

refinement, Walmart says its Parent's Choice Premium Diaper offers a number of high-quality features, especially for babies with sensitive skin. The diaper's lining is made with highly absorbent materials – including pulp harvested from sustainably managed forests – and they deliver up to 12 hours of dryness. Soft, stretchy and breathable materials, like a cotton-touch cover, are used throughout to help maintain healthy skin and keep baby comfortable. The premium diapers also feature a wetness indicator that turns blue. Walmart also added seven new baby wipes to the relaunched line, including Parent's Choice Cotton Wipes, which are ultra-thick and made in the USA using recycled T-shirts, and other seasonal scents including White Tea & Honey and Fresh Woodlands.

Meanwhile, online giant Amazon is taking another stab at the private label baby diaper market. In November, the retailer quietly launched its own brand of diapers in sizes newborn and 1 to 6.

The diapers are offered under the new Mama Bear private label name—which is already used to sell diaper pail refills, baby food and baby laundry detergent—instead of the Amazon Elements



Amazon is making its second attempt at the private label baby diaper market. This time its diapers will be under the Mama Bear brand.

moniker, which its baby wipes are sold under. Amazon introduced Elements private label diapers in late 2014, but removed them from the market in just a few weeks due to poor consumer feedback. At the time, the company said it would make some design changes before relaunching them.

"For Amazon, it's interesting how they're trying to sneak it into the marketplace, this time a lot quieter than they did with the first launch, which was a big buzz everywhere," says Euro-monitor's Uduslivaia.

She thinks there are a few reasons why Amazon decided to put the relaunch under the Mama Bear name. First, Amazon doesn't want consumers to have the negative reminder of what happened with the previous diaper launch under the Elements brand, and its association with poor quality. Secondly, Mama Bear is also a fairly successful baby care brand for Amazon. "Consumers already have a good perception of the brand, so the chances

of them trying Mama Bear diapers would be higher," she says.

Mama Bear diapers is an invitation-only launch, meaning that only a select few of Amazon's customers could buy the diapers. As of the printing of this issue, there were no customer reviews of the diapers, so it remains to be seen whether the company will find success with this latest reboot.

Uduslivaia says, "If they flunk again, then they are not likely to have a third chance. I don't think that the third time around people are going to trust it because in hygiene, especially when it comes to baby diapers, if somebody has a bad experience, the chances of winning them back are very slim. In the previous launch, the main issue was they weren't really holding everything—that's the main reason people buy diapers. It could be low cost, but cost is not everything here."

Instead of choosing a third party manufacturer this time around—Canadian diaper maker Irving Personal Care manufactured Elements—Huggies maker Kimberly-Clark reportedly makes Mama Bear diapers. Uduslivaia thinks this is a good move on Amazon's part.

"Kimberly-Clark is an expert and has been in the business for such a long time. Private label is a very small part of their business, and they do have experience in it, but most importantly they are not going to ruin their good name by producing something that doesn't work," she says.

Innovation is Everywhere

Innovation has been key for the hygiene manufacturers behind the private label brands that are found on store shelves around the world.

Belgium-based Drylock Technologies, which invented the fluffless diaper six years ago, continues to be at the forefront of hygiene innovation. Its latest development is a diaper with a three-channel core. The technology, called Magical Tubes, offers faster acquisition and better distribution. And, as more liquid goes inside the core, the tubes pull the diaper closer to the body, curving it for a tighter fit, according to Bart Van Malderen, Drylock's founder and CEO.

"Drylock takes the view that the development of Magical Tubes within an absorbent core for either babies or adults is actually a very specialized science that demands the development of ideas, requires the generation and ownership of intellectual property, whilst needing focused engineering and product development skills combined with extensive time being spent to listen and learn from the consumer," he says. "Drylock now has an extensive and deep experience in the development and manufacture of a channel-based baby diaper."

Diapers featuring Magical Tubes technology have been available in Europe since September, and the company is planning to launch versions for adult incontinence—first in adult pants, then in all-in-one adult diapers—starting in mid-2018.

"The Drylock company was created with a belief in innovation, and the ability to make a better product offering a better consumer experience that would help to grow the share of

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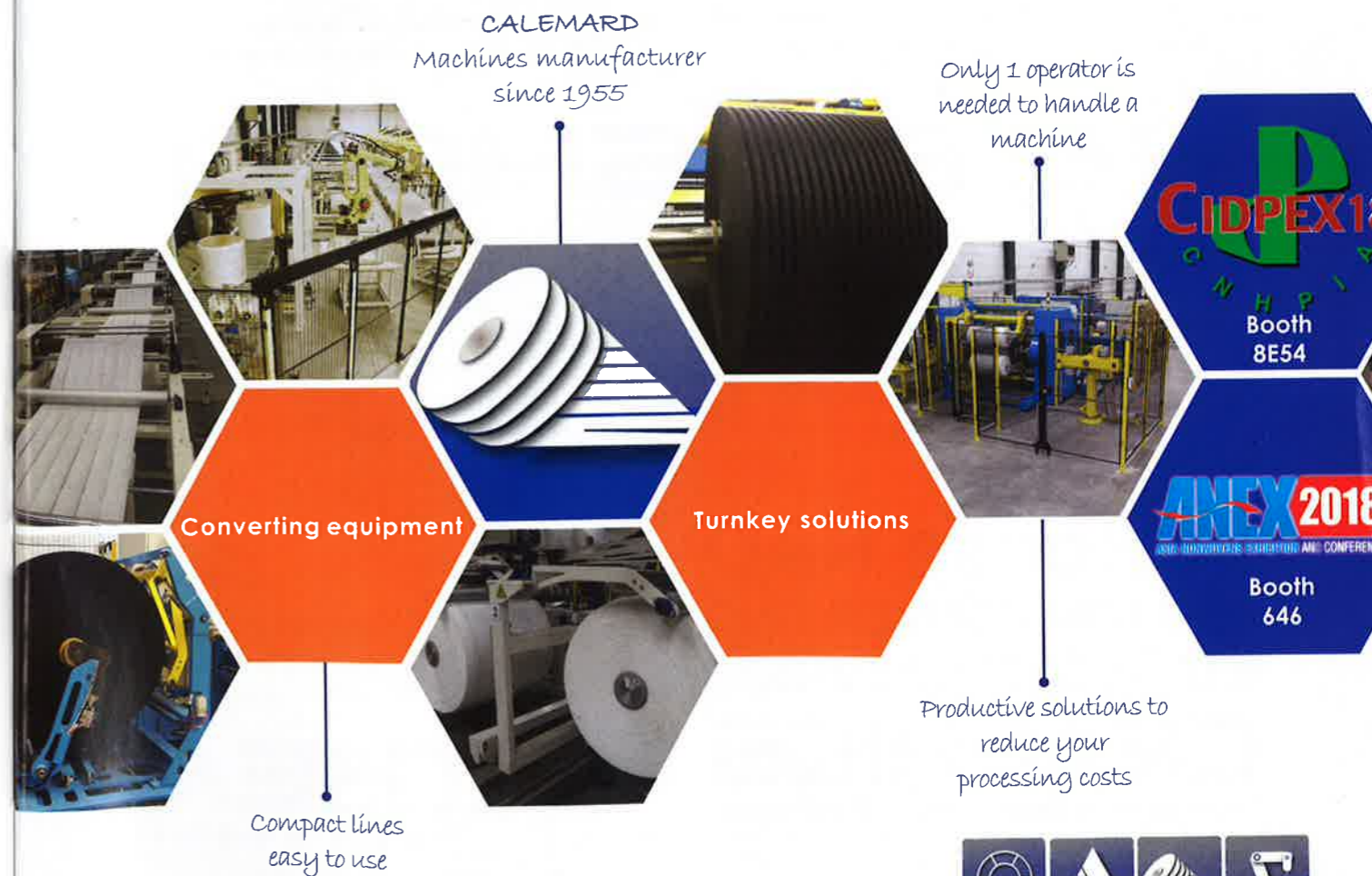
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