

Botanical PaperWorks is an example of how adventures in papermaking can make a company successful with sustainable aspirations. The protagonists from the very beginning: Mary Reimer and Heidi Reimer-Epp. What is particularly noteworthy about these two women is the fact that they are mother and daughter.

Canadian seed paper for special messages

Thoroughly sustainable



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Like father, like son" is a well-known saying which from a developmental psychological point of view means that sons learn their social behaviour from their fathers. The same applies to daughters and mothers from a scientific point of view. Mary Reimer and her daughter Heidi Reimer-Epp prove that together they can also be very creative. The two women originally wanted to "merely" produce special paper from plants and botanical habitats in their home landscape around Winnipeg in Canada. Today, their company Botanical PaperWorks produces over 2,000 different items of top quality seed

paper, which are continuously being developed. "We are the largest producer of seed paper and we work with numerous other companies including world-famous brands," says Heidi Reimer-Epp with pride and adds: "Botanical PaperWorks is headquartered in Canada, but we supply customers in 35 countries worldwide, quickly and conscientiously. And our customers really appreciate that."

Successful willingness to experiment

But first things first. In 1997 the two women launched Botanical PaperWorks. Their first products included hand-



made flower papers, wedding invitations and keepsakes. "While we were writing our first book entitled '300 paper-making recipes', we experimented with different plant components, including corn and leaves. During this time, we

came up with the idea of incorporating seeds into paper," says Heidi Reimer-Epp as she reminisces the beginnings. "We did some trials, planted the paper, and flowers actually grew out of it. It was really exciting." In fact, it was so exciting that over the next three years she and her mother developed processes to produce such paper in large quantities. That turned out to be a somewhat difficult task. "We wanted sturdy yet flat sheets of paper that could be printed with high resolution. At the same time, the seeds should have a high germination capacity, all in the largest possible quantities, in order to be able to meet our customers' requirements," say mother and daughter about the quality requirements. And they succeeded. Shortly there-

after, Botanical PaperWorks launched its first series of wedding invitations and keepsakes based on the new seed paper. The success was so overwhelming that they quickly expanded their repertoire, including various promotional products and "Memorial products" that were created to commemorate the deceased.

Part of a recycling economy

Consequently, Botanical PaperWorks changed its name to a seed paper company that today describes itself as the global leader in manufacturing and product design

in this area – both in terms of consumer goods and packaging as well as promotional products. However different the products may be, Botanical PaperWorks has developed a clear, consistent concept. Heidi Reimer-Epp explains the secret of Reimer's development as follows: "We always offer special, environmentally friendly paper that is made from post-consumer and post-industrial waste and is incorporated into the corresponding seed. When the products are planted, they grow into herbs, flowers and vegetables and in turn do not leave any waste". Botanical PaperWorks products are part of a recycling economy. They are made from wastepaper that would otherwise have ended up in the landfill. To this day, Heidi Reimer-Epp affirms that the company has avoided the disposal of several hundred tons of wastepaper in this way. Moreover, "Whenever someone chooses a product made from seed paper, they protect the environment from a single-use or non-recycled plastic item. All in all, this leads to around a million objects a year that are not fed into the waste stream. We are really very proud of that."

Attractive and environmentally friendly

Botanical PaperWorks continues to pursue the same successful strategy twenty years after it was founded: to offer customers an environmentally friendly, sustainable (promotional) product as an alternative to other products. A suitable, cost-effective option that is also good for the environment. The two founders have had high aspirations right from the outset because they want every customer's decision to buy a Botanical PaperWorks product to help "avoid wastepaper, minimise >>



More than 20 years ago, Heidi Reimer-Epp launched Botanical PaperWorks together with her mother.

the ecological footprint of the manufacturing process, and promote plantings that are important for the ecosystem." Accordingly, the corporate philosophy continues to be to help organisations and companies to celebrate events and to promote initiatives and to be able to use products that are both attractive and environmentally friendly and that are good for the planet and their customers' business.

Environmental efforts

Botanical PaperWorks is a thoroughly sustainable company. When it comes to the environment, several measures have been undertaken. In 2018, for example, "Leave the earth a better place" was chosen as the company-wide theme. In the course of the year, 103 suggestions were collected on how this claim could be implement-

mote their business, communicate their commitment to sustainability and do something good for the environment," reports the company boss, confidently adding: "We can say this with conviction because we develop, design and produce all the articles ourselves. This gives us the opportunity to individualise all the products down to the smallest detail – regardless of the colour of the paper, the type of seeds or the format. We deliver all of this quickly and inexpensively. That makes us an attractive partner." Heidi Reimer-Epp would also like her company to serve the European promotional product market. "Europe is very progressive when it comes to environmentally friendly promotional products. For this reason, we would like to develop business relations with European companies that share our values." This is one of the reasons why Botanical PaperWorks exhibited at the PSI for the second time this year.



Prospering business: When the products are planted, they grow into herbs, flowers and vegetables.

ed in everyday life. 38 ideas have already been implemented, seven are in an ongoing process, 39 are in the planning phase. "All in all," says Heidi Reimer-Epp on the impact on her company, "we have reduced our own waste production by recycling more, reusing more and reducing our consumption of items that would normally end up as waste." The company has also been certified under the Canadian "Climate Smart" programme and is continually working towards reducing its carbon footprint.

Interest in Europe

Botanical PaperWorks also sees its clear commitment to sustainable action as a benefit for promotional product distributors and consultants. "Customers are increasingly asking their distributors and consultants about environmentally friendly promotional products. Botanical PaperWorks offers 375 catalogue products and unlimited customised items. Therefore distributors will always find the right product for their customers with whom they can pro-

Multiple awards

Heidi Reimer-Epp not only founded Botanical PaperWorks with her mother. She is passionate about Botanical PaperWorks and is rightly proud of what she has achieved so far. This also includes numerous awards that her company has won in the past. Botanical PaperWorks has received the "Innovation in Print" award in recognition of its innovative processes for printing seed paper, and has already received the PPPC (Promotional Product Professionals of Canada) "Best in Green" award three times, a prize awarded to sustainable

and environmentally friendly promotional product companies. This honour in particular means a lot to the entire company because "we are very committed to increasing the positive impact of Botanical PaperWorks on the environment." However, Botanical PaperWorks is not only committed to ecological issues. The company also takes its social responsibility in society very seriously and offers immigrants a safe and attractive job, especially for those who have limited English language skills. "We warmly welcome new Canadians to our ranks," emphasises Heidi Reimer-Epp. She also sees Botanical PaperWorks as a career springboard for her employees. "Some of our team members have been working for us for many years. Others gain experience with us by furthering their education, refining their skills and finding other long-term employment," says Heidi Reimer-Epp who is delighted at being "able to play this role within society." After all, everyone can contribute in their own way. And it is precisely this collective energy that helps Botanical PaperWorks achieve something extraordinary. The company has a clear mission: to spread beauty in a sustainable manner. In every sense.