

Press Release

CRADLE TO CRADLE

September 2016 – It's time for a rethink. Raw materials are an essential asset and yet limited in their supply. So why do we live in a throwaway society? We are becoming more and more aware of the fact that we cannot go on like this. The call for sustainability and to be more ecologically aware is growing. Bauwerk Parkett is already quick off the mark when it comes to working seriously in areas such as healthy living, sustainability and product design. «Cradle to Cradle» is just one of the concepts it implements as a result of this approach to the environment.



The planet's resources are limited. However, our current production system «from the cradle to the grave» works against this depletion and overexploitation of nature, the environment and also people. Our generation already creates toxic substances and endless waste and future generations will continue to do so to an even greater extent in the face seemingly unsolvable problems. We consume resources, pollute the water and air, and even destroy entire ecosystems.

Chemist Prof. Dr. Michael Braungart and architect William McDonough already addressed these issues in the 1990s when they developed the «from the cradle to the cradle» concept.

Their vision of a waste-free economy and consistent re-use is based on continuous cycles of material that permanently keep all the media that has been used as materials fit for re-use. When referring to his concept, Michael Braungart simply states: «Processes that do not involve any waste, but instead only use useful substances, can be observed everywhere in nature. This regenerative system facilitates a positive new start in the relations between the economy and ecology». It requires a paradigm shift in production methods: Intelligent product design should result in defined materials in continuous material cycles, which benefit the environment rather than harm it. The concept does not involve any waste. This means that each product is designed and produced in such a way that it already considers the end at the beginning, so as not to produce any waste at all.

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Some companies have already changed their business model; they follow the «Cradle to Cradle» concept and use the raw materials again and again. Currently Bauwerk Parkett is the only manufacturer of wooden flooring that can proudly boast of a «Cradle to Cradle Certified™ Gold» certificate. The company gained this for its Cleverpark Silente and Multipark Silente products. The certification process assesses the five areas of materials, material recycling, renewable energy and carbon management as well as social fairness.

In addition to this, since 2016, all the parquet flooring manufactured at the St. Margrethen production site satisfies all the requirements for the «Cradle to Cradle Certified™» Gold or Bronze. This equates to 60 percent of the entire product range. All the products fitted with the Silente mat («Cradle to Cradle Certified™ Gold») can be removed intact after use. The factory takes back the parquet strips. The remnants of the mats are removed – whatever is left is returned to the manufacturer for recycling – the strips are then reworked, given a new surface protection and put up for resale. All the other parquet flooring manufactured at the St. Margrethen site are «Cradle to Cradle Certified™ Bronze» because all the materials involved in the process are used in accordance with the highest standards, and after the parquet has been dismantled, it is crushed and used as compost material. It is in this way that Bauwerk makes an important contribution to the health of both people and nature. As one of Europe's leading flooring manufacturers, Bauwerk sets the standard for the entire industry as a pioneer in this field.

With panel discussions in different Worlds of Parquet in Switzerland, Germany and Austria, Bauwerk Parkett will be strengthening the interchanges on «Cradle to Cradle» this autumn and providing its guests with more insights into the implementation of the concept in practice. High-profile speakers will talk about their experiences and what, in their opinion, constitutes the «Cradle to Cradle» concept.

Ansgar Igelbrink, President of Bauwerk Brand, stresses the sustainability and longevity of the parquet floors from Bauwerk. «Flooring is an essential component of our living environment. Customers are free to choose an affordable or practical covering, or lay a parquet that is representative of sustainable value. As a responsible manufacturer of parquet, we have always focused on the development of beautiful parquet floors that are representative of value and healthy living - and are thereby always one step ahead in terms of legislation. Parquet is and will remain a special kind of raw material. Repeatedly reworking its surface greatly extends its service life; this can even include changes in colour. The Cradle to Cradle approach allows us to regard this flooring as a raw material, even after extensive use. After the flooring has been removed and reworked, it can be reinstalled in a living area as a parquet of almost the same value. This would not be possible with imitation wood flooring.»

Albin Kälin, Managing Director and CEO of EPEA Switzerland, has worked extensively with Bauwerk Parkett to attain the certification of the products. He says: «The vision of a world without waste necessitates a complete transformation of industry, the way products are used and the closing of the cycles. The quality of the raw materials is maintained through multiple life cycles. By demonstrating and choosing this approach, we are creating the foundation for future generations by ensuring raw materials are still available and still usable. How could that possibly be wrong? In the interests of our children, we need to commit to this transformation now!»

Business ethicist **Rahim Taghizadegan** takes a somewhat more critical view of the concept: «Cradle to Cradle» can bring about great added value as product innovation. But it can likewise pose some risk if it were to be overstretched, i.e. if it were in the hands of people who are neither responsible for making investments from their own pockets, nor satisfied with their individual responsibilities as a consumer, but instead blindly seek to improve the world. This is when disappointing hype and bureaucratic projects threaten the balance.»

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Valentin Brenner, Head of the Team of Experts «Cradle to Cradle» at Drees & Sommer, has this to say about his work with the concept: «For us, Cradle to Cradle is an approach to designing that should be adopted for the next generation of buildings. This will result in a stronger bond between aesthetics and engineering, and it promotes comprehensive solutions. In doing so, Cradle to Cradle cleverly brings together the three central topics of the future of the construction industry: How to realise property that promotes healthy living, how to obtain greater flexibility and variability, how to address the problems of raw materials and waste disposal. This draws on both low-tech and complex innovations – ultimately it's about achieving higher quality for people and the environment.»

Bauwerk Parkett will continue to strengthen sustainability within the company and advocate a responsible approach to resources and the environment.

Company profile: Bauwerk Parquet

Bauwerk Parquet, a Swiss company with a long-standing tradition, combines precision and reliability in the manufacture of top quality wooden floors. Proud of its origins, the company constantly strives towards innovation. In the last few years, Bauwerk has seen significant development and has set out on a new course, converting from a technological and production-oriented enterprise to a market-oriented company with a focus on healthy living, sustainability and design.

Since 2014, Bauwerk products have been manufactured at two different sites. Though a second production site has been established in Kietaviskes (Lithuania), St. Margrethen (Switzerland) still produces over 60% of the company's product range. Bauwerk's product portfolio comprises 350 articles, ranging from 2-layer to 3-layer as well as solid parquet. In 2015, Bauwerk sold more than 4.15 million square meters of parquet flooring.

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