

Nicotine substitute from Valeo

TJI interview with two decision makers at German e-liquid manufacturer Valeo.

Through innovative research into e-liquids, Valeo Laboratories has developed into one of the largest producers of e-liquids in Europe. TJI spoke to CEO Ilonka Paul and Olaf Meinert, head of product development and research, to find out more.

TJI: *Could you give us a brief summary of what innovation and research in this sector means to Valeo?*

Olaf Meinert: Owing to unresolved regulatory conditions, we quickly decided that Valeo should take the step from importer to producer and developer. Unreliable customs officers and the then uncertain future of liquid nicotine products, inspired us to invest in controlled production in Germany as well as in the development of a nicotine substitute. The idea behind this was to offer an alternative to the end-user, and of course the dealer, in the event of a ban on the sale of liquid nicotine products – something which was being discussed at the time. With this product, we would also be able to offer an interesting perspective in the countries where the sale of nicotine-containing products is currently completely prohibited. This laid the foundation for Valeo's innovative work on e-liquids. Success, passion for research and the quest for development became our company philosophy, which has, until now, convinced 35 countries worldwide.

How exactly does a nicotine substitute work?

We have tried, through the application of 18 different active extracts, to replicate the effects nicotine has on the senses and on the nervous system in the human body. We can ensure that "Bionic", our patent-pending nicotine substitute, which uses only food-grade materials, has chemosensory properties very similar to those of nicotine: ranging from the "kick" which happens during inhalation right through to the satisfaction of nico-



Olaf Meinert

Ilonka Paul

tine cravings. A blind study of 150 vapers conducted by Valeo had outstanding results. During the testing period of 30 days, only one participant found out that there was actually no nicotine contained in the test liquids. All the others vaped nicotine-free without knowing it!

Can you give us an overview of what is to come from the Valeo labs?

We are currently working on a refined e-liquid base which will enhance the efficiency and intensity of the flavour of the nicotine and the other ingredients and flavourings contained in it. This mixture has recently passed its toxicity analysis, and as with our other innovations, we are now working towards patenting our design.

How has the e-cigarette sector reacted to such products?

Our first tests sparked the curiosity of many customers and companies, making them aware of the existence of Valeo for the first time.

The Landewyck Group, which began research on the development of "new generation products" in 2012, was very enthusiastic. Their interest in our competence as manufacturers has now led to a cooperation between the two companies, in which Valeo will assume the manufacturing role in the production of the "Fiesta" e-liquid series. In addition to the e-liquid series, the company will also launch the "Fiesta-Disposable", a disposable e-cigarette. This was a pro-

ject which gave Valeo the opportunity to expand our capabilities. We are proud to say that, through our conversion of the "Pipette dispensing robot" originally used in the pharmaceutical industry, Valeo is now able to fill both disposable e-cigs as well as cartridge systems in Germany. This is an aspect of the industry that has traditionally been reserved for Chinese manufacturers. Due to this capability, we have now brought out our own Valeo disposable e-cig filled in Germany. After 18 months of development in collaboration with German tobacco flavour houses, we are now confident we can present the best and most authentic e-liquid tobacco taste at Inter-tabac in September.

Ilonka Paul, as CEO of Valeo, how do you assess the legal position regarding the production of nicotine-containing products?

Ilonka Paul: In the days before the TPD, we were very happy that the ministry of Schleswig-Holstein (our home county in Germany) agreed to advise, support and accredit us. Bearing in mind that the legal climate was uncertain and regulations were handled differently everywhere, it was not self-evident that an official body would agree to expand its remit to include another industry sector, albeit one which could generate up to 140 jobs.

We are glad that through the TPD2 a regulatory framework for the whole of Europe will finally be pursued. Regarding the processing of nicotine-containing liquids, manufacturers must now adhere to regulations and requirements which standardise conditions for all and state that producers must ensure the safety of consumers. Until now, there have been far too many e-liquids producers present in the market who have not adhered to hygiene, safety or legal practices or who have been strangers to important aspects of production such as quality control. (ci)