

BOULDER COUNTY BUSINESS REPORT

Serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties | Vol. 26 | Issue 20 | Sept. 14 - 27, 2007

Firm offers eco-friendly twist on sponges, cloth towels

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BOULDER — Environmentally friendly products are increasingly penetrating consumer markets, and Boulder-based Twist LLC found one that has hardly changed in decades.

Its 100 percent biodegradable sponges and cloth towels offer consumers natural product options for cleaning.

Co-owners Brian Ross and Egil Wigert started the Boulder-based company in April 2006 and now have four employees. Wigert, originally from Norway, grew up using similar products and realized the potential market for these items

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CO-OWNER,
TWIST LLC

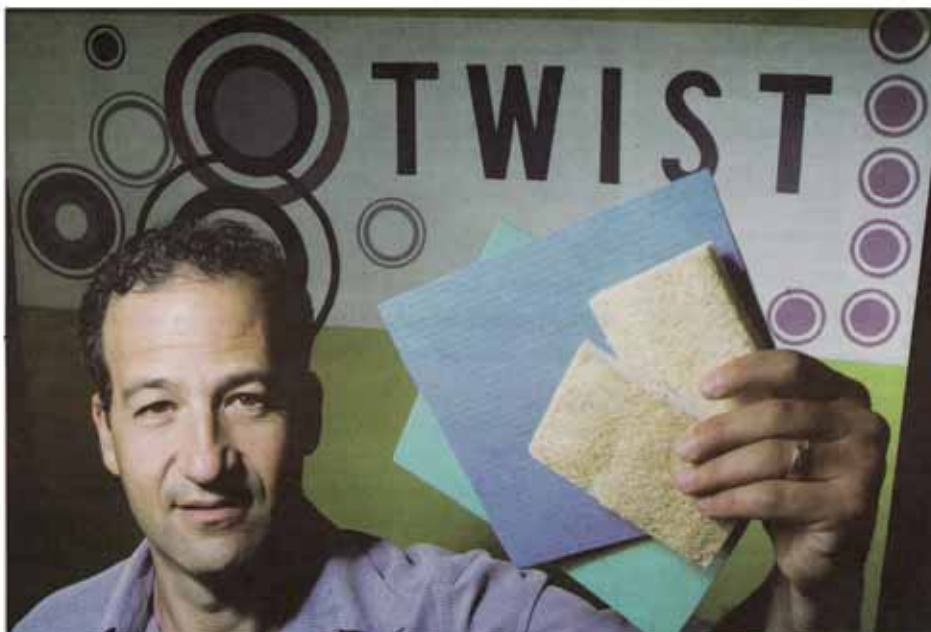
in America.

“One Euro Cloth outlasts 17 rolls of traditional paper towel,” Wigert said. “Restaurants use four paper towels every 10 minutes, now they can use our product over and over again. It will absorb 12 times its weight making it phenomenal for bars, restaurants and kitchens.”

Twist products include the Euro Sponge #10 that retails for \$1.99 per one-pack. It replaces the traditional sponge and lasts two times longer, the company said. The Euro Cloth #20 retails for \$3.99 per three-pack. It is constructed of the cellulose from trees and has the absorbency of a traditional paper towel and reusability of a sponge. The Loofah Sponge #50 retails for \$4.49 per two-pack and is used to scrub pots and pans.

“As we started this company and looked at the cleaning category, we decided we wanted to evolve the sponge,” Ross said. “Plastic scrubbers on sponges are disgusting. We attach a biodegradable sponge and replace the traditional plastic scrubber with loofah, which does not retain odors and will not scratch your pots and pans.”

The products are sold nationally at



Brian Ross, chief executive and co-owner of Boulder-based Twist, holds the company's new 100-percent biodegradable cleaning sponges and cloth towels. STEVE PETERSON

more than 300 stores and can be found locally at Whole Foods Market, Vitamin Cottage Natural Grocers and McGuckin Hardware.

Mark Law, grocery coordinator for Whole Foods Market Rocky Mountain Region, said customers are looking for cleaning products that are effective for their everyday needs with less impact on the environment. The products have been available in its markets, including Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Idaho and Kansas for six months.

“We’re proud to support Boulder-based Twist, and we think our customers will enjoy their products,” Law said. “It is a new product line, but sells pretty well. It takes time for customers to try new cleaning products, but the response thus far has been positive.”

Boulder resident KC Guarascio recently purchased Twist’s products because they are constructed from recycled material. She uses the Euro Cloth #20 and Euro Sponge #10 and said the textures are appealing to touch.

“These products perform really well,” she said. “It is a big deal that Twist is offering different options for sponges. It is the little things that we do every day that will make the difference. It is about

being environmentally conscious on every purchase.” The loofah sponges are created in Mexico from a company called Sponge Technology Corp., where Wigert is co-owner. The products are shipped to a commercial warehouse in Denver, packaged and shipped out or picked up by distributors. The sponges are created in China and Norway then assembled in the United States. The factory reuses 99.7 percent of all waste created during the production process.

Twist makes its own salt crystals. The process works by using cellulose sheets made from 100-percent tree fiber mixed with cotton and heated into a liquid that is poured into large molds. Then the salt particles are added to the mix, which creates the familiar holes. The mix is then dried as a giant block, sliced into various shapes, rinsed and combined with an antibacterial agent.

“We reuse everything so it is actually cheaper to create these sponges,” Wigert said.

Christen Bakke, an investor from Norway, gave Twist the \$200,000 start-up capital it needed to begin the business. The privately owned company did research to focus on the consumer’s performance expectation of a sponge as

Twist LLC

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Brian Ross, Egil Wigert, co-owners
Employees: 4
Primary product: Eco-friendly
cleaning products, including Loofah
Sponge and Euro Cloth.
Founded: 2006

well as the effectiveness of its packaging. Twist was allowed to test its product in six Whole Foods stores to find out if it would catch on.

“We had to start slow and fine-tune the packaging,” Wigert said. “The problem with the original packaging was people did not see what we were selling. We now use less paper to reduce waste and quadrupled our sales.”

Future Twist products include plant-based dish soap as well as biodegradable mops and brooms. A total of 12 different cleaning products soon will be available to consumers.

“We see a big opportunity in today’s market in the natural products and cleaning products category,” Ross said.