



DREAM BIG

While working in the fashion industry, Pieter-Bas Stehmann was offered the position of general manager at the Dutch Bedding Company International. Since then, he has introduced a number of changes that have made their products more accessible to a market that is just beginning to understand the true value of a good night's sleep.

Pieter-Bas Stehmann / GM DBC International

It was a friend who contacted Pieter-Bas Stehmann and offered him a role at the Dutch Bedding Company (DBC). Having spent most of his life in the fashion industry, in positions such as global division director at Mexx International, GM at Miss Etam, and CEO at Hop Lun, DBC seemed something of a departure for Pieter-Bas, but he didn't see it that way.

"It looks so different, but the truth is that if you're in a certain strategic management position in a company, you'll always look at a portfolio, regardless of what it is, and assess areas to improve upon. I've always been a visionary, and I believed that there was so much to do in the bedding industry."

Bedding in quickly

DBC International is the wholesale division of Beter Bed Holding, which has over 1000 stores throughout Europe. Via an international dealer network, websites, and B2B channels, DBC

markets a range of sleeping systems and brands developed in-house, including the brands M line and Wave.

Pieter-Bas assumed his role as GM in May 2018 and immediately began making changes, in order to both increase sales and encourage customer loyalty.

His first move was to implement a new pricing strategy to ensure there was more transparency. Many taller customers, who require a larger bed, are often charged extra, but Pieter-Bas promised to sell all sizes of a particular model at the same price, which immediately proved popular.

Then he introduced the M line passport which, as Pieter-Bas explains, was an idea encouraged by his fashion background and was all about changing the way customers think about purchasing their beds.

"The fashion industry is incredibly fast and new styles and demands mean the turnover is constantly in flux. This could not be more →



DBC's beds come in all shapes, sizes, and designs, while mattresses can be tailored to each customer's lying position

different from the bedding industry, where people often only purchase a new bed every ten years or so. I really wanted to be in a position where we could speed up our customers' return, whilst continuing to deliver an excellent service.

"Beds and mattresses should be cleaned regularly, as there are a number of little friends who sleep with you in your bed that need to be kept under control, but bed hygiene is often overlooked. Our passport offers customers the chance to have their bed cleaned by us, at home, annually. Then, after five years, they can bring their passport and receive a 50% discount on a new bed, which anyone would be foolish to refuse. This service not only encourages our customers to look after their current bed but also renew their mattress more often, which is beneficial to both them and us."

Saving on sleep

DBC offers eight key types of bedding and mattresses that vary from an entry-level price of €649 and increase up to €1,549. As with any bed selection, as well as weight and height, your choice should depend on what kind of sleeper you are. In DBC stores, the professionally trained staff can look at an individual's back

and spine, whilst they recline on the bed and see which mattress allows them to achieve the optimal position.

Of course, it is often only after a few weeks of using a bed that one can be entirely sure it is the correct model so, for those who order directly online, or wish to change their bed after trying it out, DBC has a try and return policy.

"After buyers have purchased the bed, they can try it for 100 days and if they are not happy, for whatever reason, they can return it to us free of charge. This guarantee of satisfaction has greatly increased our online sales, because people genuinely feel they have nothing to lose. With the introduction of our new Wave range, specifically for this market, we expect our online sales to continue to surge over the next few years."

" DBC is the sole provider of beds to the Dutch National Football and Olympic teams "

The majority of DBC mattresses are designed with ergonomics and ventilation in mind, not to mention the user's comfort. All of their products have an open-cell structure, which ensures a constant airflow to keep each and every sleepy customer cool at night. This quality and choice have led to DBC becoming the sole provider of beds to the Dutch National Football and Olympic teams. They also enjoy a partnership with the famous cycling team, the Jumbo-Visma Group, whose riders are provided beds by DBC that they use at home and during events such as the Tour De France. The company also takes environmental issues seriously and is launching a new 100% recyclable mattress next year called the Green Motion.

As you can imagine, with this kind of exposure, DBC is a dominant player in Holland, but Pieter-Bas is keen to expand the brand to the international market and the company has recently employed representatives in both France and Germany.

"Holiday parks and hotels are a section of the business where we believe we could be incredibly successful," says Pieter-Bas. "The quality of sleep and relaxation that people both expect and require has become so much more impor-

tant to the consumer, and we believe we can cover a vast section of this market."

When Pieter-Bas joined the bedding business, he admits he was surprised to learn how little innovation had taken place in the industry. The steady rise in the general public's appreciation of just how vital sleep is to our everyday lives has finally started to filter through to the commercial sector, and Pieter-Bas believes this is only the beginning.

Sleep well

"For too long the health benefits, both mental and physical, of good sleep have been underestimated. The public has become aware of the importance of exercise and eating healthily and now, finally, the power of sleep has been recognised. It makes sense after all, as we spend much more time sleeping than we do eating and exercising combined. There's so much still to be learned about just how beneficial to us humans a good night's sleep is, but I know more and more will come out over the next few years."

It looks as though DBC's decision to bring



in a creative thinker from the fashion industry may have come at the perfect time. As digitalisation and an array of new factors enter the sector, Pieter-Bas looks the ideal candidate to bring the bedding industry into a whole new sphere. He believes in thinking outside the box and surrounding himself with like-mind-

ed individuals, who can motivate each other and together overcome any of the challenges ahead.

There is no doubt that DBC will be at the forefront of any new innovations in the industry so, while we can all rest easy, you can be sure the DBC team won't be caught napping. ➔



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