

Recycled Products

Company:
MALAFOR
(Gdansk, Poland)
www.malafor.com

Product:
Inflatable sofa

Recycled content:
100-percent recycled paper

Target market:
General consumer

The Blow Sofa, according to its designer Agata Kulik-Pomorska, is “a great option for modern nomads.” Using inflated dunnage bags made from recycled paper as cushions, the sofa is held together with metal tubes and rubber straps. When the owner is ready to pick up their stakes, the unique piece of furniture can be deflated and disassembled making for an easy departure.

Kulik-Pomorska, who hails from Poland, points out that in an age where it’s easy to abandon furniture, often as trash, the Blow Sofa differs from other household fittings if the bags get too worn out, they can be tossed into the recycling bin and replaced with new ones.

Although made from paper, the sofa is also designed to be durable. The dunnage bags, which are lined with an inflatable plastic pouches, are often used to transport industrial materials and should prove sturdy. Finally, because it’s made from paper, artistic types will have one more object on which to direct their creative energies.



Company:
Paperworks Studios
(Traverse City, Michigan)
www.paperworksstudio.com

Product:
Gift cards

Recycled content:
100-percent recycled paper and cloth

Target market:
General consumer

About 18 years ago a special education teacher in Traverse City, Michigan wanted to help his students build life and work skills, so he started teaching them how to craft paper cards from pulp. His efforts picked up steam and became Paperworks Studios, a social enterprise that puts disabled people to work creating unique gift cards from recycled materials. “Whenever someone buys a card from us, you’re helping impact someone’s life here,” says Brian Lewis, director of sales and business development for Paperworks.

In 2008, the program partnered with the local chapter of Goodwill Industries, giving it the structure and support to continue its growth. As part of the partnership, Paperworks also received access to a steady supply of unconventional materials that its 150 disabled or disadvantaged workers, drawn mainly from northern Michigan, use to hand-craft the gift cards.

One might say that the cards made by Paperworks are soft and winsome and perhaps reminiscent of one’s favorite pair of old jeans or other favorite garment. That’s because the cards are made from 50 percent recycled cloth that is sourced from Goodwill donations that were too worn out for resale. After being cleaned, the cloth is mixed in with the recycled paper pulp to form the card.

The nonprofit also makes a line that incorporate discarded flowers from local grocery chain Meijer. It also has a “beer card” in the works



made from brewery byproducts, and recently finished doing a custom card for yogurt giant Yoplait.

"It's called a 'micro enterprise,'" says Lewis, who adds that Paperworks sold a quarter million cards last year and is on pace to double that in 2011, "but we hope it will become a 'macro enterprise.'"

Company:

Ecologic brands
(Oakland, California)
www.ecologicbrands.com

Product:

Paper bottles

Recycled content:

70-percent recycled corrugated cardboard, 30-percent recycled newspaper

Target market:

General consumer

Julie Corbett had long been concerned about the amount of plastic bottles piling up in landfills, and wanted to find a better way of packaging cleaning products, milk, juices and other household fluids.

After purchasing her first iPhone, Corbett opened the box and found the device encased in a smooth yet durable fiber tray.

"I thought to myself, if you can mold paper now in such a beautiful form, why couldn't you make a bottle out of this?" recalls Corbett in a video on her company's website. And that's just what she did.

Corbett would go on to found Ecologic, a company that produces bottles made from recycled corrugated cardboard boxes and newspaper that are meant to function just like their plastic counterparts. The bottles are molded into a fiber shell that encompasses an inner plastic pouch made from LDPE. When consumers are done with them, the shell can be popped open to remove the pouch, which can also be recycled. The shell can then go either into the compost heap or be recycled up to seven times.

So far, Seventh Generation, a maker of non-toxic and environmentally-friendly products, has begun using the bottles for its 4X Laundry Detergent, which contains 66 percent less plastic than a typical 100 ounce 2X bottle.

But Corbett has much grander vision for her bottles: "This is not just about a bottle it is about a movement, a movement that will one day change the packaging industry," she explains on a video on the company's website.

