

THE 3RD GLOBAL OILS AND FATS BUSINESS FORUM USA

Handcrafted Soap Making Industry

BY

*Mr. William
Shay Shay &
Company*

BIO
FOR
WILLIAM SHAY

William Shay graduated from Portland State University with a degree in Accounting. Mr. Shay went to work for Palmco/Premier Edible Oils handling the importing of Palm Oil, Palm Kernel Oil and Coconut Oil. In his 21 years of working for Premier Edible Oils he was involved in overseeing a lot of the daily operations of working with production, sales, and generating the financial statements at the end of each month.

After Premier Edible Oils closed in 1996, Mr. Shay started his own business Shay & Company, Inc, distributing Palm and Coconut, and other vegetable oils to the small business market. In the seven years of being in business a large percentage of his clients are soap makers in the Hand Crafted Soap Industry.

William Shay

I started my own business 7 years ago after Premier Edible Oils closed its doors in Portland Oregon. We had supplied Palm Oil for many years to the potato industry for frying. When Premier Edible Oils closed I figure, there was a market for the small guy who wants to buy small quantities of oil. As I started selling to candy companies and a few other food users, people called wanting palm oil and coconut oil for soap making. A lot of these people wanted small quantities of oil. The handcrafted soap industry was coming to life. People were calling for a natural bar of soap, which is going back to many grandparents' days of making soap on the farm. This process known as cold process soap making.

The cold process method basically uses palm, coconut and pomace olive oils and sodium hydroxide. They mix all of these together and pour into a box mold or some use round PVC pipe. After the soap sets up they remove it from the mold and then hand cut and shape the soap. In order to market their soap it has to cure for 4-6 week before wrapping and shipping. Many of the Hand Crafted Soap makers are housewives who are trying to make extra income. To market there soaps they sell at community markets on weekends, a few take the soap making to the next level from being a craft to a wholesale business where every thing is in larger batches and the hope of selling to major stores.

After the cold process was out for a while, another type of soap was coming into the market. Vegetable Glycerin is also called melt and pour soap. This soap is less dangerous to use then the cold process soap making. Many people do not like having to deal with the sodium hydroxide in the cold process soap making. The vegetable glycerin soaps main ingredient consists of the vegetable glycerin, coconut, palm vegetable stearic acid and the small portions of other ingredients. Large percent of the vegetable glycerin used in the United States is coming from Malaysia..

The glycerin melt and pour soap comes in various sizes. Where by you melt it in a double broiler slowly, add moisturizers such as Shea butter, fragrance, colorants, and then pour into plastic molds, or cookie sheets. Once the melt and pour is set up and removed from the mold, it can be wrapped, labeled, and ready for the market. There is no curing time with melt and pour. The melt and pour soap provides hand craft-soap makers more flexibility to use more creativity in the sizes and designs.

I think the vegetable glycerin melt and pour soap reached it's peak two years ago, compared to the sales that I have seen recently. The use of palm and coconut oil continues to be pretty steady in the cold process soap making business.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you in regards to the soap business.