

# NAILED ON FOR SUCCESS



Due to celebrate its 100th birthday next year, **Don Quichotte**, also known as De Wit to its OEM and private label clients, has been keeping busy during the Covid-19 pandemic with new and revived projects. General Sales Manager **Jan-Willem van der Wijngaart** and Product Marketing Manager **Naj van Galen** give an overview of the latest from the company

Originally founded in 1921 as J.H. de Wit and Sons, the company is today split into two separate entities. The side of the company known as De Wit caters for the firm's OEM, industrial and private label customers, while the other side, known as Don Quichotte, was originally the company brand, and serves customers which buy Don Quichotte branded products from the catalogue and stock. The companies currently employ 118 people.

This move, which took place around six years ago, was to help customers better align with the company's businesses, according to General Sales Manager Jan-Willem van der Wijngaart.

"We did it so people could identify with us, but also these two types of customers need a totally separate approach," he explains.

Known mainly in the past for its offering to the nail market, including masonry nails, special nails, hardened steel nails and so on, the company has since branched out into several other sectors.

"Nowadays, nails are only part of our complete business, although they remain an important part," van der Wijngaart continues. "We have put more and more development into other directions over the last 5-10 years, and now we say we cover four areas: nails, hardware and ironmongery; electrical fixings; sanitary and plumbing; and general fixings and construction."

According to van der Wijngaart, the nails market is not such a growing market in recent years, with the invention and further development of other fixes such as shooting, gluing, screwing and so on. However, as one of the major European players in this sector, it is still an important part of both the Don Quichotte and De Wit sides of the business.



The firm is one of the major European players in the nail sector.

"Nails are still, and will still, always be there," assures van der Wijngaart. "Regarding the market, volumes are not growing as such. We used to have many serious European competitors manufacturing in different countries, but nowadays there are few others. Although, new companies are starting to produce and there are lots of products coming from the Far East and China, so there isn't a very clear picture how big the market is.

"With our factory based in Holland, producing European quality products, we will always do nails as long as the market is there, and we are keeping our focus on it."

Naj van Galen, Product Marketing Manager, also sees the nail market as an important sector for Don Quichotte in particular. "Nails are a very big focus for Don Quichotte," he adds. "Most of the revenue in the nail market we get from export, as well as selling our nails as a semi-finished product to other manufacturers who use our nails for their products, such as cable clips and pipe clips, or injection moulders."

With the local Benelux nail market being reasonably small, the international markets are particularly important to Don Quichotte, which exports nails to at least 65 countries around the world, alongside many of its other product offerings.

"The Dutch market was very good before Covid-19," says van der Wijngaart. "There were good rates of growth, a lot of construction projects underway, and a good price level. It's a little early to get a real idea of how Covid impacted the market. Of course, it was a shock, but there wasn't a complete lockdown like we saw in other countries, and construction and installation work still continued, although it slowed down."

Van Galen echoed this, adding: "Our main market is export, of course we do have customers in the Dutch market and there is a feeling that everything is loosening up now regarding the measures.

"I don't see any difficulties right now, but of course it is very unpredictable what will happen in the future if there are second waves."

Manufacturing from its factory in Helmond, the firm can source raw material from surrounding countries such as France, Belgium and Germany, enabling it to serve the market quickly when customers start placing orders again.

During the height of the pandemic, van der Wijngaart and his



**Don Quichotte has been developing a new unified packaging concept.**



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team took the initiative to start several new projects, and revive some older ones, in order to keep busy while some countries closed their borders, resulting in sales personnel not being able to travel and visit customers.

#### NEW PACKAGING CONCEPT

One of the projects Don Quichotte continued during the pandemic was revamping packaging, boxes and labels. The basis of the concept is simple; nails, and nail-like products, will still be packed in full-colour Don Quichotte cartons. Electrical fixings, however, will be packed in white boxes with big, coloured 'around-the-corner' labels, so that the whole range will look more unified and coherent. Don Quichotte will also be able to print more product specific information on the label and make an efficiency improvement in packaging material needs.

Next to this unified packaging concept, the company also added bag packaging to its range for small volumes of products in transparent bags specially for the retailer. These bags can be bought separate to, or in combination with a display.

#### THE DON QUICHOTTE NEWSLETTER

Another project kick-started during the Corona outbreak was Don Quichotte's newsletter. By subscribing to the newsletter, customers will always be the first to be informed about the latest news from Don Quichotte. Those interested can subscribe to the newsletter via the QR-code at the foot of this page.

[www.don-quichotte.com](http://www.don-quichotte.com)



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