

MAKING RECYCLING WORK

Invema and Lacerta Partnership

George Gatlin, INVEMA Group from San Pedro Sula, Honduras and Mostafa Lotfi, Lacerta Group Inc. from Mansfield, US are talking about their partnership, their mindset about how recycling works and their vision of how a vertically integrated business model is leading the way in the packaging industry.



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GEORGE GATLIN
GENERAL DIRECTOR
INVEMA GROUP



People ask: why recycling? It's very simple – it's the right thing to do.

MOSTAFA LOTFI
PRINCIPAL
LACERTA GROUP INC.



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George Gatlin, INVEMA Group
„The major problem today with plastics, in general, is that you buy them, you use them and you discard them. We got ourselves into a situation, where we need to make a change, and that starts by taking recycling seriously. There is no reason why PET can't be recycled infinite times, as the technology exists. In Honduras, recycling is a way of living and it provides a way of living for thousands of people. Here in Honduras, we have a lot of poverty

and recycling is a solution for the people. Unfortunately, plastic is based on petroleum. The prices of oil go up and down, so do the price of plastics. Back in 2011 the price of oil was 100 USD a barrel and thus the price of recycled plastic was very high. In those years we had a recycling rate of 84%. That's as high as most Scandinavian countries. Today price can be half of what it was 8 years ago. And when you lower someone's income by half that is a real problem. This is where we have

to come up with ideas on how to vertically integrate in order to keep the price more stable for people. Technology today allows us today to recycle PET infinite times. The most important thing is to believe in technology and do not be afraid to invest. If the consumer is conscious and the industry is conscious, if we invest in the equipment, in the processes and the right way to do things there is no doubt that recycling can work – but it has to be a team effort.“



Mostafa Lotfi, Lacerta Group Inc.
„Lacerta started packaging 1997. We have hundreds of clients and the majority of what we do is for the food industry. At the moment more than half of what we are using is recycled plastic and we are trying to even increase that amount to much higher. I met George Gatlin a few years ago at the open house for Starlinger which produces equipment for super-cleaning and sheet extrusion for PET. Since then we are working together and INVEMA is providing us PET for

our thermoforming operation. There are a lot of places that are producing post-consumer recycled flakes, but if the quality is not good you don't get a good quality final product. So, when I went to INVEMA to see what they are using in terms of equipment and technology, we saw that they are producing very good quality post-consumer recycled flake that makes it much easier for us to do our extrusion and making our sheets. The package is the first thing consumers see when they want to purchase

things, so it is extremely important to have a good design. As far as the mold is concerned there is no difference between designing for a virgin material or a recycled material. A lot of customers are under the impression that when they get recycled material that they get something less and it is not the case. Our priorities need to change. We are blessed to have this planet and we need to make sure that we do not destroy it.“