# **"THE NEXT DECADE IS ABOUT COMBINING** MATERIAL SAVINGS AND **MATERIAL CHANGE**"

### Dr. Fritz Flanderka, Managing Director of Reclay Holding GmbH, on trends and drivers for sustainable waste management

nomy represents an important sector of the in awareness with regard to the separate coleasy to recycle if you get them unpolluted. This German economy, with significantly rising lection of waste: The principle or idea that we is much more difficult with so-called plastic sales and employment figures. Does the developed in Germany with the "Green Dot" is compounds. These are mostly technical plastics model have potential for global success?

FF: In general, I think there is no alternative to in Asia - with a corresponding impact on the is either very difficult to recycle or cannot be the change from a linear to a circular economy actions of companies. in order to solve two of the greatest challenges of our time: One is global CO<sub>2</sub> reduction DIALOG: So more is being done than just are then applied at different densities. in the context of climate change. The other is giving the corporate image a "green" coat that waste management must evolve, especially of paint? on the issue of plastics, in order to finally make significant progress in the fight against marine FF: I think most companies know the risk of after the products have been used, and only a pollution.

transferable 1:1 to other countries. The star- up with motivation. ting conditions are very different; moreover, we are talking about a complex process that If we look at the way we deal with packaging, energy and material cycles are reduced, slowed is constantly evolving with many players and high dynamics. But our experience is certainly

sustainable waste management?

FF: Right - until now! That is changing se- materials that are easier to recycle. riously at the moment. For example, we are observing a trend reversal worldwide toward The third trend is to further improve the recydifferentiated waste collection systems. This is cling of plastics. Here, however, the game has for example in the case of a deposit system, will where value can subsequently be added - or ope- only just begun due to the new recycling rerators can at least reduce the amount of waste quirements in Germany. Polyethylene (PE) and

DIALOG: Mr. Flanderka, the circular eco- going to landfills. In addition, there is a change polypropylene (PP), for example, are relatively being perceived, discussed and taken up by so- that are used, for example, in minced meat or ciety in the EU, but also in many U.S. states or other fresh products. At present, this material

such a strategy. In addition, legal requirements in the EU now set a few clear quidelines for sus-Our circular economy model is certainly not tainable business. And that is also being taken Circular economy: In this regenerative system,

for example, there are three main trends in this country: First, a strong interest in reducing valuable in a transformation toward sustain- their production in general. Second, to achieve DIALOG: What potential do you see in the recycling, because we have been building up ex- design, especially for consumer goods such as of packaging material to the cycle through pertise in these areas for a good three decades. beverage cans or yogurt pots. There has been enormous progress in this area over the past ten DIALOG: How interested are other coun- years, but the potential is far from exhausted. FF: That depends on the goods being manutries in this know-how? Especially populous In the next decade, the aim will be to combine factured and the transport conditions. If we're and economically strong nations like the material savings and material changes in areas talking about high-value technical goods, for USA or China have so far simply rejected where this has not been possible so far, for example for hygienic reasons. And in other areas, even more plastic packaging will be replaced by

recycled at all. One solution is to replace these plastic compounds with pure plastics, which

*Linear economy: A large proportion of the raw* materials used are landfilled or incinerated small proportion are reused.

resource use and waste production, emissions and energy waste are minimized. To this end, down and closed

ability - especially in waste management and significant material savings through product industry for returning a higher proportion reuse or recycling in the future?

> example, as in mechanical and plant engineering, their protection during transport is a priority. In terms of the type and quantity of packaging materials required, the scope for change *is therefore quickly exhausted. In the long term,* however, the transparency of the material flow, also lead to improvements.

sustainably here should answer two questions in particular: First, which material is used for which purpose? Second, where can material be eliminated without replacement? The Euro pal*let is a prime example of how established things are being rethought: The classic wooden pallet* and therefore needs to be repaired or replaced after two to three years on average. A plastic pallet does not have any of these disadvantages DIALOG: Apart from regulatory requirements, and usually remains in circulation for over ten years - after which the plastic can be used again for new pallets.

part of packaging manufacturers and companies to find new solutions together ...

based on voluntariness. Recently, not only the with simpler materials.

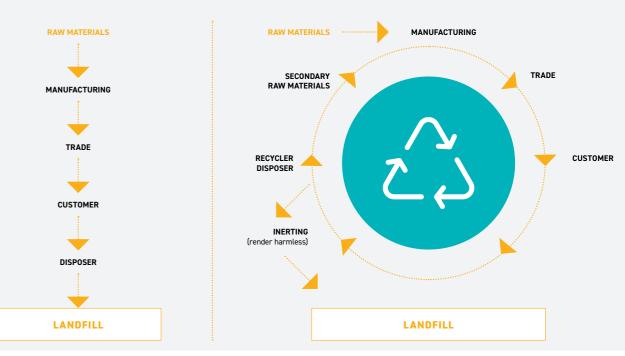
I see considerably more options in all areas manufacturers but also the users of the packa- In addition, in our experience, customer rewhere goods are consolidated for shipment ging have had to fulfill new legal obligations. guirements have a high priority, particularly in in B2B trade. Anyone who wants to act more For example, anyone who sends their products the German retail sector and there again very to other buyers must point out that they are also pronouncedly in the discounters - where large obliged to take back this packaging. In addition programs are already underway to optimize to this information obligation, documentation the use of packaging. And these specifications must be kept on how this obligation has been are passed on to the suppliers. For example, almet and in what form the materials have been most all discount grocery stores have their own recycled. This is not a world revolution, but it guidelines on how and with what materials splinters quickly, deforms, absorbs moisture sets the quidelines for the direction of the neces- products are to be packaged. sary change.

# what else is driving this transformation?

FF: Two effective forces are particularly important: firstly, cost savings, and secondly, custo-DIALOG: So this calls for creativity on the mer demand. Cost savings constantly motivate people to rethink and reevaluate processes anyway. In case of doubt, superfluous packaging materials are dispensed with or the design is re-FF: That's how it is. However, this is not only designed so that the same result can be achieved

The Reclay Group is an internationally active service provider in the field of recycling and materials management. With more than 170 employees at

# LINEAR ECONOMY





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## **CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

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