

Chemistry for a Better Life

A conversation with Manuel Rodrigues,
Marketing & Sales Director at Surfachem Deutschland GmbH

Manuel Rodrigues joined Surfachem as Marketing & Sales Director on 25th June 2018. In addition to gaining a M.Sc. degree in Chemistry with an MBA from INSEAD, Manuel also has 20 years of international B2B experience in Strategic Marketing, Key Account Management, Business Development, and Portfolio/Project Management. Manuel previously served the Personal Care & Cosmetics, Household and Industrial Care markets at Sekisui Chemical, Nanogate, Cargill and Honeywell.



EURO COSMETICS: *In 2018, 2M Holdings Ltd. took over the German distributor FrankenChemie and has been doing business since then as Surfachem Deutschland. What has changed since the takeover?*

Manuel Rodrigues: The German team has undergone significant changes. Our primary focus areas have been people, safety and our partnerships with existing suppliers. We've also developed a customer orientated culture including the education of Surfachem values of trust & respect, innovation & expertise, accountability and action taking. Another major area of change has been the upgrade of business and operational processes, including the implementation of a new ERP system to serve our customers better and faster.

EURO COSMETICS: *Surfachem offers a broad product line, from body care to skin and hair care. What are the classics, the bestsellers, and the innovations?*

Manuel Rodrigues: Since its creation in 1981, FrankenChemie, now Surfachem Deutschland, has been the exclusive distributor for Evonik's personal care products in Germany, Benelux and several Eastern European countries. Evonik has historical expertise in organic chemicals, silicones and advanced biotechnology e.g. active ingredients. Combined, these three

technology platforms provide a comprehensive ingredient portfolio.

Evonik is the primary Personal Care reference when it comes to emulsifiers. Emulsifiers alone count for 65 products to satisfy even the most demanding requirements. Other classics are secondary surfactants such as the Tego® Betain range (Cocamidopropyl Betaine) which Evonik invented and remain the world's largest supplier of. Other key ranges include; emollients, conditioners, thickeners, pearlizing agents and active ingredients with scientifically proven benefits. Classics beyond Evonik are oils, butters and waxes for natural cosmetics.

Due to the nature of our customer base, bestsellers are primarily natural ingredients which fulfill Ecocert/Cosmos/Natruel requirements; Dr. Straetmans® non-traditional preservatives following a shift away from traditional preservatives and multi-functionals; and products which contribute to efficacy, mildness, consistency and sensory.

Evonik have also released many innovations, such as:

- Sugar based, all-natural gentle cleansing additive Rheance® One
- Tocopherol antioxidants Dermofeel® TocoBalance & TocoSkin for natural cosmetics

- Multi-functional active NeoPlanta® Withania to protect against premature ageing caused by stress and environmental factors

- Bio-inspired ceramide Hairflux® which improves scalp health by reducing itching, dryness and erythema

- Tetrapeptide TEGO® Pep UP which protects the skin against damaging blue light emitted by electronic device screens.

EURO COSMETICS: *You offer completely formulated product concepts for your customers. What added value can you offer customers this way?*

Manuel Rodrigues: Surfachem is a specialty chemical ingredients distributor with unique capabilities to market and sell a variety of sophisticated products. Market research combined with technical expertise helps us to develop innovative concepts and ready-to-use formulations. Added value stems from the improved quality of our customers' innovation pipeline and their reduced development time and cost.

EURO COSMETICS: *"Your fro" is an example of your product concepts, which was developed for Afro hair. What can this product do and what effects can be achieved with it?*



Your Fro –
One of Surfachem's
Latest Concepts

Manuel Rodrigues: Due to genetics, African hair is typically dense and curly, with the angle of the hair making it prone to breakage as natural oils cannot travel easily from root to tip. Our four “Your fro” formulations enhance African hair through tamed frizz and curls, boosted conditioning, deep moisturization and intense cleansing through rich organic oil.

EURO COSMETICS: “Big Kid, Little Kid” is another of your new product concepts you will be presenting in the course of this year. In advance of the product launch, you invited children to develop designs for it at the Bradford Science Festival, an event centered around scientific topics. Please tell us more about this and what exactly is behind your new product concept (if you are allowed to tell us this ...)

Manuel Rodrigues: Without spoiling the surprise too much, the concept explores how traditional stereotypes in parenting are changing, with Dad’s taking a more active role. From this, we have developed a range of formulations designed for Dad’s to use with their young children. We encouraged children to out their crayons/felt tips and design their own logos for this

concept. We ended up with more than 300 designs which exceeded all our expectations. We will be launching the “Big Kid, Little Kid” at SCS Formulate in Coventry, UK in November 2019 and are very excited about it.

EURO COSMETICS: *Technical support and formulation consulting are another one of your strengths. Where does your expertise come from?*

Manuel Rodrigues: First of all, from our focus. Customers and principals want more than just raw materials from catalogues, they want strategic partners that anticipate their requirements and provide effective solutions. Surfachem focuses on the Personal Care and Household, Industrial & Institutional Care sectors. This defined, two segment focus has enabled our skilled team of 150 people to acquire a tremendous depth of knowledge. Surfachem’s expertise comes furthermore from the unique capabilities that we have developed over our nearly 40 years of existence. Marketing capabilities, as we are constantly monitoring the market and thrive in our forward-thinking when it comes to identifying up-and-coming

trends. Technical capabilities, as many of us have worked in product development and have contributed to develop many products available on shop shelves. And obviously our sales capabilities, with a market reach of over 5,000 customers.

We’re a learning organization that takes charge of educating customers and principals. To successfully sell products, the initial stage is to provide knowledge. To achieve continuous improvement, we dedicate significant resources to our 2M Academy. Through this academy and our Future Leaders Program, we are upskilling our people in order to grow stronger and ensure that the momentum keeps moving.

EURO COSMETICS: *The packaging sizes also play an important role. How do you implement this?*

Manuel Rodrigues: We work with all Personal Care players from startups and indie brands to contract manufacturers and large multinationals. Their requirements are diverse therefore we distribute chemicals in a variety of packaging sizes to suit all individual needs. The repacking of ingredients in a Cosmetic GMP clean room at our site in Wendelstein by Nuremberg/Germany



is an additional distinctive capability of Surfachem. Our sister company SampleRite is focusing on delivering smaller sized samples within 24 hours. This just-in-time delivery speed is a service greatly appreciated by our customers.

EURO COSMETICS: *You are growing internationally with many branch offices. What are your company's other goals?*

Manuel Rodrigues: Surfachem currently has six offices in UK, Germany, Benelux, Poland, Scandinavia and Brazil. We have very ambitious expansion plans both organically and through mergers & acquisitions. Our goal is to be a Pan-European partner of choice for customers and principals.

EURO COSMETICS: *Since it was established in 1981, Surfachem, a 2M Holdings company has become a leading distributor of special chemicals. There is a vision behind every success. What is your company's vision?*

Manuel Rodrigues: Surfachem is part of the 2M Holdings group, whose vision is "to connect the building blocks of everyday life through the development of an international chemical distribution portfolio of

world class companies with strong brands". Surfachem's own vision is "delivering chemistry for a better life™". It defines what we want to be as a company as well as what we want to offer. We deliberately use the word "chemistry" because any material whether natural/synthetic product or living organism is made of chemistry. "Better life" because we are committed to do our fair share to make this planet a better place. Sustainable solutions based on renewable resources or with a positive environmental impact have their full place at Surfachem and reflect our efforts in adjusting and growing our portfolio. For example, Solvay's Augeo™ family are green solvents targeted to replace glycols in applications such as fragrance solubilisation and detergents.

In addition, Surfachem's mission is to be the most customer centric Marketing & Sales partner for our customers and principals. Our mission drives everything we do on both a long term and daily basis, from our culture and values to our portfolio and processes.

EURO COSMETICS: *Finally. What awaits us this year from Surfachem at the SEPAWA?*

Manuel Rodrigues: SEPAWA has always been a great opportunity for our German and International teams to meet with existing customers and principals and to engage in new business opportunities. Like previous years, we will be showcasing our portfolio of products and services for both Personal Care and Household, Industrial and Institutional care industries.

SEPAWA 2019 will also see the debut of Surfachem's partnership with ADM (Archer Daniels Midlands), one of the world's largest agricultural processors and food ingredient providers. ADM is based in Chicago/Illinois/USA and made \$64B annual revenues in 2018. The initial portfolio will encompass natural mint oils and flavours from world-leading provider A.M. Todd, the natural high intensity sweetener Stevia and several natural viscosity modifier xanthan grades.

We're extremely excited about the partnership with this new principal. Meet us at Stand B316 from 23rd to 25th October to find out more.

EURO COSMETICS: *Manuel, we thank you for the conversation.* ■