer and Chief Sustainability Officer of Henkel's Laundry & Home Care Business talks sustainability:

Mr Weinberger, there is much talk these days about sustainability – what's your point of view?

The current global economic situation makes having a competitive edge all the more important. Henkel considers sustainability to be part of its core DNA and this is paying off in today's market. Our mission is to gain an advantage by combining top product performance and sustainability with innovation. Everyone understands that a new product must show that it not only offers consumers outstanding quality, but that it is also sustainable. To Henkel, this means 'performance based on sustainability', offering consumers superior value through better solutions.

What role does the consumer play?

The role of business and the role of consumers are intrinsically linked in terms of the sustainable use of products. Consumers choose to buy a product for a combination of reasons. One is, and will remain, excellent performance at a good price. In the future, delivering performance that is both based on sustainability and recognised as added value will become increasingly important for consumer choices.

How is sustainability implemented at Henkel?

We systematically focus our activities throughout the value chain on the challenges of sustainable development according to five focal areas: energy and climate, water and wastewater, materials and waste, health and safety, and social progress. Every new product must contribute to sustainable development in at least one focal area. That means during the development process every product has to pass through the so called 'Henkel InnoGate' – a product life cycle database which secures that every new product is at least better in one focal area. This development offers great potential as a driver for innovative and trusted brands. Recent launches include low temperature enzymes on Persil Gold Cold Wash, Purex Natural Elements or our new Purex Complete 3-in-1 sheets.

Even in these tougher financial times, are consumers still keen to be green and socially responsible?

New and positive brand launches are extremely important, especially in a crisis. It's a distinguishing characteristic that when everybody is scared and nervous, Henkel stands its ground. In times of crisis, consumers concentrate more on brand quality and value through innovation. Values like trust, performance, longevity and sustainability become more important. When brands guarantee these values, consumers are willing to continuously buy these trusted brands. It's the long-term perspective that counts. With our claim 'Quality & Responsibility' on all laundry and home care products, we make clear that our brands fulfill this demand.

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