



Interoffice Correspondence

PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT

GF-623

To: Mr. J. Oliviero ✓
Location: New York

Date November 30, 1979
cc: S. W. Kantor 1-3

From: P. S. Bettoli
Location: South Bound Brook

Subject: EPA ASBESTOS REGULATIONS

Attached is a very confidential status report on our non-asbestos felt for sheet vinyl flooring.

We are past the lab bench and pilot line stage and into scaling up on a full sized machine. There is still a lot to be done before we can conclude that this will be a satisfactory operation and that the flooring product involved is acceptable. We hope to conclude this in 1980.

EPA should give us two years to look for a substitute for felt. Glass mat sheet vinyl backings are quite expensive (check with G. Ferment) compared to our asbestos product.

I have been invited to attend a special, December 12th, meeting of the American Paper Institute to consider what action should be taken in response to the EPA proposed regulations on asbestos as well as fibrous glass papers (see attached notice). I have indicated that I will attend in as much as they indicated it will be a technical group. We are not members of this institute.

P. S. Bettoli

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PSB/cc
Att.

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CONSUMER PRODUCTS GROUP
FLOOR PRODUCTS
PRODUCT PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

JAN 29 1980

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MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 1980
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

ATTENDING: T. Dent, C. Eckardt, G. Ferment, P. Gillcrist, S. Kantor, J. Lee,
J. Moran, W. Page, J. Scheckowitz, R. Smith

I OPENING COMMENTS

Mr. Scheckowitz opened the meeting with a report on the Winter Floor Covering Market held in Chicago January 6th and 7th. He stated that the customer reaction to our new patterns and products was very good and that the general consensus of the market is that GAF has made excellent progress in the last two years.

Mr. Lee then reviewed specific new products introduced at this market by competition. They are as follows:

Sheet Vinyl

Congoleum - two introductions: "Ultrafloor Esteem", a premium-priced, inlaid appearing chipped product with asbestos felt backing and "Contempora", an all-vinyl, non-shrink product for loose-lay installation.

Armstrong - "New Era", an all-vinyl, shrink-type product for commercial installation.

Floor Tile

All manufacturers introduced new patterns, but no new products.

II NON-ASBESTOS PRODUCTS

Mr. Lee next reviewed the marketing aspects of the non-asbestos tile and sheet vinyl products.

In Floor Tile, non-asbestos products now in the marketplace do not have consumer benefits beyond the absences of asbestos to justify a large consumer demand. On the other hand, Sheet Vinyl, as a product category, offers several products with unique consumer benefits. All vinyl shrink-type and non-shrink type products offer ease of installation and sub-floor imperfection-hiding characteristics which are marketable beyond the non-asbestos characteristic. Other non-asbestos sheet vinyl products, such as glass-mat backed and mineral felt backed products are being marketed widely in international markets, but have not received wide exposure domestically. Consequently, the elimination of asbestos from sheet vinyl products offers more immediate marketing options than floor tile.

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In conclusion, Mr. Lee reported that the total elimination of asbestos from flooring products will depend on government regulations, consumer buying resistance to asbestos products, and the effective cost to the manufacturer of utilizing asbestos in any manufacturing process.

Ms. Moran stated that GAF's objective is to eliminate asbestos from products manufactured by GAF in 1980. To do this, we must have the all-vinyl sheet products, the non-asbestos felt type products, as well as the ability to convert all floor tile to VNAT.

Dr. Ferment made a presentation of the status of all non-asbestos flooring projects which follows: (He supported this with a handout entitled "Non-Asbestos Products - Tile/Saturn/Delta", attached).

Floor Tile Non-Asbestos Projects

a. Project Saturn - (GAF Non-Asbestos Felt)

Dr. Ferment stated the objective of this project is to develop a non-asbestos felt product which can be produced at the GAF Whitehall felt mill. The Saturn product now appears to be equal to asbestos felt. The process still needs improvement to generate better yields. The key problem with the product is skin irritation caused by glass fibers contained in the felt. Consideration is being given to changing the diameter of the glass fiber as a possible solution to the problem.

Mr. Page stated there are still problems to be resolved. One is the learning curve that plant personnel must experience. Another is finding an outlet for product produced during this trial period. It was suggested that similar products are now being used in Europe and therefore Europe might provide a reasonable outlet. Also, the lower cost products sold domestically, such as Prime and Softred, may provide outlets since professional installation is not generally required. Marketing was requested to coordinate the plans to dispose of this material with Research and Manufacturing.

b. Premium Saturn - (Softred Backing)

The objective of this project is to develop a foam-backed product with a felt or glass mat inner layer. This product has been specifically requested for use by International.

Dr. Ferment reported the key problem is air entrapment when the mat or felt is completely coated. He remarked that additional equipment will be needed to produce this product in Mullingar. Furthermore, he needs Marketing information from International to initiate the request for this equipment.

Ms. Moran stated that she will obtain this information from Mr. Bucher.

Dr. Smith suggested that someone from International attend future Product Planning & Development Committee Meetings since many of the subjects discussed pertain to them.

c. Project Delta

Dr. Ferment stated the objective of this project is to develop a sheet vinyl product with a glass mat backing. A process has been developed and trial runs made of the product. It performs as well as asbestos-backed products. Even though the Delta product runs at a faster rate and weighs less per square yard than the asbestos-backed products, it is more costly and contains 12% glass fiber.

Dr. Ferment reported that the key problem with the project is the limited availability of poly-propylene.

Mr. Page stated that Purchasing is checking on all critical raw materials required for the production of these products.

Mr. Page then raised the question as to whether products resulting from the projects will be made available to Mannington.

Ms. Moran stated that Mannington should be offered Saturn and Delta, if it is in GAF's best interest. In addition, she stated that the target date for having them available is October 1, 1980.

d. Project Baker

The objective of this project is to develop an all-vinyl, shrink-type, sheet vinyl product.

Dr. Ferment reported that plant trials using the Baker formula and process appear to be successful. Equipment necessary to convert to full production runs will require from six to eight months to obtain. The target for installation of this equipment is the third quarter of 1980.

Mr. Lee requested material from the trial run for performance test installations. In addition, he advised that Mr. Marley has two patterns available and is working on the balance of a full pattern line.

Mr. Lee requested Research to make an analysis of Congoleum's new product, "Contempora", an all-vinyl, non-shrink type product.

III SHEET VINYL

a. Softstep Line Conversion at Whitehall

Mr. Eckardt advised that CDD is reviewing the AFE for this project in light of new information.

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b. Mid-Price SVS Sheet Vinyl Product

Dr. Ferment reports that he does not anticipate any problem with a mid-year introduction of this product. Trials are scheduled for mid-February.

c. Project Gamma

Dr. Ferment stated that a chip for the production of Gamma will be available in January. This will take the project off its "hold" status.

Ms. Moran requested that Dr. Ferment prepare a development schedule to be ready by February 1st.

Mr. Scheckowitz stated that it is critical that the product be test-marketed in 1980 and available for market introduction in early 1981.

d. Whitehall Yields

Dr. Ferment stated that the task force on Whitehall yields has been meeting regularly, however, no immediate results of its actions are anticipated.

e. Felt Mill Problems

Dr. Ferment advised that the quality of the felt has been improved and cost reductions affected.

f. Suppressant - Benzotriazole

Mr. Page reported that the immediate problem of lack of a back-up source for Benzotriazole has been resolved by increasing plant inventory to approximately a two-year supply.

g. Back Embossing

Dr. Ferment reports that no dramatic improvements are foreseen as a result of the initial survey of the problem. This is still an active project.

h. Whiteness

A formula is available for the use of optical brighteners to improve whiteness.

Dr. Ferment suggested that the formula only be used with a select few product lines.

i. Hardness

Dr. Ferment reported that the new formulas designed to improve hardness have been released for the 5400 Series and the 7500 Series.

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IV FLOOR TILE

a. No-Wax Decorator - Offset Printing

Mr. Lee reported that this new decorative effect for urethane-coated tile products is planned for introduction in March. It will be utilized in the No-Wax Decorator product line.

Mr. Page advised that the process is available, however, it has not been tested. This will be done in mid-February when print and embossing rolls are available.

b. Urethane Coating

Mr. Lee advised that a meeting has been scheduled for January 29th, New York Office to discuss all Research, Manufacturing and Marketing aspects of GAF urethane-coated tile. The discussion will include Whitehall and Vails Gate production capacity, as well as the capability of the equipment. The Super Brite-Bond Floor Tile product will also be discussed.

c. Low Binder Formula

Mr. Page reported that this cost-saving formula has been utilized since October on most commercial tile produced at Vails Gate. To take full advantage of its cost savings, Mr. Page stated that a bulk handling system will be needed. He reported an AFE is being prepared for such a system.

d. Transfer Printing

Dr. Ferment reported that the project is still active and that a man has been assigned to it.

The next meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, March 5, 1980 at 9:00 a.m. in the fourth floor Conference Room, New York Office.

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