

Sustainable Product Specialist

Skip Laubach



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SKIP LAUBACH
president and COO, Vertec BioSolvents

Skip Laubach has led Vertec BioSolvents for two years as president and chief operating officer. The bio-based solvent formulations company provides alternative, sustainable solutions to petroleum-based solvents in coating, ink, adhesive and ag chemical formulations, graffiti removal, petroleum exploration and transportation and industrial cleaning applications.

Prior to joining Vertec BioSolvents, Laubach held various product management and sales leadership positions at LA-CO Industries, Nalco (an Ecolab company) and BOC Gases. He has a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Illinois and an MBA from Northern Illinois University. He grew up in farm country, outside of Rochelle, Ill., and now resides with his family next to a soybean field west of Elgin, Ill. He is proud to work for an Illinois business serving Illinois farmers.

WHAT ARE THE COMPANY'S SUSTAINABILITY GOALS?

We are focused on the core tenets of sustainability: protecting the environment, balancing a growing economy and social responsibility. Since 2000, we have been developing innovative products with bio-based formulas to provide sustainable and high-performing alternatives to petroleum-based products.

Our products are manufactured with renewable ingredients, such as corn, soy, citrus fruits and wood by-products. By using bio-based products, we reduce the negative impact of petroleum-based solvents in the environment and improve worker health and safety. Our biodegradable line of solvents breaks down into lactic acid and other organic compounds that are safely transformed in water and soil.

WHAT ARE THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS TO USING SOY IN YOUR PRODUCTS?

It is very important to find alternatives to petroleum-based products in industrial manufacturing and agricultural products. Renewable ingredients like soy-based esters reduce the impact of contamination in the air, soil and water, and provide a more sustainable future.

An additional benefit to using soy-derived solvents is that they are biodegradable. Soy allows us to develop products with no hazardous air pollutants. Often, petroleum-based product use will have environmental residuals that risk entering the groundwater or soil. Using soy-based products reduces the impact on air, soil and water, which is good for all of us.

HOW CAN ILLINOIS SOYBEAN FARMERS HELP FURTHER YOUR SUSTAINABILITY MISSION?

Soybean farmers can use our products in cleaning applications on their machinery, or as a more environmentally-friendly option to apply bio-based containing solvents in agricultural formulations to their crops for weed and pest control. By using our products, farmers can reduce their environmental impact, and they can benefit by investing in their own soy market as well.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS FOR SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS?

We plan to develop more bio-based products that can go into agricultural chemical formulations. In addition, we continue to develop other bio-based products for applications that also will continue to reduce negative impacts on water and soil. We plan to continue to use soy to help develop new products and reach new markets, growing the demand for soybeans. ■