POLYNEXT CONFERENCE

01-02 October 2025

"The Future Of Plastic Recycling and sustainable packaging"

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of PolyNext Insights, your gateway to the world of plastic recycling and sustainable packaging. In this issue, we explore the groundbreaking innovations transforming the future of plastics, from circular economy strategies to next-generation packaging solutions that reduce environmental impact.

Our pages feature insights from industry leaders, pioneering startups, and sustainability experts who are reshaping how we recycle, repurpose, and rethink plastic materials.

This edition also offers a preview of the upcoming PolyNext Conference & Awards, where many of these ideas will be explored in depth. Whether you're attending or following from afar, this magazine provides a glimpse into the key discussions, technologies, and trends driving sustainability in plastics and packaging.

At PolyNext, we believe that collaboration, innovation, and responsible practices are key to building a sustainable future for plastics. We hope this issue inspires you, challenges perspectives, and provides valuable insights as we work toward a greener, more circular economy.

Thank you for being part of our community of changemakers. Together, we're redefining the future of plastic recycling and sustainable packaging.

Happy reading!

Warm regards,
The PolyNext Team

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THE FUTURE OF PLASTIC RECYCLING

CEO's Message

I am excited to introduce PolyNext Insights, a dedicated publication that highlights the latest advancements in plastic recycling, sustainable packaging, and circular economy solutions. As part of the PolyNext Conference & Awards, this platform reflects our commitment to driving innovation, fostering collaboration, and shaping the future of the plastics industry. Through expert insights, groundbreaking technologies, and industry-leading discussions, we aim to build a thriving global community focused on sustainability and material innovation.

PolyNext is more than just a publication—it's a thriving ecosystem. Anchored by our annual PolyNext Conference & Awards in Dubai, it extends across digital platforms and industry services, fostering a global community dedicated to plastic recycling, sustainable packaging, and circular economy solutions. Our mission is to connect industry leaders, innovators, and key stakeholders, creating a dynamic space for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and actionable change in the plastics industry.

In this rapidly evolving landscape, PolyNext serves as a guiding force in plastic recycling, sustainable packaging, and circular economy solutions. We bring you insights, success stories, and expert analyses that are shaping the future of the industry. Join us on this transformative journey as we drive innovation, collaboration, and sustainable progress.
Welcome to PolyNext—where the future of plastics begins today.

Anas Jawed
Founder & CEO,
Next Business Media

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Chemical Recycling Poised for Scale-Up: What's Next?

As plastic waste surges worldwide, a once-niche technology is stepping into the spotlight. But is chemical recycling ready to deliver?

The Turning Point

For decades, the world has wrestled with plastic waste. Traditional recycling helped, but only scratched the surface—downgrading plastics and leaving much of the problem unresolved. Now, chemical recycling promises a breakthrough: breaking plastic back into its core building blocks and turning it into virgin-quality material.

And in 2025, it's no longer a question of if this technology will scale. The real question: How far, how fast, and how sustainably?

Did you know?
Analysts predict chemical recycling capacity could triple by 2030, driven by policy mandates and brand commitments.

From Labs to Industry Giants

What was once a collection of pilot projects has become big business. Global energy companies and consumer brands are pouring billions into large-scale facilities. Europe, the U.S., and Asia are racing to build capacity, betting that technologies like pyrolysis and depolymerization can transform waste streams that mechanical recycling cannot touch.

Why It's Scaling Now

Three forces are converging to push chemical recycling into the mainstream:

- **Policy Power :** Governments are setting firm recycled-content laws. In the EU, packaging without recycled input may soon be unacceptable.
- **Corporate Pressure :** Global brands from beverage giants to personal care leaders need high-quality recycled plastics to meet their climate pledges.
- **Technology Gains :** Process efficiency has improved, lowering costs and making these systems more competitive with virgin resin.

The Big Question: At What Cost?

Chemical recycling has its skeptics. Critics point to high energy demands, emissions concerns, and the billions needed to build infrastructure. The sector faces scrutiny over whether it can genuinely reduce environmental impact or if it risks becoming a polished **"greenwashing"** tactic.

As one sustainability expert notes:
"Scaling isn't the only challenge. The industry must prove it's cleaner, not just bigger."

Looking Ahead

The next five years will be decisive. Hybrid systems blending mechanical and chemical recycling are gaining traction as a practical way forward. Supply chains will need to adapt, ensuring reliable streams of plastic feedstock.
In short: 2025 marks the start of chemical recycling's real-world test phase.
If successful, it could redefine plastics as a truly circular material. If not, the world may have to rethink its reliance on plastics altogether.

Final Word:

Chemical recycling is poised for scale. But scaling responsibly proving both economic and environmental value will decide if it's the game-changer the industry is waiting for.

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Innovation Spotlight: Biomimicry in Autonomous Sorting Systems

In 2025, engineers are taking cues from nature to solve one of recycling's toughest challenges: sorting waste with speed and precision.

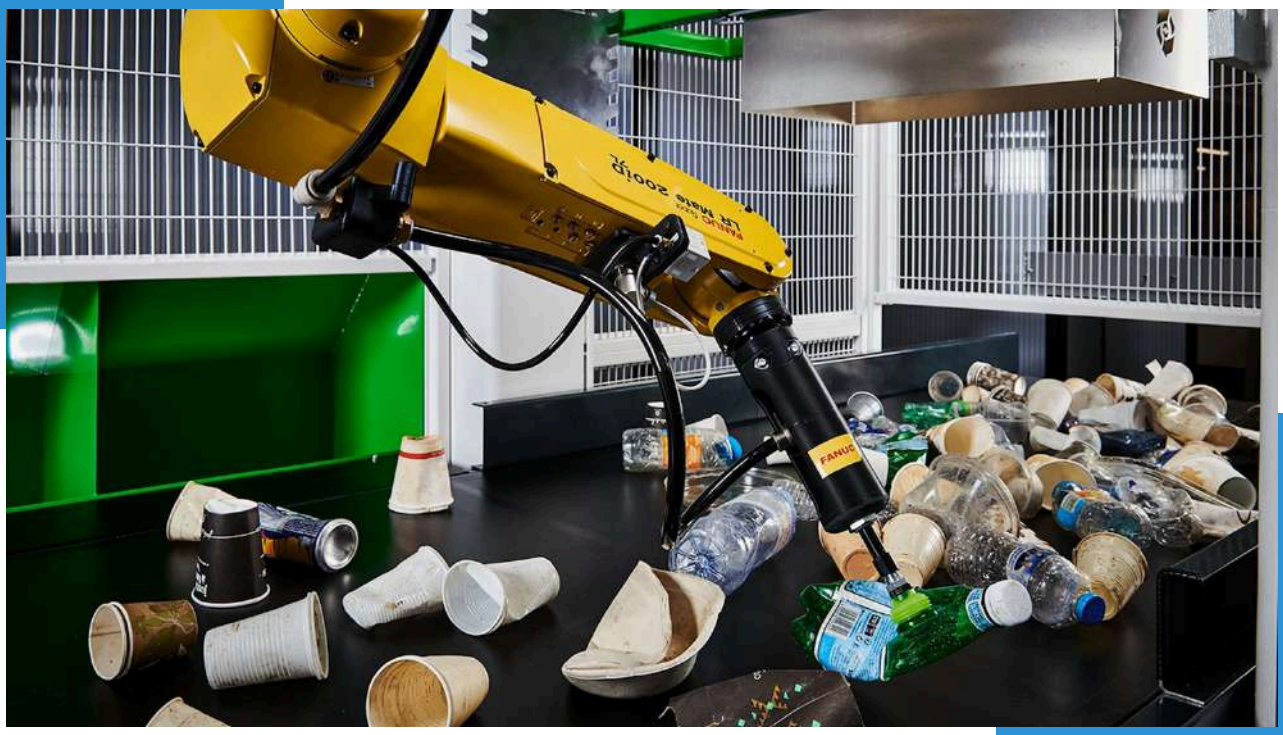
Sorting Smarter, the Natural Way

Recycling has always faced one stubborn barrier: sorting accuracy. Even the most advanced facilities struggle to distinguish plastics, metals, and composites at the speed and precision required for a true circular economy.

Now, a breakthrough is emerging—biomimicry in autonomous sorting systems. Inspired by the way organisms sense, filter, and adapt to their environments, engineers are designing machines that don't just separate waste, but think and react more like living systems.

Did you know?

Biomimicry isn't just an inspiration—it's becoming the operating manual for next-generation recycling plants.



Nature as the Teacher

From the compound eyes of insects that detect subtle differences in light, to the olfactory systems of dogs that separate complex chemical signals, biological models are reshaping the sensors and algorithms used in waste management.

- **Vision systems modeled** after eagle eyesight are enhancing optical sorting.
- **Artificial "noses" inspired** by animal olfaction can detect polymers invisible to conventional sensors.
- **Swarm intelligence—borrowed** from ant colonies—is guiding fleets of robots to collaborate in real time, reducing bottlenecks in sorting lines.

Why 2025 Is the Year to Watch

The push toward autonomous, AI-driven **material recovery facilities (MRFs)** is accelerating.

By 2025, pilot projects in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East are already demonstrating how biomimetic systems can increase **recovery rates by up to 30%, reduce** contamination, and cut labor costs.

At a time when **chemical recycling and sustainable packaging** are gaining ground, efficient sorting is the missing puzzle piece. Without accurate feedstock separation, downstream recycling technologies cannot deliver their full potential.

Challenges in the Spotlight

Like any innovation, biomimicry-driven systems face hurdles. High costs, complex calibration, and the need for massive data integration still stand in the way of large-scale adoption.

Critics also point out the energy footprint of advanced sensing technologies, raising questions about trade-offs between efficiency and sustainability.

As one researcher notes:

"We're teaching machines to think like nature, but we must also ensure they respect natural limits."

Beyond Recycling:

Wider Impact Biomimicry in sorting goes beyond waste plants. The same technologies can enhance food safety, medical diagnostics, and e-waste recovery helping industries leapfrog traditional limits and move toward a regenerative economy.

Final Word:

In 2025, biomimicry in sorting unites nature's wisdom with AI and robotics pushing recycling closer to a true circular economy.

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Global Trends: End-of-Life Plastics in Construction & Infrastructure 2025 Feature

2025 Feature

Plastics, Reimagined

Plastic waste has long been seen as a liability. But in 2025, a global shift is underway—recasting end-of-life plastics as valuable resources for construction and infrastructure. From roadways reinforced with recycled polymers to modular housing built with plastic composites, what was once considered trash is now transforming skylines and cities.

Why Construction?

The construction sector is uniquely positioned to absorb large volumes of recycled plastics. Unlike food packaging or medical applications, where strict safety standards apply, infrastructure projects can incorporate plastics without compromising quality or performance. This makes the sector an ideal outlet for the millions of tons of plastics that mechanical and chemical recycling alone cannot fully reintegrate into closed-loop packaging.

Did you know?

Using recycled plastics in road construction can increase lifespan by 50% while cutting asphalt costs by up to 30%.

Building Stronger, Greener

From India's highways paved with plastic waste to Europe's pilot projects using polymer composites in bridges, the momentum is unmistakable. Plastics improve durability, resist weathering, and reduce costs—while offering a way to lock waste into long-life applications.

Policy & Industry Convergence

Governments are increasingly supportive. The EU's Green Deal promotes secondary raw materials in construction, while GCC nations are exploring plastic-based infrastructure as part of their waste management strategies. At the same time, global companies are partnering with municipalities to pilot large-scale projects.

Looking Forward

In 2025, end-of-life plastics in construction are moving from niche pilot projects to mainstream adoption. For circular economy advocates, this trend signals a critical milestone: plastics are not just being recycled but re-engineered into the foundations of future cities.

The construction sector is turning plastic waste into bricks, panels, tiles, insulation, and asphalt reducing landfill use while boosting durability and cost-efficiency. Backed by policies and innovation, these solutions are scaling from homes to highways, transforming "waste" into a key resource for tomorrow's circular cities. This shift marks a breakthrough in sustainable urban development. What was once discarded is now shaping resilient, low-carbon infrastructure worldwide.

Opportunities & Obstacles

Still, challenges remain. Standards for safety, durability, and recyclability of plastic-infused construction materials are evolving. Logistics—collecting and processing vast volumes of post-consumer plastics—require major investments in sorting and recycling infrastructure.

Yet, the economic and environmental case is compelling. Turning end-of-life plastics into infrastructure not only diverts waste from landfills but also reduces demand for virgin materials like cement, a major source of carbon emissions.

Final Word:

The world is building its future with yesterday's waste. End-of-life plastics, once a symbol of environmental crisis, are becoming the backbone of sustainable infrastructure.

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Company Brief: Sempack's Eco-Engineered Flexible Pouches

At a time when packaging sustainability is no longer optional, Sempack is setting new standards with its eco-engineered flexible pouch solutions.

Rethinking the Pouch

The global packaging sector is under pressure to balance functionality with sustainability. Single-use plastics face mounting scrutiny, and consumers demand packaging that is not only practical but also planet-friendly. Enter **Sempack**, a packaging innovator reshaping how we think about pouches.
Sempack's flexible pouch stands out with a **unique vertical design**, inspired by tubes yet optimized for recyclability and reduced material use. Lightweight, durable, and versatile, these pouches are designed to minimize environmental impact while offering maximum convenience.

Did you know?
By switching to flexible pouches, brands can cut carbon footprints linked to packaging transport and production by up to 50%

Eco-Engineering at Its Core

Unlike conventional packaging, Sempack's pouches are **engineered for circularity**. Available in recyclable mono-materials and compostable alternatives, they meet growing regulatory and corporate demands for sustainable solutions.

Key features include:

- **Material Efficiency:** Up to 60% less plastic than traditional rigid containers.
- **Recyclability Options:** Mono-material versions align with recycling streams worldwide.
- **Design Flexibility:** Suitable for food, cosmetics, household, and industrial products.
- **Lower Carbon Footprint:** Lightweight structure reduces transport emissions and energy use.
- **Consumer Convenience:** Easy-to-use, portable designs enhance user experience.
- **Brand Advantage**: Combines sustainability with premium shelf appeal to meet market demand.

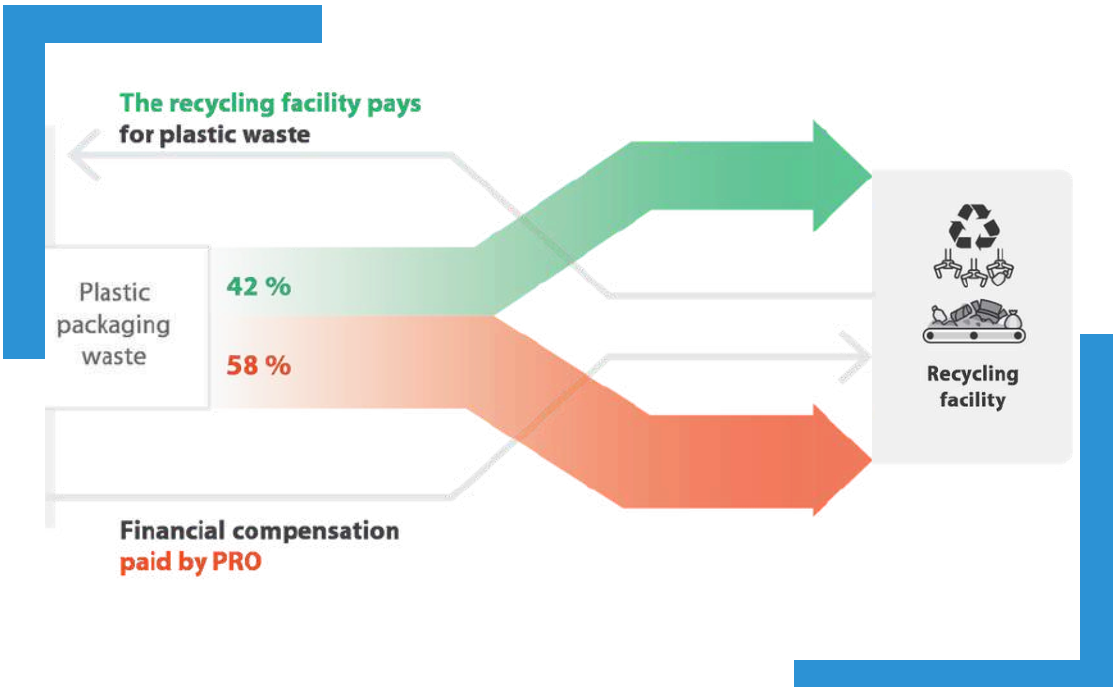
Meeting the 2025 Moment

In 2025, with global mandates on sustainable packaging tightening, Sempack is well positioned to partner with brands aiming to meet ambitious targets. The company's innovations reflect a shift from "single-use convenience" to responsible packaging that doesn't compromise on performance.

As industries across food, beauty, and pharmaceuticals look for scalable solutions, Sempack's eco-engineered pouches offer both sustainability and shelf appeal. By combining functionality with circular design, they help brands cut waste while strengthening consumer trust. Sempack is not just adapting to change it is driving the future of sustainable packaging.

Final Word:

Sempack's pouches go beyond packaging blending eco-design with convenience to prove sustainability and innovation can shape a circular future.



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Policy & Markets: EU's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Boosts Innovation

2025 Feature

From Burden to Catalyst

In 2025, the European Union's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policies are no longer seen as regulatory burdens. Instead, they've become one of the most powerful catalysts for innovation across packaging, recycling, and circular business models. By holding producers accountable for the full lifecycle of their products, EPR has transformed how industries view waste—not as a liability, but as an opportunity.

Did you know?

By 2030, the EU aims for **all packaging to be recyclable** or reusable a goal fast-tracked by the momentum of EPR schemes.

How EPR Works

At its core, EPR shifts the financial and operational responsibility of waste management from governments to producers. Companies must now ensure that packaging and products are collected, recycled, or disposed of responsibly. The mechanism is simple in theory but profound in impact—forcing manufacturers to rethink design, materials, and supply chains.

Market Transformation

EPR has also reshaped markets. Investment in recycling infrastructure is surging, fueled by predictable streams of funding from producer responsibility organizations (PROs). For consumers, the result is visible: better access to recycling, clearer labeling, and products designed with end-of-life in mind.

For producers, compliance has sparked competition. Those who innovate fastest not only reduce fees but also capture consumer loyalty in an increasingly sustainability-driven market.

Challenges Ahead

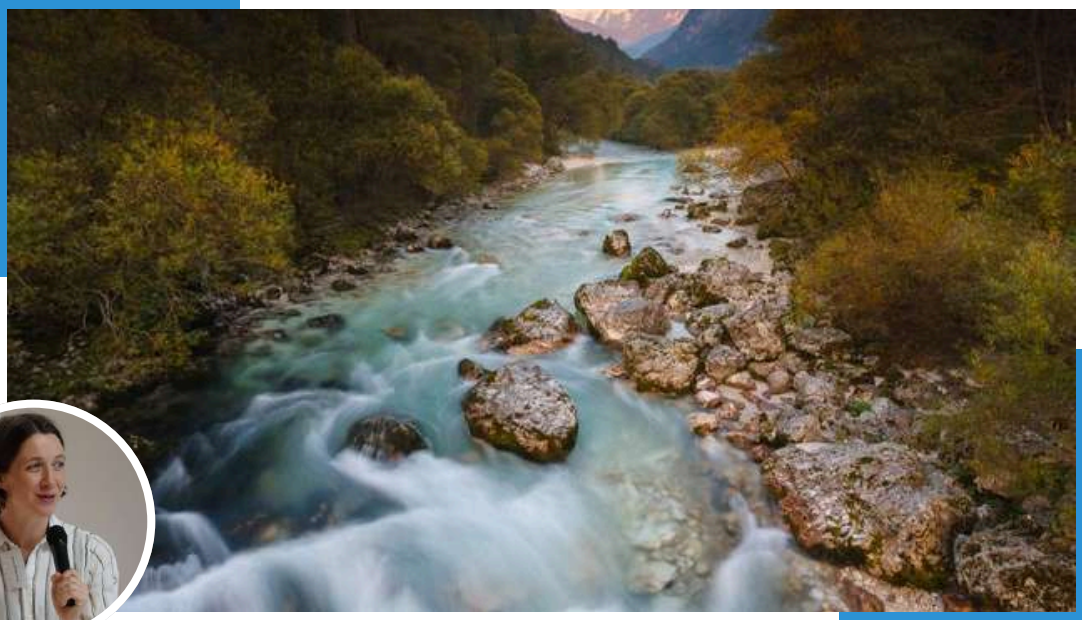
Of course, the transition is not without friction. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) struggle with compliance costs, and harmonization across EU member states remains complex. Critics argue that without global alignment, EPR risks creating trade barriers. Yet, most agree the direction is set: accountability is here to stay.

Looking Forward

In 2025, EPR is more than a policy—it's a driver of Europe's circular economy. By linking responsibility with innovation, it ensures that sustainability is no longer optional, but a competitive advantage. Brands are redesigning packaging with recyclability in mind, supply chains are becoming more transparent, and collaboration across industries is accelerating progress. EPR is setting the pace for global standards, proving that accountability fuels both environmental and economic growth. With stronger enforcement mechanisms, companies are moving from compliance to leadership. Consumers, too, are rewarding brands that embrace responsibility. The result is a marketplace where circular design is not just encouraged it's expected.

Final Word:

The EU's EPR framework is reshaping markets and mindsets alike—proving that smart regulation can fuel, not hinder, innovation.



Andreja Palatinus is a leading force in environmental sustainability, known for her pioneering work as a microplastics researcher, community leader, and founder of Slovenia's largest coastal cleanup initiative, Čista obala. Her journey exemplifies how individual passion and community action can create lasting change for marine health.

Early Inspiration and Scientific Path

From a young age, Andreja felt a deep connection to nature, often collecting trash as a child. This early sense of responsibility led her to pursue a degree in environmental science, with a particular focus on ocean health and waste management. A pivotal moment in her career occurred in 2004, when she discovered the "clean coast index" methodology, which became the driving theme of her academic thesis and ignited her commitment to combating marine litter.

Founding Čista obala: Slovenia's Clean Coast

In response to the extensive need for coastline maintenance, Andreja co-founded Čista obala ("Clean Coast") two years after graduating. Initially, the Slovenian environmental agency struggled to keep up with waste along the 46 km shoreline, managing only monthly cleanups with limited staff. Andreja's organization rallied student volunteers, reducing cleanup times significantly and increasing impact. The movement grew rapidly: their first full-coast event happened in 2009, and by 2011 they joined the International Coastal Cleanup campaign. Annually, around 150 people now participate, collecting and categorizing hundreds of thousands of discarded items, with a major emphasis on educating and empowering volunteers.

Transforming Marine Litter Into Value

Beyond organizing cleanups, Andreja is a strong advocate for repurposing marine litter. She has connected with artists and entrepreneurs to transform small, collected plastic pieces into new products, such as tabletops and lamps. However, the journey revealed many regulatory and logistical obstacles, like the lack of official waste status for marine litter in EU law and the challenges of cross-border material transport. Undeterred, Andreja collaborates on EU projects exploring ways to reuse marine trash, drawing inspiration from successful ventures abroad and continuing to champion innovation in waste management.

Engaging the Next Generation

While microplastics and plastic pollution are pressing global issues, Andreja stresses that greater responsibility should not fall on the younger generation alone. Instead, she calls for leadership and solutions from those who shaped today's environment, urging adults to mentor and empower youth rather than pass challenges down to them

Insights and Advice

- **Biggest myth about plastic pollution:** The claim that there is "more plastic than fish in the ocean" oversimplifies a complex issue.
- **Product wish didn't exist:** Andreja believes no product is inherently bad; the issue lies in responsible and ethical use.
- **Eco-unfriendly guilty pleasure:** Driving to the coast for work and leisure.
- **Dream cleanup collaborator:** Madonna.
- **Alternative career:** Anything related to environmental protection, such as air pollution research.
- **Word for sustainability's future:** "Gone"; Andreja emphasizes focusing now on survival and vitality, not just sustainability.
- **Advice for aspiring innovators:** Follow your heart, trust your instincts, and take action before it's too late.

Legacy and Continuing Impact

Through initiatives like Čista obala and "Microplastics for Breakfast", Andreja brings together researchers, businesses, and communities to find real solutions to marine litter. Her leadership demonstrates that environmental threats can become catalysts for collective action and creativity, helping bridge the gap between science, industry, and the public for a cleaner, more sustainable future.

Thevinyl
PVC COMPOUND

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Tobias Lind, CEO of THEVINYL AB, stands as a transformative leader in the PVC industry, with over two decades dedicated to steering his company toward sustainability and robust growth. At PolyNext 2025, Lind shared insights on his personal journey and THEVINYL's evolution as a model for sustainable innovation.

From Engineer to CEO

Beginning his career as a process engineer, Lind gained a deep technical foundation in manufacturing before advancing through sales and managerial roles. By 2020, he was appointed CEO, integrating his engineering precision and commercial insight to lead THEVINYL with a clear vision for sustainability.

Sustainability as Core Strategy

Under Lind's leadership, THEVINYL places sustainability at the center of its operations. The strategy encompasses reducing environmental impact, expanding recycling capabilities, and developing bio-based PVC compounds. THEVINYL's commitment is further demonstrated by ISO 9001, ISO 14001, and ISO 26000 certifications, affirming excellence in quality, environmental stewardship, and sustainability

Doubling Production and Overcoming Challenges

Since 2020, THEVINYL has doubled its production and sales, fueled by sustainable innovations and strategic investments in capacity despite facing global supply chain disruptions. Lind detailed delays in equipment delivery and fluctuations in raw material prices, but pointed to collaborative problem-solving and optimized processes as keys to resilient growth.

Customer Reception and Product Innovation

Top industry partners have responded enthusiastically, with some replacing 100% of virgin PVC with recycled or bio-based alternatives. THEVINYL has also launched new lab facilities to guarantee quality for recycled materials and high-performance applications. Their notable innovations include rim tapes for bicycles and vegan leather substitutes for automotive interiors.

The Future of PVC in the Nordics

Looking ahead, Lind forecasts accelerated adoption of recycled and bio-based PVC, increased regulatory pressure, and bold customer-driven innovation, noting that Nordic countries will set the pace for sustainable progress in the industry.

Leadership Insights

- **Sustainability or innovation?** Lind sees innovation as crucial for advancing sustainability.
- **Unusual PVC applications:** Rim tapes for bicycles, vegan leather in cars.
- **Buzzwords to beware:** "Green" or "environmentally friendly" without proper certification or clear explanation.
- **Guiding advice:** Be honest—truth endures.
- **Next steps:** Growth and innovation remain THEVINYL's priorities.

Conclusion

Through technical expertise, strategic vision, and relentless innovation, Tobias Lind and THEVINYL AB exemplify the path forward for sustainable plastics—proving that growth and environmental responsibility can indeed go hand in hand.

Thomas Lorenz, CEO of Lorenz Technik GmbH, stands as a visionary leader in the European composites industry. His journey from family business roots to technological pioneer was highlighted at PolyNext 2025, where he discussed Lorenz Technik's competitive edge and enduring commitment to sustainability.

Leadership and Legacy

Founded in 1966 by his father, Lorenz Technik began as a composites producer in Germany. Thomas Lorenz took the reins in 1996, steering the firm to focus on the development and manufacturing of advanced materials like SMC (Sheet Moulding Compound), BMC (Bulk Moulding Compound), and glass fiber reinforced composites. Today, Lorenz Technik serves the electrical, automotive, and railway industries across Europe.

Competitive Edge: Customer-Focused Innovation

Lorenz emphasized that customer requirements drive innovation and competitiveness. By continually adapting products and pricing to market needs, the company has thrived even amidst fierce competition and shifting industry demands. This customer-centric approach is at the heart of Lorenz Technik's strategy.

Sustainability: Thirty Years of Recycling Solutions

A sustainability pioneer, Lorenz Technik started recycling initiatives nearly 30 years ago. Rather than chasing buzzwords, their CO2 footprint concept stands out for combining cost-efficiency and competitiveness. This pragmatic approach has enabled successful long-term integration of sustainability in specialized composites manufacturing.

Challenging Plastics Perception

Lorenz is adamant that public understanding of plastics is limited. He underlines the complexity and diversity of plastic technology, which the public often overlooks. This misunderstanding, he notes, is a persistent challenge the entire industry faces, especially as it evolves toward sustainable solutions.

Market Drivers and Future Technologies

Supplying to sectors like automotive, construction, and household appliances, Lorenz Technik observes broadening interest in sustainability but sees no single sector dominating demand. The company continues advancing recycling technologies, leveraging its experience in innovative customer projects to propel progress in the industry

AI, Automation, and Material Trends

While automation is vital across manufacturing, Lorenz anticipates that sophisticated AI and automation technologies may take time to permeate niche composites sectors. For materials, the company employs natural fibers but finds bioplastics less relevant for SMC and BMC parts built for durability.

Rapid-Fire Insights

- **Recycling or biodegradables?** Prefers recycling for composites.
- **Biggest plastics challenge:** Keeping up with regulations.
- **Advice for entrepreneurs:** Plastics remain a secure career path.
- **Industry alternatives:** None poised to replace plastics fully.
- **Favorite German brand:** Mercedes.
- **Misunderstood fact:** Plastics' technical diversity.
- **Policy advice:** Sustainability is critical, but overregulation can backfire; Germany's deposit system serves as an exemplary international model.

Conclusion

Thomas Lorenz's enduring leadership and focus on **competitive sustainability** have not only kept Lorenz Technik at the forefront of composites but have also set the benchmark for integrating recycling and innovation within the sector. His balanced perspective on regulation and pragmatism around material choices is shaping the future of plastics in Europe

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Thomas Blocher is a seasoned chemical engineer and leader in chemical recycling, currently heading the chemical recycling platform at BUSS ChemTech AG. With over 35 years of global experience in chemical process technology, Blocher is at the forefront of innovation in converting mixed plastic waste into sustainable, reusable materials. His work bridges decades of technical expertise and a deep commitment to sustainability.

Global Expertise and Innovative Leadership

Trained in the United States, Thomas Blocher's extensive career has spanned roles in process equipment, technology development, and leadership positions worldwide. His international experience has fostered an open-minded and flexible approach to problem-solving, enabling him to design customized process technologies that address the diverse challenges of plastic waste recycling.

Chemical Recycling and Its Complementarity

Blocher emphasizes that chemical recycling is a vital complement to mechanical recycling. While mechanical recycling faces limitations due to feedstock quality and polymer degradation, chemical recycling expands the types of plastic waste that can be processed and regenerates materials to near-virgin quality. Together, these recycling methods create a more comprehensive solution for managing plastic waste sustainably.

Industry Realities and Future Outlook

Recent industry trends suggest a reality check, with stakeholder expectations becoming more grounded due to project delays and market conditions. Despite a weak investment climate and regulatory uncertainties, BUSS ChemTech is steadily progressing, with plans to complete in-house testing infrastructure and initiate contracts for its first commercial chemical recycling plant.

Looking forward, Blocher envisions maturing supply chains and widespread adoption of chemical recycling technologies, such as pyrolysis, becoming economically viable solutions within the next decade. His work continues to support the industry's transition toward a circular economy, helping stakeholders reconcile sustainability goals with practical commercial viability.

Insights from Thomas Blocher

- **Passion for Process Innovation:** Enjoys both hands-on development and strategic planning.
- **Recycling Approach:** Advocates for integrated use of both mechanical and chemical recycling technologies.
- **Misconceptions:** Clarifies that plastics are not inherently problematic; challenges lie in their management and design.
- **Cultural Preference:** Appreciates European countries, especially Switzerland and Germany, for their industry environments.
- **Future Outlook:** Describes the future of plastics as "evolving," reflecting ongoing innovation and adaptation.
- **Advice for New Engineers:** Encourages entering the field given its challenges and immense potential for meaningful impact.

Conclusion

Thomas Blocher's leadership at BUSS ChemTech embodies the convergence of technical expertise, innovation, and sustainability commitment needed to drive forward the plastics recycling industry. His vision and efforts in chemical recycling are critical for creating scalable, economically viable solutions for plastic waste, marking an exciting chapter for circular economy advancements globally.

[BUSS ChemTech AG's pioneering technology and industry activities highlight their aggressive push toward implementing chemical recycling as a key enabler of sustainability in plastics management.]

Sachin Kumar Singh is a seasoned expert in business continuity and crisis management with over 17 years of diversified global experience. Currently based in the Middle East, he is the founder of Risk Minds, a consulting firm that pioneers innovative solutions to help organizations prepare for unexpected disruptions. Recognized globally for his expertise, including through the United Nations' ARISE initiative, Sachin brings a unique blend of industry experience and cultural insight to his work.

Diverse Experience and Global Influence

Sachin's career spans multiple sectors such as banking, manufacturing, government, and high-profile roles like resilience manager for Formula 1 Abu Dhabi. This diversity has enriched his understanding of risk and resilience across varied operational environments. His tenure in the Middle East has further refined his strategic capabilities in proactive government engagement and industry maturity enhancement.

Founding Risk Minds

Driven by a desire to innovate beyond the confines of bureaucracy he encountered in larger consultancies like PwC, Sachin founded Risk Minds to deliver real value through flexible, forward-thinking risk management services. His firm addresses cross-sector challenges in crisis management, risk mitigation, and cybersecurity by assembling tailor-made teams of subject matter experts aligned with clients' needs.

Innovation and AI in Crisis Management

Sachin highlights the transformative potential of AI in crisis forecasting and operational continuity. By enhancing agility and responsiveness, AI helps organizations move away from static manuals toward adaptive systems that allow faster, more effective decision-making during crises.

Insights and Rapid-Fire Perspectives

- **Biggest myth about crisis management:** The belief that documentation-heavy manuals alone are sufficient.
- **Leadership role models:** Influenced by multiple college professors and mentors.
- **Recommended reading:** Currently authoring his own book; emphasizes there is no one-size-fits-all manual.
- **Alternate career:** Teaching.
- **One word to describe Risk Minds:** Trust.
- **Advice for newcomers:** Integrate resilience deeply into organizational culture rather than treating it as a checklist, ensuring continuous engagement and resource investment.

Conclusion

Sachin Kumar Singh's commitment to embedding resilience within organizations makes him a pivotal figure in today's complex risk landscape. His leadership through Risk Minds provides critical tools and strategies enabling businesses to navigate uncertainty and sustain operations amid evolving challenges. As disruptions increase globally, his expertise and innovative approach offer a timely and vital resource for organizations aiming to be truly prepared.

Renu Singh Bakirci is the CEO of Rean Earth and a trailblazer in the field of clean and sustainable energy innovation. Her journey from the fossil fuels industry to green technology leadership was inspired by a profound realization during the COVID-19 pandemic: the urgent need to care for the planet and shift toward ecological integrity.

Transition to Green Tech and Sustainability

Renu began her professional career trading oil and commodities. The pandemic marked a turning point when she recognized the planet's depletion due to resource overuse without replenishment. This insight propelled her to focus on clean technologies such as sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), green hydrogen, and regenerative agriculture. Her vision centers on creating solutions that prioritize environmental health alongside business scalability.

The Evolution of Rean Earth

Originally, Renu envisioned launching a digital neo bank to empower women, who bear disproportionate impacts from climate change, particularly in water-scarce regions. However, her focus evolved toward energy and agricultural innovation, blending SAF production with soil regeneration practices. Rean Earth now actively operates internationally, notably advancing projects in Kazakhstan that cultivate regenerative crops like cholina, which enhance soil health while providing alternative income for farmers.

Soil Health and Climate Impact

Renu emphasizes soil as the foundation of life, highlighting that over a third of fertile soil worldwide has been lost due to intensive agriculture and chemical use. Restoring soil vitality through sustainable crop initiatives not only supports biodiversity but also plays a critical role in carbon sequestration, food security, and ecosystem health.

Purpose and Scalability

For Renu, purpose and profitability are inseparable. Rean Earth strives to develop scalable projects that balance ecological benefits with economic viability, aiming to build regenerative companies that are profitable by design and deeply committed to environmental stewardship.

Collaborative Successes

A key example of impactful collaboration is Rean Earth's work with governments and stakeholders in the CIS region to grow resilient crops on marginal lands. This initiative demonstrates a circular model engaging communities and ecosystems alike, transforming underutilized lands into productive, sustainable landscapes.

Rapid-Fire Insights

- **Leadership style:** Intentional
- **Current focus:** Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) over hydrogen
- **Admired founder:** Her father
- **Mind-blowing green tech:** 3D graphene solid-state batteries, SAF derived from municipal waste
- **Preferred brainstorming beverage:** Tea
- **Sustainability myth:** It requires sacrifice — it doesn't
- **Alternate career:** Running a coffee shop or writing
- **Dream travel destination by SAF:** Patagonia

Fostering Innovation and Responsibility

Renu fosters an organizational culture grounded in respect for life and planetary health. She values curiosity, honesty, and constantly challenges whether projects align with Rean Earth's mission, ensuring innovation is purposeful and responsible.

Conclusion

Renu Singh Bakirci's inspiring leadership at Rean Earth drives meaningful advances in clean energy and regenerative agriculture, presenting tangible climate solutions for a sustainable future. Through integrating cutting-edge technologies with deep ecological values, she exemplifies how purpose-driven innovation can create scalable impact for generations to come.

Rajesh Pahwa, founder and CEO of 21st Century Polymers, is a pioneering figure in India's plastic recycling industry with over 35 years of experience. His extensive career covers recycling, polymer compounding, and advancing sustainability and circular economy initiatives.

Journey and Industry Leadership

Rajesh began his recycling journey in 1989 when plastic was widely regarded as a lifesaver material. Over decades, he witnessed a paradigm shift from unmanaged plastic waste to structured, policy-driven recycling systems. 21st Century Polymers was the first Indian recycling company to exhibit internationally in countries including the U.S., Dubai, Germany, and China. The company also collaborates with the United Nations on waste aggregation projects, such as in Goa.

Evolution of Recycling Practices

The recycling landscape has progressed significantly, with the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) systems being a major milestone. Rajesh emphasizes that recycling must be integrated with broader sustainability concepts like waste reduction, reuse, and product design to close the circular loop effectively.

Distinctive Capabilities of 21st Century Polymers

The company excels by providing end-to-end management—from collection and segregation to washing, granulation, and product manufacturing. Notably, 21st Century Polymers innovates in recycling multilayer packaging (MLP), expanded polystyrene (EPS), and polymer compounding, where additives enhance recycled polymers to outperform virgin materials.

Supporting EPR and Overcoming Challenges

As a full-service EPR fulfillment partner, 21st Century Polymers ensures traceable collection, compliance documentation, and community engagement for source segregation awareness. Rajesh highlights the gap between policy and ground realities in India, noting that infrastructure is growing but public awareness and enforcement lag. Empowering informal sectors with training and technology is pivotal to bridging this gap.

Exciting Recycling Technologies

Rajesh identifies chemical recycling as a promising but nascent technology. He also advocates for the development of biodegradable and compostable polymers that naturally degrade without industrial intervention. His company holds patents in multilayer packaging separation and collaborates internationally to scale such innovations.

Future Directions

Recently, 21st Century Polymers partnered with Source One, India's leading tech-based virgin polymer distributor, enabling digital trading of recycled and compounded polymers. This initiative brings transparency, market access, and scalability to the circular economy in India.

Rapid-Fire Insights

- **Plastic or bioplastic?** Plastic with recyclability.
- **Favorite recycled product?** Park benches made from multilayer waste.
- **One habit to reduce waste?** Segregation at the source.
- **Recycling: Necessity or opportunity?** Both, but primarily necessity.
- **Future innovation focus?** Packaging—refillable, compostable, smart.
- **Sustainability in one word?** Integrity.
- **Advice for young entrepreneurs?** Best time to join with growing opportunities and profitability.

Conclusion

Rajesh Pahwa's visionary leadership at 21st Century Polymers exemplifies India's growing prowess in sustainable plastic management. Through technological innovation, advocacy, and robust partnerships, his work bridges policy and practice—advancing a formalized, effective, and scalable recycling ecosystem for India's future.

Pierre Juan is a seasoned leader in the plastics and chemical industry with over 30 years of experience working at major global corporations such as LyondellBasell, DAOW Chemicals, BASF, and Ineos Styrolution. A French mechanical engineer by training, Pierre began his career focused on application development and the automotive plastics sector. Over time, he progressed through roles including product manager, business director, and ultimately vice president for innovation and sales. Recently, he established his own consulting firm, Sustainplus Europe, to help companies navigate the evolving plastics sustainability landscape.

Career Highlights and Leadership Approach

Pierre credits a pivotal career moment to his promotion as head of global key accounts at BASF, where his cross-cultural skills and fluency in English and German enabled him to manage multinational clients effectively. Collaborating closely with CEOs in innovation roles further refined his strategic thinking and broadened his leadership capabilities. Though he embraces his engineering background, Pierre identifies as a "sales guy at heart," passionate about advising top executives on industry-wide trends, innovation, and mega-trends.

Advocacy for Balanced Regulatory Strategy

With European regulations such as PLV and PPWR reshaping the plastics industry, Pierre advises companies to avoid mistiming their investments. He emphasizes the importance of strategically allocating resources in alignment with the expected full impact of these regulations around 2030 to 2032, cautioning against premature or delayed responses that could jeopardize business success.

Thought Leadership in Sustainability

Pierre blends academic insights from experts with his extensive market experience, ensuring his guidance is both informed and practical. He believes the technical aspects of plastics regulations are generally understood, but the long-term implementation challenges and business implications remain less clear to many organizations.

Perspectives on Recycling Technologies

While recognizing the potential of chemical recycling, Pierre regards it as currently overhyped, with many investments paused due to uncertain economics and reliance on regulatory incentives. Conversely, he views mechanical recycling alongside improved sorting and purification technologies as more realistic, promising avenues for the coming decade.

Personal Philosophy and Future Vision

Pierre's leadership is grounded in hard work, passion, openness, and curiosity—qualities that help him connect disparate ideas and spot opportunities others may miss. His desired legacy is to assist clients in successfully navigating regulatory challenges and maintaining competitiveness in the evolving plastics sector. To him, the future of plastics is sustainable, contingent on integrating practical application knowledge with regulatory understanding.

Rapid-Fire Insights

- **Biggest myth about plastics in Europe:** The "plastics bashing" trend that undervalues plastics' benefits leading to misguided bans.
- **Underestimated regulation:** Substance of concern legislations affecting recycled plastics.
- **Sustainable startups admired:** Mura Technology (chemical recycling innovation), Circularise (digital product passports).
- **Career risk embraced:** Launching his own consultancy after a corporate career.
- **Greater challenge:** Mindset change over supply chain transformation.
- **Future of plastics:** Sustainable.
- **Advice for new entrants:** Prioritize practical applications alongside regulations to avoid failure, emphasizing bottom-up knowledge integration.

Conclusion

Pierre Juan is a strategic and innovative leader dedicated to guiding the plastics industry through a complex sustainability transition. With a balanced perspective on regulation, technology, and business realities, he plays a crucial role in shaping a sustainable future for plastics in Europe and beyond.

Philipp Krauss is a dynamic and multifaceted leader whose career spans traditional plastics, recycled materials, global consulting, e-commerce, and personal fitness coaching. As founder and CEO of Krauss Consulting & Recycling GmbH, he combines over 15 years of experience in business development, marketing, sales, and circular economy principles to drive innovative and commercially viable solutions in the plastics recycling industry.

Journey Blending Technical and Commercial Expertise

Philipp began his professional journey as a trade apprentice in a Japanese trading house, gaining hands-on experience in margins, market reliability, and supply chain dynamics. He later pursued industrial engineering studies, equipping him with technical fundamentals critical for advancements in recycling. This blend of practical trading insight and engineering knowledge fuels his approach to transforming waste streams into valuable resources.

Leading Consulting and Innovation

Philipp's leadership philosophy revolves around integrating theory and practice. He utilizes his foundation in foreign trade and industrial engineering to craft consulting and trading solutions that are robust technically and sustainable commercially. His firm supports multinational clients across Europe, the US, the Middle East, and Asia, helping companies secure supply chains, manage risks, and innovate to improve margins using recycled feedstocks.

Global Perspectives on Recycling

Operating worldwide, Philipp observes diverse cultural and business practices in recycling. Asia's rapid tech adoption contrasts with the Middle East's infrastructure-driven projects and the US's focus on speed. These variations highlight differing definitions of recycling—from simple landfill diversion to advanced repolymerization—requiring tailored strategies for each market.

Innovation and Technology at the Forefront

Philipp emphasizes the critical role of data and technology in scalable, transparent recycling supply chains. He highlights innovations like IoT sensors for waste collection, blockchain for traceability, AI analytics for logistics optimization, and digital quality management. Such technologies underpin efficiency and sustainability in the evolving plastics landscape.

AI, Automation, and Material Trends

A strategic thinker, Philipp plans on a 10-year horizon with milestones to maintain focus without losing sight of daily operations. He fosters transparency and agile collaboration among teams and partners, embedding compliance checkpoints to guide innovation fluidly amidst regulatory complexity.

Personal Insights: Fitness, Mindfulness, and Leadership

Philipp incorporates fitness, meditation, psychology, and Kabbalah into his leadership style. Meditation aids clarity; fitness builds discipline; Kabbalah's Tree of Life concept guides decision-making, helping distinguish ego from vision. These practices underpin his thoughtful and dependable leadership approach.

Rapid-Fire Insights

- **Recycling industry myth:** It's never profitable (Philipp doubts this)
- **Leadership style in one word:** Dependable
- **Morning ritual besides journaling:** Meditation
- **Admired brand:** Patagonia
- **Tougher challenge:** Negotiating with Middle Eastern suppliers harder than lifting 170 kg in the leg press
- **Dream collaboration:** Elon Musk
- **Change wished in plastics:** True circularity in product design, especially addressing metal contamination in industrial parts
- **Advice to future leaders:** Prioritize impact, build strong foundations and respect everyone

Conclusion

Philipp Krauss stands as a visionary and practical leader in the plastics recycling and circular economy space. His multifaceted expertise and global outlook enable him to bridge commercial viability with sustainable innovation, inspiring a more responsible and efficient plastics industry worldwide.

Mia Ba is an award-winning social media strategist and founder of Automate Social, known for her impactful work driving innovation and digital storytelling across global organizations such as the United Nations, World Bank, and The Body Shop. At the PolyNext Conference, Mia shared insights into her vibrant career, her pioneering efforts in fair trade plastic initiatives, and her vision for the future of plastic recycling through marketing and technology.

Driving Impact Through Automate Social

Mia heads Automate Social, a company that has developed a revolutionary system automating social media advertisements, saving busy entrepreneurs up to 80% of their time. Her passion lies in enabling businesses to harness AI-powered solutions to scale their reach while freeing up valuable time — a game-changer for mission-driven businesses.

Founding Čista obala: Slovenia's Clean Coast

Mia's journey includes spearheading the launch of the world's first fair trade plastic campaign in Bangalore, India, in collaboration with The Body Shop and Plastic for Change. This groundbreaking initiative created sustainable livelihoods for waste pickers, elevating plastic recycling into a community-driven, ethical model of circular economy. The campaign successfully went viral with the help of journalists and influencers, amplifying its global reach.

Blending Marketing with Social Impact

Mia believes that cause marketing, balancing authentic storytelling with solution-focused optimism, can significantly move brand narratives forward. By identifying the right influencers and target industries, her campaigns effectively engage consumers and inspire meaningful action against plastic waste.

Looking Ahead: A Vision for Sustainable Recycling

Optimistic about recycling becoming standard practice, Mia advocates for halting virgin plastic production and mainstreaming recycled content. She stresses the need for integrating environmental efforts with humanitarian values, highlighting how plastic waste disproportionately affects vulnerable communities around the world.

Balancing Business, Volunteering, and Life

Having experienced burnout from mixing work and personal life, Mia now consciously separates her entrepreneurial efforts, hobbies, and volunteer work into distinct spaces. This intentional balance helps maintain her energy and enthusiasm.

Staying Ahead in a Fast-Changing Landscape

Mia keeps abreast of social media and digital marketing trends through content creators focused on AI innovations, ensuring that her strategies remain cutting-edge and deeply informed.

A Surprising Personal Insight

Despite her bubbly public persona, Mia identifies as an independent "lone wolf," often navigating pivotal life moments alone. This contrast adds depth to her leadership and creative approach.

Conclusion

Mia Ba exemplifies how innovative digital strategies combined with a heart for social impact can transform plastic recycling awareness and action. Her leadership at Automate Social is catalyzing a new era of efficient, AI-driven marketing that empowers businesses to scale their message and contribute to a more sustainable world.

Hartmut Siebert is a highly experienced professional in the specialty chemical and polymer industries, combining a strong education in polymer chemistry with extensive leadership in sales, marketing, and innovation. Currently serving as Head of Sales for Europe and the Americas at Sulzer Chemtech, Hartmut brings a unique blend of technical expertise and creative strategic insight to his work.

Educational and Career Journey

With a PhD in polymer chemistry from the Institute for Macromolecular Chemistry in Freiburg, Germany, and a Master's degree in Innovation Management from LIMAK Austrian Business School, Hartmut has held a diverse range of roles across major companies. His career spans from product development management at Basell and Borealis to technical marketing and business development at Clariant, before taking on leadership positions at Sulzer Chemtech.

Interconnection of Sales and Innovation

Hartmut emphasizes the intrinsic link between sales and innovation: sales drive the delivery of innovations, while innovations fuel business growth. The challenge lies in continuously adapting to evolving markets by identifying unmet needs and creating solutions that stimulate mutual success.

Trends Shaping Specialty Chemicals

One of the critical trends Hartmut observes is the push to make sustainability commercially viable. This requires balancing cost reduction, efficiency improvements, and sustainability enhancements simultaneously. He highlights advanced recycling technologies like devolatilization, fractional crystallization in electronic phosphoric acid purity, and protective additives as transformative innovations currently impacting the industry.

The Importance of Creativity in Technical Fields

Creative design is fundamental not only in product innovation but also in branding within B2B industries. For Hartmut, building trusted relationships and credibility is just as essential to sales success as technical performance.

Global Market Nuances

Drawing from his international experience, Hartmut outlines distinct regional traits: rapid innovation and risk-taking in Asia, Europe's focus on sustainability with bureaucratic hurdles, North America's energy advantage and service orientation, and the Middle East's modernization efforts driven by cost considerations.

Commitment to Sustainability and Circular Economy

Sustainability is a cornerstone in Hartmut's projects, particularly through biobased and biodegradable polymers and robust recycling practices. He views legislation like the EU Plastics Regulation as pivotal for driving industry change despite associated challenges.

Rapid-Fire Insights

- **Polymer limitation:** Withstanding highest temperatures.
- **Underrated innovation:** Safety benefits plastics provide in cars, food preservation, insulation.
- **Sustainability:** A necessity, not a hype.
- **Profit vs societal cost:** An acknowledged reality.
- **Mind vs machine:** Mind over machine.
- **Business tip:** Build close customer intimacy.
- **2035 industry forecast:** More green.
- **Advice to younger self:** Adapt swiftly; accept what can't be changed.

Conclusion

Hartmut Siebert's career embodies the powerful synergy of science, creativity, and market savvy needed to advance specialty chemicals and polymers toward a sustainable future. His leadership drives innovation and commercial growth while navigating the complex demands of evolving global markets and regulatory environments.

Transforming Plastic Waste Management: An Exclusive Conversation with Eric Schaffner, CEO of Zelu

At the PolyNext Conference 2025, an insightful discussion unfolded with Eric Schaffner, the visionary CEO and founder of Zelu, a company revolutionizing plastic waste management through blockchain technology and gamification. With decades of experience in the packaging industry and collaborations with major players like Sidel and Tetra Laval, Eric shares the journey that led him to disrupt the status quo and offer immediate, impactful solutions to the global plastic crisis.

From Packaging Veteran to Sustainability Innovator

Eric's extensive background in packaging exposed him to the massive scale of plastic production and the complexities of waste management. Despite advancements in sustainability, he saw a critical gap: empowering individuals and fostering a circular economy remained elusive. This realization sparked the creation of Zelu, aiming to incentivize recycling, build communities, and promote the reuse of plastic materials.

Driving Immediate Impact with Technology

Zelu breaks traditional barriers by offering solutions that yield immediate environmental impact rather than distant promises. The company uses blockchain to reward users with eco-tokens for every bottle collected, tracked via a mobile app. So far, over 7,000 collection points in more than 70 countries have been mapped, allowing users worldwide to engage in gamified challenges and competitions that keep motivation high. Additionally, Zelu supports corporate programs targeting plastic footprint offsetting.

Challenging Plastics Perception

Lorenz is adamant that public understanding of plastics is limited. He underlines the complexity and diversity of plastic technology, which the public often overlooks. This misunderstanding, he notes, is a persistent challenge the entire industry faces, especially as it evolves toward sustainable solutions.

Blockchain for Transparency and Trust

Zelu integrates crypto technology to guarantee transparency and traceability. Every eco-action—whether bottle collection or cleanup—is securely recorded on the blockchain, with automated rewards ensuring fairness. The company issues plastic Pedex NFT certificates as proof of actual waste recovery, exemplified by their work in Argentina, where 150 tons of plastic were diverted from landfill, jobs were created, and verified certificates were issued. This decentralized trust system counters skepticism and potential greenwashing.

Partnering with Industry Leaders and Governments

Zelu's credibility is reinforced through partnerships with corporations such as Nestle and several municipal governments. These organizations value Zelu's measurable and transparent sustainability approach that aligns with their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) goals while fostering consumer engagement. Zelu's scalable platform spans over 70 countries, showing the potential for a global sustainability movement.

Inspiring Innovations and Regional Priorities

Among sustainability startups, Eric admires "Too Good To Go," an app rescuing surplus food. He identifies Asia as the region most urgently requiring zero plastic waste efforts due to its significant pollution challenges.

Gamification: Engaging People to Save the Planet

Central to Zelu's approach is gamification, which transforms environmental action into an engaging and rewarding experience. Users collect any plastic bottle, deposit it at a designated point, and upload a photo to earn tokens redeemable for various goods and services. The app also encourages community cleanups and ties user efforts to tangible environmental metrics, such as carbon footprint equivalents, thereby making personal impact visible and meaningful.

Combating Greenwashing and Ensuring Accountability

Greenwashing threatens the credibility of sustainability efforts, but Zelu combats this by providing verified digital plastic credits linked directly to real recovery. Businesses purchasing these credits can transparently demonstrate their environmental commitments. Furthermore, Zelu's app engages communities in authentic action, verifying on-the-ground impact beyond corporate claims.

Insights on Plastic Neutrality and Industry Myths

Eric emphasizes that plastic neutrality only succeeds with genuine, measured efforts rather than serving as a corporate buzzword to justify ongoing plastic production. He challenges the myth that recycling alone solves plastic pollution, stressing the crucial need to reduce plastic production and consumption overall. The immediate habit to abandon, according to Eric, is reliance on single-use plastic packaging.

A Call to Action for Businesses and Policymakers

Eric urges all to reduce plastic use and support verified recovery by joining Zelu's movement through the app or plastic credits.

POLYNEXTCONF

Innovation and Sustainability: A Conversation with Arno Maurer of Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences

In a special session focused on innovation, sustainability, and the future of materials, Mr. Arno Maurer, senior research scientist at the Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences, shared his valuable insights. With a background in chemistry and decades of experience converting waste into activated carbon and crude oil, Arno is a passionate advocate for circular material systems and supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production.

A Motivated Scientist and Advocate for Future Generations

Arno, a husband, father, and recent grandparent, is deeply motivated by the desire to secure a livable future. His journey began with solid roots in chemistry and professional roles across Germany focused on sustainable materials, circular economy, and environmental protection. Currently, he leads projects on sustainable polymers while also engaging in teaching and collaborations to foster innovation.

Early Influences and Commitment to Circular Economy

Growing up in Europe during the 1970s and 1980s, a period marked by rising environmental awareness triggered by the oil crisis, profoundly influenced Arno. His early research on converting biomass and waste to fuels gave him a first-hand understanding of circular approaches well before the circular economy became a mainstream concept.

Views on Circular Economy Trends and Collaboration

Although progress on circular economy adoption can seem slow—with many organizations still in the early phases—Arno finds hope in the increasing commitment across research, legislation, and industry. He emphasizes the importance of collaboration and expresses optimism for robust agreements in upcoming global treaties on plastics.

Multidisciplinary Approach to Innovation

Arno enjoys a generalist role that balances technical research, effective communication, and market perspectives. He believes that writing and promotion are crucial to spark collaboration and secure funding for innovative projects.

Industry Partnerships and Practical Impact

At his applied university, projects are closely driven by industry needs and aim to deliver immediate practical value. This approach has proven motivational for both students and researchers, fostering a dynamic environment of applied innovation.

Preparing the Next Generation

Arno's institute mainly educates mechanical engineers who may not start out enthusiastic about chemistry but are inspired to think about future challenges. He underscores that traditional methods won't suffice to address emerging global concerns, pushing for forward-looking education.

Rapid-Fire Insights

- **Future of energy:** Optimistic
- **Most underrated innovation:** Clean and affordable renewable energy
- **Electric vehicles or hydrogen:** Electric vehicles—simple and fun
- **Dream collaboration:** Coffee with the initiators of the plastics treaty
- **Alternate career if not a scientist:** Happy being a scientist
- **Advice to aspiring scientists:** Focus talent where it benefits society and the planet immediately—opportunities abound in advanced recycling, clean energy, renewable carbon, and cross-border technology transfer.

Conclusion

Arno Maurer's insights blend technical expertise with a deep human commitment, offering inspiring perspectives on how multidisciplinary innovation and collaboration can drive sustainable materials and circular economies forward. His work at Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences exemplifies the practical, immediate impact needed to meet today's environmental challenges and build a better future.

INDUSTRY NEWS

A COMPETITIVE EUROPE – WITH OR WITHOUT PLASTICS?

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Treaty Talks Stall, Industry Must Look Inward

Global negotiations in Geneva once again failed to deliver a binding plastics treaty, largely due to lobbying by fossil-fuel and petrochemical giants. With the multilateral route blocked, momentum now lies with industry-led solutions—companies exploring Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), scaling recycling infrastructure, and innovating in reuse models.

Europe Tightens the Noose with EPR Laws

The European Union's aggressive new EPR policies—requiring up to 65% recycled content in packaging by 2030—are already spurring innovation. Multinationals are rapidly investing in chemical recycling, bioplastics, and reusable packaging models to stay compliant. This shift is expected to ripple far beyond Europe, shaping supply chains in Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

Microplastics Found in Human Brains Sparks Alarm

A landmark 2025 study published in The Lancet confirmed a 50% rise in microplastic concentrations in human brain tissues compared to data from a decade ago. This finding has elevated plastics from an environmental issue to a direct human health crisis. Governments in Canada, Germany, and Japan are already launching "plastic-health task forces" to examine long-term risks and regulatory responses.

Catalyst Discovery Could Transform PET Recycling

In a breakthrough from Northwestern University, scientists unveiled a low-energy catalyst that converts PET plastics into terephthalic acid in under four hours at ambient conditions. If commercialized, this discovery could slash the carbon footprint of recycling and provide a scalable solution for the world's most widely used plastic. Industry observers say this could be the ***most important plastics innovation of the decade.***

Asia's Mega-Markets Lead on Plastic Alternatives

China, India, and Indonesia are fast-tracking plastic alternatives with state-funded bio-materials programs. From algae-based films to bamboo composites, these nations are positioning themselves as leaders in sustainable packaging exports. Analysts suggest that Asia could dominate global bio-plastic production by 2030, challenging traditional petrochemical giants.

Meet Our Esteemed Speakers

Saurabh Gupta
Founder & CEO,
Earth5R

Tames Jan Rietdijk
Program Advisor,
River Cleanup

Thomas Lorenz
CEO,
Lorenz Kunststofftechnik GmbH

Ashly Alex
Director Environmental Services, Imdaad LLC, & General Manager, FARZ

Ajith PK
Founder, Plaskon Plastics Eco Circular Pvt. Ltd

Christian Bardon
C.E.O & President of VotreCity Monaco

Vivek Tandon
Founder of
Revalyu

Eric Schaffner
Founder of
ZeLoop

Aman Kulshrestha
Chief Technology Officer,
Emirates Biotech

Priya Sarma Mathur
Head Of Sustainability & Corporate Affairs, Unilever

Dr. Hartmut Siebert
Head of Sales
Sulzer Chemtech Ltd

Mia Bowyer
CEO,
Automate Social

Mika Surakka
Managing Director,
Sumi Oy

Sachin Kumar Singh
Founder,
Riskmindz

Dr Sameer Joshi
Vice Chairman, INDIAN PLASTICS INSTITUTE - IPI

Chinuu Kwatra
Founder,
Khushiyaan Foundation

Meet Our Esteemed Speakers

Priyanka Jha
Director at Advance Plastic Chips Manufacturing LLC

Rajesh Pahwa
Founder & CEO,
21 Century Polymers

Fatih Konukoglu
Chairman
RE&UP Recycling Technologies

Le Anh
Sustainability Director of DUYTAN Recycling

Ismail Tekin
Founder,
The World Impacteurs

Saeed Al Shamsi
Chairman
of EXHub Holding

Amit Grover
Founding Partner & CEO

Dimitrios Georgouvelas, PhD
Head of Materials, Trifilon

Sebastian Krell
Managing Director, SK Industriemodell

Nina Day
Managing Director, Metten Kunststoffprodukte GmbH

Aryan Aggarwal
CEO at
Recycle Plastics

Niall Greenan
Inventor & CEO of The SmartBunker

Samuel Ifeanyi Akaraonye
Group CEO at Samony GreenPack Solution

Dr. Sandeep Kulkarni
President, MiM® Marketing Interim Managers

Dr. Bakare Rasheed Oluwafemi
CEO,Ecoflow Nigeria Limited

Donald Thomson
Founder and CEO, Center for Regenerative Design & Collaboration (CRDC)

Meet Our Esteemed Speakers

James Merrill
Founder at StokedPlastics

Dr. Yelena Kann
President & CTO, Carbon Nurture

Juan Camilo Briceno
Financial Manager (CFO), ACEBRI

Fabian Loske
Senior Manager - Business Development Sustainability Consulting, Sphera

Pascal Siegrist
CEO & Founder of Recyclium

Simon Fiedler
CEO & Founder of Simiplas GMBH

Tobias Lind
CEO at THEVINYL AB

Sree Teja Deeti
Founder, Vistar Leaf

Tim Brewer
Managing Director, Silostop

Chip Cereghin
Company Owner, D.E.L.L PET LLC

Jeremy Selhore
Technical Manager (R&D, NPD), Plantic Technologies Ltd.

Christi McGee
COO at Circular Solutions Advisors

Roblain Namegni
Founder and CEO NAMé Recycling SA

Wenaël Regnier
Founder & CEO Sempack

Lori Yoder
Consultant , D.E.L.L PET LLC

Ahmet Abdulaziz
Founder and Managing Director of QONEXA Industries

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Kaunain Shahidi
Sustainability & Packaging Expert

Barry Cocks
CEO at NBC Group

Chip Cereghin
Company Owner, D.E.L.L PET LLC

Dr. Bakare Rasheed Oluwafemi
CEO, Ecoflow Nigeria Limited

Ahmed Elmetwally
CEO/ General Manager Private Office of Sheikh Mohamed Bin Ahmed Bin Hamadan Al Nahyan

Anas Jawed
CEO, Next Business Media

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www.river-cleanup.org

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Lorenz-Kunststofftechnik GmbH
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www.votrecity-monaco.com

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www.sumi.fi

21 Century Polymers
www.21centurypolymers.com

IPI
www.ipiindia.org

Khushiyaan Foundation
www.khushiyaanfoundation.org

Advance Plastic Chips Manufacturing LLC
www.apcmllc.com

RE&UP
www.reandup.com

Plastic Studio
plasticstudio.ch

Riskmindz
www.riskmindz.com

Ichthion
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Corsair
www.corsair.com

Next Business Media
www.nextbusinessmedia.com

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www.internetshine.com

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www.sambarrili.com

SK Industriemodell GmbH
www.sk-industriemodell.de

Metten Kunststoffprodukte GmbH
www.metten-gmbh.de

Recycle Plastics
www.recycleplastics.co.in

The Smart Bunker
www.thesmartbunker.co.uk

Samony GreenPack Solutions
www.greenpacksolutions.ca

KoolEarth Solutions Inc.
www.koolearthsolutions.com

Stoke Plastics
www.stokedplastics.com

Carbonnurture
www.carbonnurture.com

ACEBRI
www.acebri.com

CRDC Global
www.crdc.global

Thevinyl
www.thevinyl.se

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Simiplas GmbH
www.simiplas.com

Recyclium
www.recyclium.io

Silostop
www.silostop.com

Resiclo
www.resiclo.com

Plantic
www.plantic.com.au

Circular Solutions
www.csadvisors.eco

D.E.L.L PET
www.dellpet.com

Sempack
www.sempack-packaging.fr

Name Recycling
www.name-recycling.com

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www.plasticstudio.ch

Emirates Biotech
www.emiratesbiotech.com

Next Business Media
www.nextbusinessmedia.com

Sempack
www.sempack-packaging.fr

CRDC GLOBAL
www.crdc.global

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