

leather

INTERNATIONAL



PM 2070 PC

the novel concept in matting polymers with less than 2% VOC!

GSC Group, fully committed to *sustainable development*, presents its latest generation of matting agent!

Properties:

- Low VOC (-2%)
 - High matt degree
 - Perfect flow out
 - Outstanding black jetness
 - Not repolishable
 - High fastness to wet and solvent rubbing test
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Bringing the Italian way to the rest of the world

Italy is the home of high-quality leather goods and the Arzignano is the beating heart of the tanning industry. One of the region's leading producers of leather chemicals is set to take its ethos of quality, sustainability and innovation to brands all over the world. Mark Chatwood, global automotive director at **GSC Group**, explains how.

GSC Group, which develops and produces chemicals for many sectors of the tanning industry, is a traditional company that is about to take its name to a wider stage. Based on a firm belief in the future of leather in the automotive sector, it is embarking on a global marketing strategy that will give OEMs more choice in their pursuit of high-quality, sustainable chemicals.

"The leather market is challenged by fossil fuel alternatives, but the public has been misled over synthetics," says Mark Chatwood, global automotive director at GSC Group. "They don't have the leather's longevity and they have challenges with egress, ingress and humidity. They will crack. It is time for the truth about leather to be put out there."

Blending tradition with innovation

Chatwood started in the leather industry when he was just 16 years old, and for more than 30 years he has immersed himself in the leather chemicals and automotive leather markets. Newly arrived at GSC, he is bringing the culture and quality of Italian leather production to the global market.

"My challenge is to take the profile of this family-oriented business, which is the most prominent leather chemicals company in the region of situated in the Arzignano – the world capital of tanning – and make it global. Especially in the automotive sector, I want to bring that reputation for precision, quality and expertise to a global audience."

"This company brings together R&D experience, chemicals know-how and the Italian way of family business, passion, drive and a flair for technology," he adds. "This company knows how to respond rapidly, how to move quickly



Mark Chatwood, global automotive director at GSC Group.

from R&D to final product, and how to be frontrunners."

Global network

GSC has a tight portfolio of 45 state-of-the-art products for the processing of hides for car interiors. With this finely honed toolkit, it can meet the requirements of any OEM, particularly in the major markets of the US, Europe and Japan.

This portfolio is the result of nearly 50 years of development. The company, which was started back in 1976 by Donato Serafini and Giovanni Giancesini, has been created a family of chemicals that combines the highest technical standards and the Italian thirst for beauty.

"With raw materials price rises and delivery challenges, we can commit to a portfolio that won't expand but is attuned to the specifications of OEMs, though it uses only a limited range of chemicals," says Chatwood. "Such high-performance systems are key to the future of everything from bags to sports shoes, and we can meet their needs with our automotive products. And we can overcome the problems that can

arise from raw materials and supply chain challenges."

While the portfolio will not grow in terms of the number of products, it will not remain static. As new ideas evolve, new concepts will replace existing ones to improve quality, performance and sustainability.

Working for the planet

In fact, sustainability is one of the main pillars of GSC's strategy moving forward. The company is making great strides in reducing the impact of its production processes, and its chemicals reflect the same desire to be kind to the environment without compromising on quality. Every chemical in the portfolio is water-based and low in volatile organic compounds.

"Sustainability is at the forefront of what we do," Chatwood remarks. "Our R&D is focused on using non-fossil fuel-based raw materials, how to optimise our business for leaner production and how to use more renewable energy. We are looking at every aspect of it."

A key example is in the wet-end stage, where GSC is using olive mill wastewater for the tanning process.

"We are always looking for automotive to be more environmentally friendly, while ensuring that we have products that really work," says Chatwood. "One of the benefits of being based here in Italy is that we can try out all of our products in real time, not only in the laboratory, but also in production at scale in a tannery."

The challenge now is to build trust in a new brand among OEMs, but the quality of the products and the company's long heritage should make that a simple task. ●

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