

Syfel Inc. – bringing Biodegradable, Sustainable, Antimicrobial, Fashionable, Reusable Bags to the World



Sylvia Feldzamen
Founder

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Interview conducted by:
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CEOCFO: *Ms. Feldzamen, would you tell us about the vision when you started Syfel and what your focus is right now?*

Ms. Feldzamen: My vision was to do the right thing for our environment. I saw the accumulation of plastic bags everywhere including my own home and I thought it was important to do something about that.

My focus now: Because of the pandemic supermarkets were going back to using single use plastic bags which I cannot understand. So, I started looking for something that would put consumers and supermarket employees at ease in regards to their bags. It is not antivirus but it can be considered the next best thing.

CEOCFO: *Syfel bags are reusable and fashionable. Why is the fashionable part important?*

Ms. Feldzamen: Reusable shopping bags are a great inexpensive marketing tool for supermarkets and retailers but, there are many consumers today that are looking for trendy options and more sustainable choices. Reusable bags are not just for groceries. People don't want to use the same bag that they used to carry their fish home.

CEOCFO: *How prevalent is the use of reusable bags both in the US, Canada and Europe, and what do you see are the differences within these geographies?*

Ms. Feldzamen: Europe leads the way in sustainability. Europeans are much more into sustainable materials like Jute, Juco and cotton, Ireland being the first country to go plastic free in 2006. Whereas in North America the trend started in 2006 making bags out of polypropylene. However, the tide may be turning, as I am having more conversations with my customers about Jute, Juco and Cotton and other bio-degradable materials.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about the differences in materials you utilize?*

Ms. Feldzamen: Prior to 2006, Cotton and heavy Canvas were the big trends for supermarket bags. To date there are so many different kinds of material than can be used to make reusable bags. From Polypropylene to Jute, Juco (blend of Cotton and Jute) to hemp. Being recycled, bio-degradable, organic etc.

CEOCFO: *Are people paying attention to the antimicrobial part?*

Ms. Feldzamen: Anti-microbial is a new product being added in reusable bags and **I am proud that I am the first to bring it to North America.** People are going to be interested and with good reason. We are going through a crisis right now so people are washing their hands when they touch anything, and they are wearing masks for protection, so this

antimicrobial product is one more level of protection. It doesn't wipe off when you clean the bag and it will last the lifetime of the bag. It is a second line of defense for consumers and store employees.

CEO CFO: *Other than no logo, what makes a reusable bag fashionable?*

Ms. Feldzamen: My European design team has an eye for fashion, they help me create fashionable bags by using different fabric and designs to create reusable bags with flare.

CEO CFO: *How are you able to clean the bags?*

Ms. Feldzamen: Some bags can be washed in cold water others wiped down with a damp cloth. If your bag has anti-microbial in it, you wipe it down just to remove any dirt. The bag is protected against bacteria.

CEO CFO: *Who is using your bags?*

Ms. Feldzamen: Anybody and everybody from retailers to tradeshow to schools and so on.

CEO CFO: *Would you tell us about your office in China?*

Ms. Feldzamen: I have two employees in China that work strictly for me. One is my manager. She takes care of all my paperwork, works with the factories, handles my correspondence and we communicate daily. The other employee handles the production and does all the quality control inspections. That way I know nothing is overlooked. She visits the factories prior to starting the work and again once the work is complete to make sure it meets my standards. In Vietnam, I have an employee who does the same.

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CEO CFO: *How have you reached out before COVID and what has changed?*

Ms. Feldzamen: Before COVID we met buyers face to face by appointments and built relationships, now we meet people on Skype and Zoom. We have lost that personal touch, but we will get it back. Many buyers are working from home, which makes it a bit difficult to build new relationship with new buyers.

CEO CFO: *Do you work with the general public??*

Ms. Feldzamen: We are business to business.

CEO CFO: *How is business?*

Ms. Feldzamen: Business is ok. They say the strongest survive, and we are still here. We are not going anywhere. Business is not the same, it has been harder, which means we have to keep innovating.

CEO CFO: *Do you see new materials coming about and is there much research in that area?*

Ms. Feldzamen: We have done lots of research on materials. We have a new program in development now that is all brand-new materials which are not on the market yet. All are sustainable, biodegradable and strong. I work with a designer in Europe, who is doing the mechanical drawings from concepts my team and I provide. The entire bag will be sustainable including the accessories.

CEO CFO: *Do you see going into additional countries?*

Ms. Feldzamen: We have worldwide distribution. We do sell a bit to Japan, also sell within China and we are selling all over Europe. I would love to sell to South America so I can go and meet clients – I have never been there. I love travelling.

CEO CFO: *Why look at Syfel; what sets the company and your bags apart?*

Ms. Feldzamen: I think offering personalized service is most important and having employees overseas to make sure our products are to my standards. Another thing that makes us different is I will do whatever is necessary to keep my customer happy even if that means flying shipment in by Air on my dime. My customers mean a lot to me, as they have supported me for years and I greatly appreciate each one.