

K-scope Issue #3

Solving customer problems: ANTI-GRAFFITI PRODUCT

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POSSIBLE TITLES:

Graffiti Wars

Winning the Battle ... with Water!

It takes a village... to solve customer problems. And in Texas, they had a few problems.

Problem number one: graffiti painted on the walls and bridges of Texas highways. Number two: the Texas Department of Transportation wanted a product to remove graffiti with water – not chemical solvents. Next problem: the DOT needed to spec more than one product – and only one company in Canada made such a product.

Enter the problem solver: Dee McNeill, a 25-year employee of Sherwin-Williams and the Market Development Director for the Bridge and Highway division in San Antonio. Dee had worked with the Texas DOT on a regular basis for more than 20 years and had developed strong relationships. So when he suggested that Sherwin-Williams could develop a competitive product – the DOT essentially said “go for it.”

“They needed our help – because the DOT is a state agency and can’t specify one particular product for purchasing. They needed other options,” explains Dee. “So I went to Randy Carter, the Technical Manager of our Chicago lab. All the way, I got great support, including Doni Riddle, the VP of Marketing when the project began four years ago. This was absolutely team work. Anyone could have scratched the idea along the way, but they didn’t.”

Anti-Graffiti Hero is Born

What evolved from that team work and research is a new Industrial & Marine division product – the Sherwin-Williams Anti-Graffiti Coating. Think of it as the ultimate weapon against graffiti vandals, whose “artwork” is a drain on budgets. Customers – including cities, counties and businesses – all struggle not only with the cost of graffiti removal and surface repainting, but the downtime for maintenance crews.

The new Anti-Graffiti coating can be painted on nearly every surface where graffiti is a problem – including bridges, rail stations, bus terminals, commercial buildings, schools or multi-family housing. “It’s not just for bridges. Now we’re selling it in the architectural market segment,” says Dee.

What makes the product unique? The coating has very little surface tension – allowing the graffiti to be removed with just water. “This is new generation technology,” explains Dee. “It only happened because innovation is encouraged at Sherwin-Williams – and thinking outside the box to do whatever it takes. It’s what drives us to be a better company – to better serve the customer. “

The Anti-Graffiti Coating was approved by the Texas DOT – and has received glowing accolades for performing better than the Canadian product. Graffiti artists in Texas and beyond... have met their match.

POSSIBLE SIDEBARS:

The High Cost of Graffiti

- \$15 to 18 billion estimated annual cost of clean-up in U.S. (www.nograffiti.com)
- Decreased property values
- Drain on maintenance budgets
- Encourages gang territory

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