

Green Entrepreneurship

Successful business cases of Green Entrepreneurs in the Mediterranean



Regional Activity Centre for Cleaner Production



Zicla: Innovation in recycled products in Spain

65

Name: Zicla Innovation in recycled products
City, country: Barcelona, Spain
Name of entrepreneur/ founder: Veronica Kuchinow and Alfredo Balmaceda

Description

Zicla is a company specialized in the innovation of recycled products and waste management. This firm helps other companies and organizations to turn their waste problem into a business opportunity that is committed to the environmental improvement of their operations.

Zicla develops, designs, promotes and sells innovative, competitive and quality recycled products based on the concepts of a recycled product life cycle. They consider the “waste problem” to be the driving force that will help to transform the environmental management approach into a global and committed solution. This gives a great opportunity to improve, reduce costs and to make a difference.

Zicla works in two areas:

Commercial: Promotion and sale of recycled products, meeting the demand for both Zicla’s products and the products of other manufacturers.

Projects: Innovative recycled products that help to expand the supply of waste-made products and developing industries, markets, technologies...

Investment

The company was initially financed by the consultancy sale and the incorporation expenses of the company were covered with just Y EUR. One year later, the income coming from the distribution of other companies’ products was added and investors were obtained through private contacts (business angels):

- First tranche in 2005: sale of 10% of the shares by Z EUR (company valued at K EUR).
- Second tranche in 2006: sale of an additional 20% by 2Z EUR.

The negotiation process with the business angels took 6 months and no incidents were registered. The whole capital was contributed by the entrepreneurs.

Return over investment:

Income sources: In 2011, 20% of the income came from the sale of consultancy and 80% from the sale of products, mainly of our own. 70% of our clients are private companies that supply the Administration.

Stakeholders

Clients: City councils, industrial companies, signposting companies.

Suppliers: Industries from the plastic, rubber and motor sectors.

Waste managers

Public institutions: City councils, regional, national and community administrations.

Employment generation

Three full-time workers. One part-time worker. A group of coworkers by project: designers, architects, experts on materials...

Timeline

- 2005: The company is established by Verónica Kuchinow and Alfredo Balmaceda, both engineers with wide experience in the environmental and waste management fields.
- 2006: Development of projects for the Administration in order to help to strengthen the green procurement through the identification of recycled products and the creation of ecolabels for those recycled products that did not have them. Finalist for the prize “INICIATIVA BMW para la Innovación” (BMW initiative for innovation). BMW Spain.
- 2007: ZICLA takes on the management, R&D&I and commercialization of recycled products manufactured with waste car carpets from the company ATRI SL, re-opened as a result of the project developed by ZICLA for the group HERA. Development of the recycled carpet flooring for fairs: TAMOC.
- 2008: Development of own products for the brand ZICLA: cycle lane separator ZEBRA
- 2009: Development of new own products for the brand ZICLA:
- Land demarcation TAURO
 - Road puzzle
 - Road platform to improve bus accessibility through remains of electrical cables.
- Awards:*
- “Premio de Medio Ambiente 2009” (Environmental prize 2009) in recognition of a CAREER of protection and improvement of the environment.
 - First prize “Diseño para el Reciclaje” (Design for Recycling) to the cycle lane separator ZEBRA in the 5th edition of the prize “Diseño para el Reciclaje. DxR2011” granted by the Generalitat de Catalunya.
- 2010: Start of ZICLA’s internationalization process within the scope of the NEX PIPE ACCIÓ program. Development of projects for the industry to transform their waste into products. First product re-use projects (Seat & Light).
- 2011: Recycling projects for the products of big brands: NESTLE, DESIGUAL... First ZEBRA’s exportation to France.
- Awards:*
- First prize “Diseño para el Reciclaje PREMIO 2011” in the category of products for the Bus Platform, in the 6TH edition of the Premio Diseño para el Reciclaje. DxR2011 of the Generalitat de Catalunya.
 - 6th CMN prizes to Business and Professional Excellence of Businesswomen granted to Verónica Kuchinow, director of ZICLA.
 - Best recycled product – Second place – 2011 granted by the EPRO (European Association of Plastics Recycling and Recovery Organization) for the cycle lane separator ZEBRA.
- 2012: Boost of internationalization actions. 1st exportation to Chile. Creation of the franchise of the business model ZICLA.

Feasibility study

The initial business plan was developed by the entrepreneurs, taking advantage of their experience in the environmental field. It was then modified and adapted to the new reality of the company and its environment.

Geo-social-economic setting

Thousands of tons of different waste are deposited in dumping sites because they have not found the way to turn them into raw materials for the industry.

Key features

Waste recycling: obligation and opportunity. CO2 emissions reduction. Closure of the materials’ cycle. Environmental sustainability. Corporate social responsibility.

Overall rational and motivation	ZICLA aims to divert waste from the dumping sites in order to incorporate it to the industry as raw materials that will become products accepted by the customer due to their quality, price and environmental value. Recycled but also recyclable products. Creation of the channels to make this recycling feasible.
Strenghts	More than 20 years of the partners in the environmental and waste management fields. Excellent relationship with the Administration and the industry. Agreements with the industry to try waste in their equipment. Agreements with waste managers to guarantee the provision of waste.
Challenges and constraints	The internationalization of the company, especially in Latin America and the countries of the Mediterranean basin. Limited speed due to the lack of own resources.
Direct activities and Impacts	<i>Social:</i> The employees work flexible hours, they work according to targets and are completely involved in the company's mission.
Use of innovative Technologies	Adaptation of the traditional technologies to process waste. Protection of ZICLA's designs with the corresponding patents.
Evidence of a holistic approach/world view	Waste represents a problem, but it is also an opportunity to innovate, create added value and jobs. ZICLA identifies channels, technologies and designs that permit to divert waste from dumping sites in order to turn them into products accepted and valued by the market due to their quality and price. ZICLA's approach with regard to waste and its sustainable management can be extrapolated to any place in the world.
Scale of benefits	Not available.
Policies, incentives and regulations needed	The revitalization of green procurement in the Administration and companies. The increase of dumping taxes.
Lessons and recomendations	The knowledge and command of the execution of a business and company valorization plan are really important. The entrepreneur must face new challenges, i.e. in the financial field, and live with certain level of uncertainty inherent to the process. In short, risks must be taken.

References
www.zicla.com