

CLOSING THE CIRCLE IN TOTAL HARMONY WITH NATURE

HOW GERMANY'S KLEIBERIT AND SWITZERLAND'S LICO JOINED FORCES AROUND HOTCOATING



At trade fairs, exhibitors tell their best stories. Those stories sometimes become even more special when two companies join forces. Like when the technology of one helps the other to market beautifully finished, all-natural products. We ran into such a story with German company Kleiberit and Swiss company Lico. Or how the HotCoating technology of one [Kleiberit] enables the other to present very special floorboards.

Flooring made from old jeans

At Lico, you couldn't look past the Denim floor, which consists of recycled, renewable fibres - in this case cotton from old jeans -, natural rubber and vegetable fats. This is a Class 33 product, with very high resistance to wear, chemicals and scratches. With, of

course, the additional attractive element of closing the ecological circle, combined with, among other things, an impact noise reduction of up to 18 dB. The secret of the strength of this floor - and of many other floors at Lico - lies in the finish via HotCoating.

We introduced this Hot Coating to you in previous issues. At Kleiberit, the bottom line is that many years of research and development and decades of experience with reactive PUR hot melt systems formed the basis and conditions for the successful market launch of Kleiberit's HotCoating technology. This intelligently combines PUR technology with UV coating technology. Today, more than 50 systems have been installed worldwide for finishing and coating furniture elements, floor coverings, facades and rolled goods for profile wrapping.

HotCoating already in... 2007

Naturally, we want more explanation and to this end, Edwin Lingg, Lico's business manager, joins Jens Fandrey, who is responsible for the technical follow-up of the whole Kleiberit HotCoating story. It is immediately apparent that this is a story with solid roots in the past. For instance, Lico discovered HotCoating back in... 2007.

"We now have 36 years of experience as a manufacturer of prefabricated floor covering," Edwin Lingg points out his company. "Over the years, the family business developed into a successful manufacturing company that is represented in more than 40 countries internationally with its sales partners. Our key to success is understanding nature, working in an intact, natural environment and processing natural raw materials."

"Everything started with cork flooring. However, the problem with that was that people did not consider it a sustainable floor. This was mainly due to the fact that traditional varnish systems have their limitations. We came into contact with Kleiberit's HotCoating system during the Ligna trade fair in 2007 and that's how the ball got rolling. Thanks to this system, many doors opened, even those of the commercial sector! We now have 16 years of experience with it and this is perfect for us because it allows us to fully play the card of innovations. Like now with Denim, where the HotCoating not only ensures a perfect top layer, but also helps to enable the concept of a second life."

Second life

With this second-life process, Lico is perfectly in line with Kleiberit's mission statement, where renewable is at the heart of everything it does. Under the theme of 'second life' at Lico, they simply take back a worn-out old floor. Or if the customer wants a new design, they simply click away the floor, after which it is returned from the end user to the retailer and then to Lico. Lico scrapes the old design from the floor panels, reprints and coats and profiles them. Finally, the new floor is reintroduced to the market and distributed as a top-quality product.

"We developed the technology back in 2005 and it is thanks to companies like Lico that we were able to reach such a high level," adds Jens Fandrey. "With this partner, we immediately felt the enthusiasm for cooperation. From 2009, he was the first to apply this HotCoating for flooring and now we see that three lines are running in different product groups in Mústair."

"A partner like Lico has perfectly understood what it should be about not only at Kleiberit but in the whole world. For us, the green aspect is particularly important in everything we do and now we focus on working with more than 50% renewable materials already. If you compare that to the 5% of most competitors on the market, you can safely say that at Kleiberit, renewable is the single most important thing it can offer."

"You cannot look past the advantages of HotCoating," says Mr Lingg. "If only because of the fact that you no longer need energy for drying, apart from the ecological advantages and the total avoidance of the 'plastic touch'. And of course also the enormous resistance of the floor. For example, we tested a floor made with HotCoating behind a bar where the barkeeper is standing all the time and after six years of the most strained use one can imagine, it was still in great condition, you can hardly give a better example of proven technical properties."

Topcoat floor with... coffee grounds

When the interview is almost over, Edwin Lingg pulls an interesting addition out of his sleeve. It turns out that a very special floor is being developed and will be launched in the next few months. The top layer consists of... coffee grounds and coffee pods.

"With technology for the future, we are making the floors of the future," he laughs. "This floor will also illustrate how 'crazy ideas come to crazy people'. Now we just thought: replace the jeans fibres with coffee grounds and see what happens..."

