



**The Tannery**



## **Re: LITE *Leather* News Letter**

Aug.24<sup>th</sup>, 2007

Dear Customer, Partners and Friends

Recently more and more People have requested more information about our LITE Leather project. I have been asked many times how it all got started. It has been suggested we should issue a news letter, so here it is.

This news letter will give some background and a little history of the project. The next one will give you more day-to-day information...  
It is an exciting project and I had so many responses that I'd like to share some with you.

If anyone does not wish to be copied in the future, just send me a notice.

### **Back ground of the LITE process**

My passion for the environment was certainly formed by my father in the early days: "switch the light off when you leave the room; fix a dripping water faucet etc.

Also the place I was born and grew up helped a lot. The green fields and fresh air is something that stays with you forever.

**ISA Industrial Limited**  
**Guangzhou, China**  
**[www.liteleather.com](http://www.liteleather.com)**



The place I was born and lived in the 1950's  
Near Nuremberg / Germany

In 1989 I started a Finishing plant in South China and we produced crust in a Tannery in Henan. This Tannery also had a bottling plant and sold bottled drinking water using the same 500 meter deep water well as the Tannery did for tanning hides. I promised myself that one day I will actively help to stop such waste.

When we started Tantec in 1994 we had young open minded technicians, who were willing to try new things. In 1995 we already used recycled water for a part of the retanning process!

When we started Chrome-free leather for the automotive industry we also promoted it for the shoe industry. .

We did not succeed mainly for three reasons:

A - Brands in that time ( 8 years ago) feared that if they market the chrome free for a certain line of shoes “ green “ it makes the rest of the lines look bad .

B - The raw material (wet white) was (and still) not available like wet blue causing increased cost and limited flexibility

C - Restriction in products like waterproof is not possible to make from heavy metal free leathers on an economical basis.

It still left us with no clear concept of environmental friendly leathers which are practical and economical.

### **The concept is born**

A break though was what we learned from the European automotive industry: gr CO2 / km now provides a closer look of which vehicle has a higher impact to the environment and which one has less.



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We thought about how we could transfer this idea into a tannery. The many management systems, audits and certifications which ISA has gone thru over the years helped us to establish LITE manufacturing system.

We are not only using it to categorize the leathers which we are producing and their impact to the environment but also as a tool for continuous improvements.

### **The name is created**

When a customer asked us to develop a leather which was very commercial but with the lowest possible impact to the environment, we developed LITE - **Low Impact To Environment.**

We asked why only one product?

### **We made a decision**

We gave ourselves until the end of 2007 to convert the total company to LITE.

We specify LITE as follows:

**A** - Every leather type we produce must be clearly categorized with a number of kgs CO2 emissions / 1000 sq ft

**B** - We challenged ourselves that the leather must have a better score than we currently have in order to carry the LITE label.

**C** - We are focusing strictly on our own production facility as this is currently the one we can influence.

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### **We put a plan into action**

Over the last 12 month we invested USD \$1,700,000 in equipment of latest technology:

- Drying equipment capable of drying leather at 42 degrees centigrade, which is better for the leather, but also better for the environment as it uses less energy.
- Processing vessels which are low on energy and water usage
- New Finishing equipment which is applying the finishing in a direct process rather than the conventional spray machine , reducing energy use and VOC emissions
- Processing machines, which de-water leather more efficient therefore reducing drying times ( drying is energy and energy causes emission of CO2 )

### **Monitoring systems**

Even with good systems in place we want to optimize them by implementing ISO 14064.

We are currently undergoing this process. I have explained the ISO 14064 in an earlier e-mail.

I am now working on the next Newsletter.

Therefore:

To be continued .....

Kind Regards

Thomas Schneider  
President & CEO  
ISA Tan Tec

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