Liquid detergents: committing to highly **concentrated** formulations

Colruyt is committed to changing its liquid detergent assortment and eventually offering highly concentrated detergents exclusively. This will enable the retailer to cut packaging and transportation costs. Colruyt is negotiating with their suppliers and launching a campaign to inform customers of the benefits of using these products.

A smart **choice** for both the **environment** and the **customer**

Concentrated liquid detergents contain much less water than the current diluted detergent formulations. The \( \text{H}_2\text{O} \) concentration is sometimes three or four times smaller. ‘The advantages are immediately obvious,’ says Vic De Meester, environment coordinator at Colruyt. ‘The bottles are smaller and lighter, leading to a smaller amount of package waste for the same total washing performance. Additionally, the bottles have a smaller footprint in the store and transportation is more economical since we can convey twice the number of bottles in a single run.’ Everyone saves money: producers, suppliers, and retailers. What’s more, the environmental cost is significantly reduced. De Meester notes that the customer benefits from it as well since 1 litre and 1,5 litre bottles are much easier to handle than the heavier and bulkier 3 litre containers. The bottles come with an adapted dosing screw top to ensure that the customer uses the proper amount of product.

**Colruyt takes the lead**

The **industry is developing more concentrated products at a fast pace**. ‘Super-concentrated products are a big success in neighbouring countries,’ observes De Meester, ‘but the Belgian market has lagged behind. For this reason, we have assumed responsibility and informed all parties involved about the benefits of these new products. It is a win-win for everyone: the more efficiently manufacturers and distributors can operate, the cheaper we all can market the products and reduce the environmental cost.’

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**Colruyt wants to offer concentrated detergents in order to reduce packaging waste**, cut transport costs, and minimize the environmental cost.

**The smaller bottles have an adapted screw cap** for correct dosing and are much easier to handle.

**The supermarket now clearly indicates the price per dose, not only the price per litre**. This way the customer can easily and accurately **compare** products with different concentrations.
**Example Colruyt Case story**

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How does Colruyt promote concentrated detergents?

**Step 1: negotiating with suppliers**

Colruyt is a major retailer and in a strong position to negotiate with their suppliers to offer concentrated detergents. Detergent producers are understandably rather reluctant to change what they consider successful formulations and branding; customers tend to have a strong product allegiance and do not like to change their habits. The Colruyt campaign is actively supporting both industrial innovation as well as ecological responsibility.

**Step 2: indicate the price per dose**

From now on, Colruyt will advertise their price of liquid detergents by indicating the price per dose, not just the price per litre. This way, customers can much more accurately compare products of different concentrations. With this price indication, concentrated liquid detergents can be easily compared to diluted formulations as well as powdered detergents, which both occupy a significantly larger volume.

**Step 3: sensitize the customer**

Colruyt has launched a communication campaign to inform customers about the benefits of using concentrated detergents. Drawings are used to explain that these products have a smaller environmental footprint. With this positive communication strategy, Colruyt once again supports ecological innovation in detergent manufacturing.

Vic De Meester:

‘A 1,5 litre bottle is much more practical and easier to handle than a bulkier and heavier 3 litre bottle. And since they come with an adapted dosing cap, overconsumption is avoided.’

**Colruyt and the environment**

- Group Colruyt has established an active prevention program called **Greenline**. This prevention program makes a strong statement regarding the group’s commitment to the environment, including its awareness of the environmental impact of packaging.

- Group Colruyt is committed to always offering the lowest prices on the market. Offering low-end prices means working with thin margins; therefore preventing unnecessary costs becomes even more important.

**Project outcomes:**

- Since its inception, Colruyt has refrained from handing out disposable bags to customers. They actively stimulated the **reuse of the cardboard boxes** from its suppliers.

- Colruyt’s Collect & Go service uses foldable plastic boxes to pack the goods. A deposit is paid to ensure they are returned.

Thanks to the combined Greenline programmes, a total of **43 billion kilometres of truck transportation has been avoided** between 1990 and 2006. During the same period, Colruyt saved a total amount of **81,581 tonnes packaging material.**