

COATING WORLD[®]

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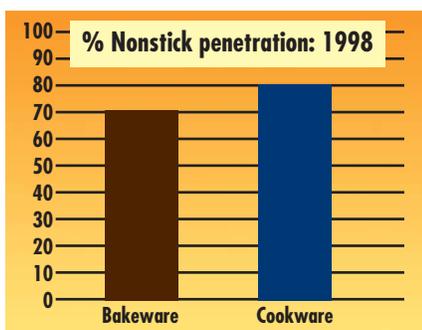
SPECIAL REPORT ON NONSTICK COATINGS AND HOUSEWARES FOR RETAILERS

Whitford Launches Informational Program To Help Retailers Increase Sales of Nonstick-Coated Products

There's a lot going on in the nonstick arena. To begin with, nonstick coatings are appearing on more and more cookware, bakeware, kitchen electrics and gadgets.

One reason: Research and development in the nonstick category have been unusually active over the past few years, resulting in dramatic improvements, as well as a proliferation of choices for the manufacturers of housewares and kitchen electrics.

The industry bible, *HomeWorld*, estimates that 70 percent of bakeware and 80 percent of cookware are nonstick.



Nonstick coatings are moving up-market, appearing on lines of expensive cookware for the first time (especially on stainless steel).

Manufacturers are offering guarantees on the nonstick coatings, some of them for the life of the cookware.

Lack of information

In the midst of the explosive growth of nonstick coatings, little has been done to provide basic and current information at the retail level, such as:

- How many different kinds of

nonstick coatings are there?

- What are the basic differences among them?
- Are all of them safe for use in normal household cooking?
- Which is best for what type of customer (occasional cooking, daily preparation of meals, gourmet, etc.)?
- What's the best way to trade up an interested customer?

Whitford to the rescue

Whitford Worldwide manufactures the world's largest, most complete line of nonstick coatings. Whitford spends a greater percentage of its sales on research and development than any of its competitors.

Now Whitford is turning its energies to the retail market in an attempt to provide helpful and meaningful information regarding nonsticks.

Whitford's first step: The hiring of a dynamic, seasoned professional from the world of retail: Fran Attilio.

Ms. Attilio graduated *magna cum laude* from SUNY's Fashion Institute of Technology with a BS in Marketing. She cut her teeth as assistant manager at Pottery Barn, then moved to Macy's in product development (later Federated Merchandising Group). She spent five years in Tools of the Trade[®], rising to product manager for cookware, cutlery, cutting boards and gadgets.

Next was a move to Frederick Atkins, as product manager for Decor-

ative and Basic Housewares. She learned new product categories and



Fran B. Attilio, Whitford's new Retail Marketing Manager.

dealt with retailers directly. This led to a promotion to brand manager for Decorative Home and Housewares.

Says Ms. Attilio: "Common to product development and brand management is creating products and programs to help retailers drive their business and improve their margins.

"Moving to Whitford to manage the new retail program is a natural next step. It's the most exciting challenge I've had. Whitford is growing well, and I'm really excited about helping them help the retail market."

An important part of the new program is *CoatingWorld* (for retailers), this being the first of a series of guides to key information about nonsticks, housewares, electrics and gadgets, designed to help the retail trade understand, promote and sell nonstick products more effectively and efficiently.

Do The Nonstick Coatings On Your Products Comply With FDA Food-Contact Regulations?

The answer to this question is not an easy one. But it is extremely important. The United States Food and Drug Administration is the governmental body responsible for the safety of all food-contact coatings.

Let us clear up a common misunderstanding: **The FDA does not approve nonstick coatings.** Rather, it provides an exhaustive set of regulations that the manufacturer must follow. These regulations are recorded in the Code of Federal Regulations under four different sections. One section lists 7 criteria that manufacturers of nonstick coatings must meet.

Reliable manufacturers follow these carefully. But, as sourcing of cookware, bakeware and other similar

items has moved to the Pacific Basin, to countries with lower labor costs, lower living standards and less stringent regulations, some doubts have arisen about the compliance of the nonstick coatings applied.

The potential problem

The pressure to keep prices down naturally encourages corner-cutting. Compliant nonstick coatings may be adulterated (in fact, many have been). Local coatings may be substituted that do not meet FDA standards. Most importers probably are unaware of this.

If such products were to be subjected to quality tests and found defective (at least in the nonstick coating used), the entire shipment could be confiscated and fines could be

imposed.

What should be done?

The obvious answer is to make sure any nonstick coating comes from a reliable manufacturer who provides assurance that all regulatory criteria are met. Also, ask your source for the manufacturer's statement assuring the nonsticks are in full compliance.

There are other programs such as Whitford's Quality Cooperative Program that provide such assurance and, in addition, offer free testing of coated products to make sure that the coating (and the performance characteristics of the coating) are in order.

There will be more information on this program in the next issue of CoatingWorld.

Frequently Asked Questions

“FAQs” will be a regular feature of Coating World. If you have questions regarding nonsticks, please send them to us (address at end).

Question: “Why do nonstick coatings wear off so quickly?”

Answer: “That’s a good question, although a little out of date. Nonsticks have improved so much over the past few years that they are lasting up to five times as long as before.

“But they do wear — because the nonstick ingredient, normally PTFE (polytetrafluoroethylene) is organic. Early nonsticks were almost entirely PTFE, so they were soft and waxy, easily worn away by a fork or spoon.

“As the science improved, smart manufacturers began to add certain non-organic ingredients to increase adhesion to the surface of the pan as well as make the basic coating far

harder — more resistant to abrasion.

“With a little care, today’s conventional nonsticks will last for years. (More about reinforced nonsticks in another issue.)”

Question: “Should I season nonstick cookware? If so, how do I do it and how frequently should I repeat it?”

Answer: “Before using any cookware (nonstick or not) you should wash it in hot, soapy water, rinse it thoroughly and dry it immediately.

“Then you should wipe the nonstick surface lightly with a paper towel and some cooking oil. The oil fills in any microscopic voids that may exist in the coating. This prevents foodstuffs from getting into these voids where they harden with heat and time, forming little spots in the coating. They interfere with the nonstick surface and make it easier

for future foodstuffs to adhere during cooking.

“You should reseason a pan after any heavy or lengthy washing (such as a dishwasher cycle) that could remove all the residual oil.”

Send your questions with your name, address (email if you prefer) to: Fran Attilio, Whitford Corp., Box 2347, West Chester, PA 19380-0110. Email: fattilio@whitfordww.com.

Coming in future issues:

- The Quality Cooperative Program: assuring the quality of your nonstick products.
- Free Guide to Nonstick Cookware.
- The truth about Alzheimer’s and aluminum cookware.

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