



Interview Bloemenkrant, 13th June 2017

**At the table with:
Koen and Cristol Broekhuizen
Koen Pack**

It was his dream to start for himself and in 1996 Koen and Cristol Broekhuizen started their business. Very small with the baby room of their home as their office. Now Koen Pack BV is the market leader in packaging for flowers and plants. Besides the company in Amstelveen, we also have offices in Florida, California, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador and Kenya. We spoke Koen and Cristol on a sunny summer evening at Restaurant Dutch in Noordwijk. The dishes and the atmosphere contributed to a fascinating conversation, which never stopped quietly.



"We saw demand for renewal in the flower packages. New designs, shapes, materials. The existing wholesalers could not bring adequate renewals. We wanted it better. So, both of us quit our jobs and we created our office in the baby room of our house. We designed things ourselves, but also got inspired by suppliers. This brought us the most beautiful designs. At exhibitions, but also during personal visits to customers, we showed all beautiful things. From the slogan we still carry: The Personal Touch. And it was an instant success."

"Since then, packaging has just become more important. We now supply packaging for both flowers and plants and, besides suppliers, we also inspire ourselves to see how other products are packed. In the meanwhile we have our own design department with six people."

"What is a good packaging? Good question. A good packaging is subordinate to the product, but it must match. If you have a natural bouquet, its packaging must also be natural. In a way you should not really see how well a flower- or a plant packaging is. The style of flower and plant packaging varies by country and in some countries even by region. In California, they want different packaging than in northeastern USA. It also varies by supermarket organization. The starting point is always that the packaging makes the bouquet or the plant more attractive in a natural way."

"We deliver to four customer groups. Retailers, packers, growers and the traditional wholesale channel. Growers often need a specific product, a sleeve that fits their own flower or plant with their own appearance. Retailers often buy from our collection, but the larger ones attach value to their own logo and look. Our design studio can do just about anything. When a customer comes to us, we will talk first to discover what he really wants. In our 400 square meters showroom in Amstelveen you will find our total



collection plus what we have ever made specific for customers. If you go there with a customer, the good ideas go beyond each other. We have a large printing machine that can print on film so that we can show an idea immediately. The customer can see real life what his future packaging looks like. In addition, we can show – even as important – exactly what we want to our suppliers. So they know what

is expected of them. "

"Our suppliers are mainly in the Far East, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar. The first one finds his strength in the ability to deliver large numbers quickly, the other distinguishes with an above average quality. Characteristic of our company is that we are loyal to suppliers. In fact, we prefer partners than suppliers. Of course, a good price is important, but the story of a good product always starts with good quality."

"Sustainability is also an item in our branch. We are doing more and more paper and we have been working on sustainability for more than ten years. Our PLA film can be put into the green container, but it's more expensive than the usual film. Sustainability often quits at a higher price, which is understandable. We work with the largest retailers in the world. There are often huge numbers of bouquets and numbers of sleeves, so a lot of money. Nevertheless, we think the future is about more durable packaging materials."

"We have ever planned to work the company solely together, but we did not succeed. Eventually selling no was not an option, so people joined us (in the Netherlands now fifty and one hundred worldwide) and suppliers and branches. Our big growth is in North- and South-America. We want to sit where flowers and plants are traded. In our personnel policy, we have, from the start, been able to put creativity, dedication and loyalty beyond diplomas. Employees got and get a lot of freedom with us. This insertion is still a big part of our success. Ultimately, it's our employees who make us succeed."

