



## **CASE STUDY: ChemLink Laboratories** ***R&D Tablet-Maker a Trailblazer in Safer, Greener Cleaning Products***

ChemLink Laboratories is a U.S. research and development company that specializes in formulating effervescent tablets used as cleaners and disinfectants. Many of its products are converted into tablets from liquid cleaning formulas. ChemLink's patented technologies cross a variety of markets including household, industrial, beauty supplies and medical/dental.

Founded in 1991, the Kennesaw, Georgia-based company has worked for a number of years to reduce the environmental impact of its products, an effort that includes identifying renewable and less-toxic chemicals for its formulas. ChemLink also has become a strong advocate for sustainability among its customers, and is recognized as an authority on cost-effective approaches to producing more earth-friendly products.

Thanks to these initiatives and with the ongoing support of NSF International, ChemLink has earned third-party certification for several of its products from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Safer Choice Program

### **The Challenge**

Many cleaning solvents today contain certain chemicals that, depending on dosage, present a potential threat to people and the environment. This is because historically, whether for industrial or household use, indoors or out, the common wisdom for cleaners has been "the stronger, the better," a strategy that often equates to higher, potentially unsafe product formulations.

Most cleaning products also require water, and in some cases petroleum-based materials, as primary ingredients. As with many other household and industrial products, more manufacturers today are looking for ways to reduce their use of water and fossil fuels for economic as well as environmental reasons.

ChemLink Labs recognized an opportunity to differentiate itself in the marketplace by showcasing its deep knowledge of sustainability and its ability to formulate chemically safer alternatives for cleaning products. As a behind-the-scenes player serving both name-brand manufacturers and national retailers, ChemLink was uniquely positioned to positively influence the cleaning products industry. However, the company needed a way to validate its claims to firmly establish its credibility.

### **The Solution**

ChemLink's work had not gone unnoticed. The company was invited by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to participate in its Safer Choice program, an initiative that helps consumers, businesses and institutional buyers identify products that perform well, are safer to use and are cost-effective.



"We undertook a desk audit with Safer Choiceto show our commitment to educating customers on our approach to safer product chemistry," says ChemLink President Ryan Moore. "We have encouraged all of our customers to earn the right to carry the Safer Choice logo, especially on their outdoor cleaning products."

ChemLink worked with Safer Choice partner NSF Sustainability (a division of NSF International), which performs third-party, ingredient-by-ingredient reviews for the Safer Choice Formulator Program, to screen for chemicals that might pose human or environmental safety threats. That initial experience built the foundation for a seven-year relationship between ChemLink and NSF, during which NSF has helped the company achieve Safer Choice certification for its dishwashing detergent, cook-top cleaner and glass cleaner tablets, among other products.

Moore credits ChemLink Founder and COB Chuck Walker for



recognizing the long-term benefits of the Safer Choice initiative and allocating the budget and time necessary to make it a success.

ChemLink also became an early participant in CleanGredients™, an online database of cleaning product ingredient chemicals that provides verified information about the environmental and human health attributes of listed ingredients. NSF has helped over 200 companies achieve Safer Choice recognition and CleanGredients listing for more than 1,400 products.

## The Results

Moore estimates that ChemLink's business has likely doubled through its affiliation with Safer Choice. "It's had a snowball effect and given us a huge competitive edge," he says. "Even five years ago, some still saw Safer Choice cleaning product certification as a gimmick. Now the marketplace wants it, and people see that we know what we're talking about." Moore cites ChemLink's biggest retail customer, a well-known name nationally, as proof. "We convinced them to carry one product with the Safer Choice logo, and now we're working to move all of their products to Safer Choice status."

Beyond its own competitive advantage, ChemLink continues to advocate strongly among its manufacturer customers for safer, renewable and less-toxic chemical formulas. "We want to feel good about the products we make," Moore explains. "We push from behind the scenes. It helps to sell sustainability when you're the formulator with 10 years of experience. We can show manufacturers how to achieve competitive pricing with healthier chemicals."

ChemLink General Manager Joe Garmon, who supervises production, recognizes the direct benefits of creating a safer working environment. "I feel better knowing that we're making changes to our formulas that make them safer for our employees to work around."

Moore says ChemLink also feels a heightened responsibility as one of the few chemical formulators specializing in the "tableting" of cleaning products. "We believe the next 10 years will be critical in terms of reducing water and petroleum use," he insists. "Converting a liquid cleaning formula to a tablet can have a significant impact on energy costs and pollution reduction.

"For example, when it comes to shipping and transport, one truckload of our tablet product equates to 88 truckloads of the typical bottled liquid cleaner. Consider the positive impacts there in terms of controlling water use and waste, the drop in fuel costs and CO2 emissions, reduced tire wear, fewer trucks on the road, etc.

"This has huge implications for industry in general and the sustainability movement in particular."

For more information on the U.S. EPA Safer Choice program at NSF, call 1.734.769.5192 or e-mail your questions and contact information to [greenchemistry@nsf.org](mailto:greenchemistry@nsf.org).

