

Thirty Years of Reliable Bonding—Thanks to VESTOPLAST®

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VESTOPLAST® is celebrating its birthday. For 30 years now, this product family from Evonik's Coatings & Additives Business Unit has been lending hot-melt adhesives their reliable bonding strength. VESTOPLAST® has a wide range of application—as an adhesive in diapers and an additive in road marking materials, and for use under carpeting or in furniture construction, to name only a few.

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The substances for which the VESTOPLAST® brand name stands are co- and terpolymers of ethylene, propylene, and 1-butene. In combination with synthetic resins, this special polyolefin has outstanding adhesive power. When combined with waxes, melt viscosity is reduced and the water vapor barrier effect is enhanced. This versatility is particularly important because adhesives today must be capable of far more than creating a durable bond between two substrates.

“The main areas of application for our various grades of VESTOPLAST® are currently thermoplastic hot-melt adhesives for diapers, the wood and furniture industries, and the paper and packaging sector,” says Dr. Lutz Mindach, head of marketing and technical service for Adhesive Resins. “But the product's outstanding environmental compatibility is increasingly extending its use in automotive interiors and in carpet applications.” Capacities have been systematically expanded over the last few years to meet growing global demand. “In the growth region of Asia in particular, we can point to very healthy growth rates, even in the current global economic downturn,” remarks Mindach.

Apart from its use in a number of hot melt laminating and adhesives and in bonding skid-proof coatings, VESTOPLAST® has, since 1981, also found application in road construction. Asphalt treated with VESTOPLAST®, for example, can absorb higher initial stresses and disperse them more rapidly. As a result, road surfaces remain in good condition, even in sweltering heat or freezing cold. The Evonik product is used in road markings, colored sealing compounds, drainage openings, and bitumen sealing sheets, too. Another important plus point for

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VESTOPLAST® is its environmental compatibility and 100 percent recyclability.

The road to success

The products that are so successful today were originally no more than by-products in general polyolefin production. VESTOPLAST®'s spectacular rise began in the 1970s, when it became possible to significantly improve the quality of the thermoplastic polymer and market research predicted increasing demand. The greatly superior properties of VESTOPLAST®-based hot-melt adhesives, compared to the polymers used until now, led to this completely new, highly promising application area.

Following its successful development, therefore, the company began exclusive production in what used to be the polybutene plant in 1981. Capacity was gradually increased from the initial 12,000 metric tons to the present 70,000 metric tons, with expansion of the single production line to four. Today, the product group comprises about 16 different grades for a wide variety of application areas. "For the future, we want to expand into new fields of application in addition to maintaining the existing ones, so that we'll be far less at the mercy of economic fluctuations in individual branches of industry," says Mindach. "In addition to producing the usual VESTOPLAST® grades, we'll develop specially functionalized polymers for applications that are qualitatively more sophisticated, thus securing future prospects."

Company information

Evonik Industries is the creative industrial group from Germany which operates in three business areas: Chemicals, Energy and Real Estate. Evonik is a global leader in specialty chemicals, an expert in power generation from hard coal and renewable energies, and one of the largest private residential real estate companies in Germany. Our strengths are creativity, specialization, continuous self-renewal, and reliability. Evonik is active in over 100 countries around the world. In its fiscal year 2008 about 41,000 employees generated sales of about €15.9 billion and an operating profit (EBITDA) of about €2.2 billion.

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