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Natural instinct

Nonwoven fibre structures
inspired by nature

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A new dimension in feminine hygiene

Fashion designer **Elena Zaltsberg** has developed a three-dimensional panty liner to fit, protect and comfort women who lead busy, active lifestyles. She tells **Fiona Haran** all about it

Anyone who has attended an event related to the hygiene and personal care industry within the last few years will understand how important comfort and fit are to consumers. After all, a poorly fitted diaper or sanitary pad impacts a person's overall health and wellbeing by failing to fulfil its protective duties. And if the product is too bulky, it lacks the qualities that consumers look for, tainting their experience of that brand.

This is something fashion designer Elena Zaltsberg experienced only too often with the sanitary products she once used – the lack of a comfortable, supportive, seamless fit in tune with women's unique anatomy, particularly

when wearing skimpy underwear, thongs, athleisure pants and other forms of tight-fitting clothing. And during her extensive and varied exposure to both the European and American apparel marketplaces, this emerged as a dominant issue for women regardless of their age, socio-economic status, body type, or country of origin.

Being part of an industry that's defined by its image-conscious nature, Zaltsberg, who owns a custom tailoring business in Dallas, Texas, felt compelled to do something.

She says: "There is a deficiency in addressing women's comfort needs as opposed to just absorbency when it comes to sanitary products. It's such a

private subject; nobody wants to talk about it. But I realised that other women shared my views, which made me think hard about finding a solution."

Zaltsberg started to experiment with designs and fabrics at her store, resulting in a custom-made solution available strictly for her clients. The initial prototype drew ample praise and support from the testers, with Zaltsberg saying that clients looked at the 3D shape and immediately understood the concept. But to turn her idea into a mainstream reality, Zaltsberg realised that she'd have to delve into the world of nonwovens.

Last year, she attended INDA's Hygienix Conference – dedicated to the hygiene and personal care sector – to introduce her product, learn more about the industry, and make invaluable connections. "My husband, Lev, and I started to explore the sector – we put a lot of effort into it and continue to do so," says Zaltsberg. "At Hygienix, we formed invaluable relationships and connections, drawing much interest, praise and encouragement. One of them was with a reputable boutique manufacturer to see if manufacture and mass-production of our product was feasible. I was concerned about how I could produce my design into nonwoven form with it previously being stitched, but when we received the final sample it really worked."

The result is Essentia™ Shield – a disposable, daily-use panty liner with a proprietary, anatomically correct supportive shape specifically designed to fit, protect and comfort women leading

A mock-up of the Essentia Shield packaging





Essentia Shield is developed and manufactured from 100% organic cotton

busy, active lifestyles.

“Due to its innovative design, Essentia is a superbly comfortable and supportive 3D panty liner highly effective in absorbing normal daily discharge and handling women’s ‘light days,’” says Zaltsberg.

While the product does not make any medical claims, the USP of Essentia Shield lies in its three-dimensional structure which creates an increased airflow, prevents irritation, numbness, compression, bifurcation, loss of sensitivity, and addresses a host of discomforts and complications experienced by millions of women. Furthermore, the product ticks the eco-friendly box by being developed and manufactured from 100% organic cotton.

Zaltsberg says: “I can see that more and more women are aware of what they use in their hygiene products, and are increasingly insistent on comfort and support, especially when it comes to sanitary products.”

Essentia Shield is currently in the initial limited production stage, says Zaltsberg, who is currently focusing on branding and marketing campaigns along with making connections and generating interest among “some of the most relevant and respected industry influencers”. One of these connections is with a highly-regarded boutique manufacturer in the US, with the aim of producing and

Education drives femcare market

The feminine hygiene market is expected to garner a revenue of US\$42.7bn by 2022, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.1% between 2016-2022, according to a new report by Allied Market Research.

Titled ‘World Feminine Hygiene Products Market Opportunities, 2015-2022’, the report states that in 2015, the Asia-Pacific region accounted for the largest market share of around 48.9%, owing to increasing awareness towards personal hygiene and higher adoption of sanitary pads in markets such as China and Japan.

Major categories of feminine hygiene products include sanitary pads, tampons, panty liners and shields, internal cleansers and sprays, and disposable razors and blades. Among the mentioned products, sanitary pads dominate the market, accounting for nearly two-thirds of the overall market revenue throughout the analysis period. In terms of growth, internal cleansers would be the fastest growing product category, followed by tampons and panty liners, owing to increasing demand of high-end feminine hygiene products across the globe.

Feminine hygiene products are primarily distributed through retail stores, which include supermarkets and hypermarkets, speciality stores (drug stores, pharmacies and beauty stores), and convenience stores. Among these, the supermarkets and hypermarkets segment accounted for the largest share in overall sales of feminine hygiene products in 2015 and is expected to maintain its leading position throughout the forecast period. However, convenience stores are the prominent distribution channels in rural areas of developing markets such as India and China. The online sales channel, which currently represents a relatively smaller portion of the market, is anticipated to gain popularity in the coming years due to increasing penetration and developments in ecommerce, the report concludes.

bringing the Essentia panty liner to the marketplace.

The product has five US patents, with international filings in many countries, including: the European Union, UK, China,

Hong Kong, Australia, Israel and Canada; all receiving the Essentia panty liner trademark soon afterwards.

To learn more about Essentia Shield, visit www.essentia shield.com 