

Veldeman Bedding brings circular design into practice

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Some time ago, this family business realised that the traditional way of production could no longer be justified, because it contributed significantly to the waste mountain, due to the large products that are made at the company. It wanted adapt its processes to be able to sustainably produce eco-friendly products. The beds were given a new, modular design, with some recyclable and some reusable parts. This new design also makes repairs and refurbishing easier, which in turn extends the lifespan of the products. In order to make the concept work in practice, disassembly was made possible and a uniform material flow was created, without compromising on quality.

The project started with one product, developed with the principles of the circular economy in mind. Once an advanced prototype was made, the next step was to market this product and link its added value to the changed market needs and wishes. A new business model had to be set up to complete the circle. The idea is that box spring and mattress are taken back after use; some parts are reused, others are processed. Putting this into practice turned out to be quite a challenge.



(Image: Veldeman)

Realistic approach

Veldeman Bedding is a member of the Circular Economy Connect learning network and in this capacity it learnt about Sirris's expertise and experience in the field of circular economy. A practical and realistic approach was worked out together, including three workshops with all parties involved. This led to different insights that were incorporated in various pilot projects, in which a small team worked iteratively and process-wise and many small steps were taken. In this way it is possible to learn quickly and gain experience, which is more important in the first phase than working out optimal processes for sales, delivery and production.

Tailored to the requirements

In concrete terms, Veldeman identified a limited number of specific customer segments, each of which can be approached with a tailor-made circular offer. The key is that circular economy has a different value for each of the customers and therefore a different finality, such as long life, recyclability, recoverability and reusability. Moreover, by working with modules, it is possible to realise a wide range of products with limited resources.

All this made sure that Veldeman Bedding was well-prepared to start marketing its sustainable bedding collection. In time, the methodology will be further extended and applied to all products within the manufacturer's range. Veldeman will adapt its entire product range step-by-step and contribute to the realisation of a more circular future

Authors



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