



Press release

Düsseldorf, December 2006

An overview of the history of Germany's No. 1 laundry detergent

100 years of Persil

At the beginning of the 20th century, a good number of meadows were white, especially in summer. Linen was spread out over the grass to bleach in the sun. Now the meadows are all green again, thanks mainly to one laundry detergent: Persil. On June 6, 2007, Persil, the first self-acting laundry detergent, will be celebrating its 100th anniversary. Throughout its history Persil has stood for cleanliness you can see, feel and smell, and it is still setting new standards today on its path into the next century.

For centuries, soap makers supplied housewives with their concoctions for that washday chore. It was only around 1880 that soap started having to compete with washing powder, which was originally simply pulverized soap. Real progress arrived the day washing and bleaching agents were combined as a powder. The first company in Germany to bring a genuine washing powder of this kind onto the market was Henkel & Cie. in Düsseldorf, founded in 1876. Henkel added perborate as a bleaching agent to the washing agent. During the washing process, the oxygen formed small bubbles, gently taking over the hard work at the washboard, saving time and rendering sun-bleaching superfluous. The first "self-acting" laundry detergent was launched on June 6, 1907, and was given the name "Persil". The name derived from the two most important chemical raw materials in the product, perborate and silicate.

Persil quickly made its name on the market, winning the trust of consumers. To assure consumers of the product's consistently high quality, Persil was given a manufacturer's warranty. Advertisements also emphasized its dependable cleaning power, carrying the slogan: "Only Persil is Persil". The "White Lady," created in 1922, is probably Persil's most famous advertising image. She featured on placards and metal signs until the beginning of the 1960s. When she started smiling again for Persil in 1950 for the first time since the World War II, she conveyed to many Germans the feeling that lasting peace had finally arrived. In the 50s and early 60s, the detergent market was revolutionized by the growing popularity of domestic washing machines. Persil responded to these new requirements by launching "Persil 59" – a synthetic laundry detergent that was also suitable for machine washing. In the 1960s New textiles such as the man-made fibers of nylon and Perlon also appeared on the scene alongside traditional fabrics such as cotton or linen. On January 1, 1965, Henkel presented Persil 65, a genuine heavy-duty detergent with temperature-dependent foam control, which provided optimal care for the new fabrics as well. In 1986, Henkel once again underscored its pioneering role as market leader, bringing phosphate-free Persil onto the shelves. Here too Henkel set a standard: all household detergents in Germany are now phosphate-free.



During the years that followed, Persil consistently succeeded – through significant new developments – in strengthening its position as market leader and as an innovative brand, but without diluting the brand's acquired identity. In 1990, Persil Supra was launched, a laundry detergent in concentrated form. It was followed in 1991 by Persil Color, the first heavy-duty detergent specifically for colored garments. A further major innovation followed in 1994: Persil Megaperls® – a wholly new generation of detergent in the form of highly-concentrated pearls instead of powder. The great advantage of Persil Megaperls is that it can be dosed in much smaller quantities. Further product innovations were Persil Gel in 1997, Persil Tabs in 1998 and, in 1999, Persil Sensitiv (renamed Persil Sensitive in 2004). Since 2006, Persil “with a touch of Vernel” has been offering a new dimension in softness and freshness in addition to the trusted Persil cleanliness.

In its anniversary year 2007, Persil therefore caters for the widest possible range of consumer requirements – and offers convincing innovations and modern product formats that ensure widespread consumer satisfaction. The Allensbach Institute for Demoscopy uses these words to describe Persil's brand image: “Persil combines high washing performance, top quality and modernity. At the same time, Persil has a rich tradition and has always kept its feet firmly on the ground. This mix is by no means inconsistent; it defines the unique brand image of Persil.” This successful blend of tradition and modernity has held good throughout 100 years and is aptly expressed in the slogan for the future: “Persil – Pure into the future”.

Persil 100 years – Pure into the future

“Henkel - A Brand like a Friend”. Henkel is a leader with brands and technologies that make people's lives easier, better and more beautiful. Henkel, a Fortune Global 500 company, operates in three strategic business areas – Home Care, Personal Care, and Adhesives, Sealants and Surface Treatment. In fiscal 2005 Henkel generated sales of 11.974 billion euros. More than 50,000 employees work for Henkel worldwide. People in approximately 125 countries around the world trust in brands and technologies from Henkel.

Contact

Henkel KGaA

Marion Schwenker

Tel. +49 211 797-8312

Fax +49 211 798-4040

press@henkel.com

www.press.henkel.com