

Specialty polymers and bio-based chemicals for a sustainable future



Kraton invests heavily in research and development every year to create innovative solutions and sustainable products



Kraton Corporation employs more than 1,800 people worldwide

Interview with



*Marcello Boldrini,
CEO
of the Kraton Corporation*

KRATON™

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Kraton Corporation is a leading global manufacturer of high-performance specialty polymers and bio-based chemical solutions. At a time when environmental issues and sustainable practices increasingly in the spotlight, Kraton's products offer not only versatility but also environmentally friendly solutions for various industries, including adhesives, packaging and medical products. In an interview with Wirtschaftsforum, CEO Marcello Boldrini spoke about the company's history, innovations and future prospects.

Wirtschaftsforum: Mr. Boldrini, how has Kraton Corporation developed over the years?

Marcello Boldrini: Kraton has an interesting history that began in the 1950s when it was established as a product line within Shell. The name "Kraton" comes from the Greek and means "strength". The original invention known as styrenic block copolymers, was intended to provide new materials for the tire industry. Although they were never used in tires, we created a new category of products,

which are known today as elastomers and are used in many applications.

Economic Forum: Which milestones should be emphasized?

Marcello Boldrini: Kraton was spun off from Shell in 2001 and has experienced considerable growth over the years. An important milestone was the acquisition of Arizona Chemical in 2016, which doubled our size and further strengthened us in the market. In 2022, we were acquired by DL Chemical, a Korean company.

which gave us the opportunity to operate as an independent subsidiary.

Business Forum: What products does Kraton offer and how do they differ?

Marcello Boldrini: We have two main business areas. The first comprises styrene block copolymers, while the second is based on bio-based products from by-products of pine wood processing in the pulp and paper industry. These products are used in the following areas

such as adhesives, packaging and many others. The two business areas complement each other. For example, some of our styrene block copolymers and bio-based derivatives are used in adhesives production, which enables our customers to offer sustainable solutions.

Business Forum: How does Kraton invest in research and development?

Marcello Boldrini: We invest around USD 40 to 50 million a year in research and development. Our innovation strategy



Kraton's bio-based polymers are in a wide range of applications, including adhesives, packaging and medical products



The production site for polymers in Gersthofen, Germany, is an important part of Kraton's global network

aims to develop new applications, particularly in the field of electronics and sustainable materials. For example, we are working on new materials for 5G communication and have successfully replaced PVC in medical applications with more sustainable alternatives.

Another example is our 'CirKular+™' product line, which acts as a compatibilizer for recycled plastics. These products help our customers to achieve their recycling targets and reduce their environmental impact.

Business Forum: How important is sustainability for Kraton?

Marcello Boldrini: Sustainability is a central component of our corporate philosophy. Our suppliers from the paper industry practice sustainable forestry and we can trace the origin of our raw materials. We have numerous certifications that prove our commitment to sustainability, and this is greatly appreciated by our customers.

We also develop products that promote the sustainability of our customers, such as additives for tires that reduce fuel consumption. Our materials enable tire manufacturers to offer more efficient products without compromising performance.

Business Forum: What role do digitalization and artificial intelligence play at Kraton?

Marcello Boldrini: We use AI in research and development to accelerate our innovation processes and in production to optimize quality and collect data. Implementing these technologies helps us to work more efficiently and improve our production processes. We see this as an important step towards remaining competitive.

Economic Forum: What challenges does Kraton see in the future?

Marcello Boldrini: The chemical industry is cyclical and we have experienced some challenges in recent years, particularly due to overcapacities in certain regions. Nevertheless, we are well positioned to deal with our long-term contracts and a stable network of raw material suppliers. We continue to focus on sustainability and innovation in order to develop new products and strengthen our market position.

Business Forum: What are Kraton's goals for the future?

Marcello Boldrini: Our goals include the further integration of sustainability into our business strategy and the use of artificial intelligence to optimize our processes.

We also aim to continue to grow through innovation and the development of new products. Overall, we strive to establish Kraton as the leading supplier of specialty polymers and bio-based chemicals in the industry while a positive impact on the environment.

Kraton offers a wide range of pine-based chemical and polymer products that have been specially developed as bonding for adhesives

