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# New bespoke workwear for Monsanto

Monsanto Antwerp has six different production units that produce chemicals. The ownership of these departments belongs to four international companies: Monsanto, Eastman, Henkel and Ferro.

**800**

Monsanto has approximately **800** employees at its site in Antwerp.

**650**

Vandeputte supplies workwear and safety wear to **650** employees at Monsanto.

**1970**

Vandeputte has supplied Monsanto with PPE since the **1970s**.

**700.000**

Annually, Monsanto spends approximately **700,000** euro on safety facilities.

*In early 2012, Monsanto, a chemical company based in the port of Antwerp, was looking for a new supplier of workwear and called upon Vandeputte.*

*The two companies have been working together since the 1970s for the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as goggles, helmets and gloves.*

"We used to lease our workwear from a laundry, but this was not a very flexible setup and it was also rather expensive. After talks with Vandeputte, it transpired that they offer a very comprehensive service for workwear: from fabric choice and design to tailoring, supply, washing and invoicing."

Speaking here is Edgar Van Heulst, Technical Procurement Lead at Monsanto Antwerp..

## One point of contact for all safety wear

From then on, Monsanto decided to purchase their workwear, rather than lease

or rent it. Following a market assessment of 15 candidate suppliers, the contract was awarded to Vandeputte. As their main supplier, and in consultation with Monsanto, Vandeputte selected a suitable, bespoke tailor and laundry.

Van Heulst: "That's when we realised how knowledgeable they are about safety - they think of things that seem like details to us, but that are actually essential."

"At that time, we decided to start using safety wear in addition to our usual workwear. The materials used and the production method for safety wear are very specific: just think of the material for the buttons, the position of the pockets on the clothing, the fastenings etc. Our company is operational 24/7, so our staff

must be clearly visible in the dark as well. For this reason we have had fluorescent colours and reflective strips applied to the clothing. Vandeputte assisted us in defining the standard for our requirements and made sure we complied with current standards.”

## Bespoke: not just for suits

To work comfortably, workwear should also fit comfortably. This can only be achieved for each individual employee if they are fitted with bespoke workwear, and so Vandeputte organized fitting sessions at Monsanto. Not the easiest job in a company where there are five separate shifts! For two whole weeks, one Monsanto employee and two Vandeputte employees were busy measuring up all 650 employees, in a converted studio with four dressing rooms. Van Heulst: “Our employees had to try on all the clothing, from shirts to trousers, coats, fluorescent jackets, you name it. Think beyond ‘small to XXL’: even the length of the sleeves and trouser legs varied, and then there’s also the difference between ladies and menswear. Vandeputte is even supplying the socks and underwear.”

## Clean laundry every day

Every day Vandeputte visits the company to collect the soiled clothing and deliver the laundered clothing.



As a result, the number of garments per employee has been reduced from ten to four pieces, resulting in significant savings. Each garment has a unique label, so Vandeputte knows exactly in which locker to place the clothing. The laundry identifies when garments are worn out, and immediately replaces them with new ones.

prices and delivery times. Vandeputte packages the PPEs at their distribution centre, by department and by name, and delivers them daily to a central location at Monsanto. An internal courier delivers them to the relevant departments. “This is done for safety reasons: we want as few as possible suppliers and external parties on our premises”, explains Edgar Van Heulst.

## A sequel to the successful Antwerp approach

Since Antwerp has set the ball rolling, Vandeputte is also supplying other Monsanto European sites. Right now they deliver to the Netherlands, France, Hungary and Spain, soon to be followed by Italy, Romania, Turkey, Germany, Ukraine etc.

“Although we are speaking of several hundred products, Vandeputte has ninety per cent of the articles in stock. They have invested in a completely new distribution centre. Nevertheless, if you take into account the whole package they offer, their prices are still very competitive. And above all, they certainly know their business inside out. They know exactly what standards we must meet in the chemical industry, and they closely follow any legislative changes. They visit us on site with their clothing manufacturers, to ensure the best possible choices are made. And above all, they listen to us and our employees.” ■

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## Shopping online for personal protective equipment

Nearly a hundred employees, mostly team leaders, order the personal protection equipment for themselves and their colleagues from [www.vdp.com](http://www.vdp.com). They do so directly from a web catalogue that Vandeputte has created specifically for Monsanto, with fixed