

R & D at R & S Targets Sustainability

Rohm and Haas Co. says its allocating \$150 million — roughly half of its nearly \$300 million 2007 R&D budget — for sustainability efforts including new product development, energy efficiency, and process improvements. Many of the new products are intended to help transform traditional industrial applications to more sustainable, water-based acrylic technology including home building insulation, road/highway marking paints, and industrial paints and coatings.

Rohm and Haas, based in Philadelphia, PA, has focused on safer, environmentally advanced technology since it debuted acrylic emulsion technology for interior house paints more than 50 years ago. Today, approximately 85 percent of the paints sold in the U.S. are based on acrylic technology. "Rohm and Haas is dedicated to bringing greener, safer materials to the mainstream market," said Gary Calabrese, the companys chief technology officer. "The company was founded on the principle of continual innovation, and we expect that demand for environmentally advanced materials will continue to grow. The fact that we are devoting half of our R&D budget to environmentally advanced projects is a strong demonstration of our commitment."

In addition to serving the architectural paint and coatings market, the company is bringing environmentally advanced technology to industrial markets, which have only recently begun to convert to acrylic-based technology. Advances in the companys Aquaset, Avanse, and Fastrack platforms have facilitated the removal of harmful volatile organic compounds and formaldehyde from a range of paints, coatings, and building materials. "We see great potential to use our deep understanding of coatings technology to convert industrial applications to safer, water-based products, says Luis Fernandez, vice president and group director responsible for the companys \$2 billion paint and coatings materials business. "We estimate that today only about 20 percent of the industrial market has shifted to the more environmentally advanced acrylic technology. We have the products and the technical knowledge to be the catalyst that will accelerate the shift."

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