



Case study

Air cleaners to wipe out flour dust



Client

Verkade Cookie
Factory



Location

Zaandam (NL)



Sector

Industrial bakery



Dust reduction

79 %

At a glance

“Working conditions have improved significantly thanks to the air purifiers from Zehnder Clean Air Solutions. We also have to clean the factory less often. We’re extremely happy about working with Zehnder.”

Arie Visser, Production Manager

Challenges

Verkade is one of the best-known brands in the Netherlands – a traditional family business that has been producing chocolate and biscuits since 1886. Air purification is hugely important in order to control the flour dust that is typical in such a large bakery. At Verkade, however, the dust was creating an unhealthy working environment, particularly in the dough preparation and flour sifting areas. Cleaning costs were also sky high and despite extensive efforts, they were not getting the dust under control.

About Verkade

Verkade began more than 100 years ago baking bread and biscuits on the banks of the river Zaan.

Over the years it has become one of the most well-known brands in the Netherlands. In 1950 they won the right to add “Royal” in front of their name. And in 2010 Verkade was the Netherlands Brand of the Year. About 550 people work at the factory in Westzijde, Zaandam, 325 of them in the production areas. They make a wide selection of products, including cakes, macarons, butter cookies and waffles.

Benefits

Thanks to the air cleaners from Zehnder, flour dust is down by 79 %. The working environment is now far cleaner and healthier. This has reduced the risk of employees developing what’s known as baker’s asthma, and at the same time is helping the staff feel more comfortable at work. The amount of cleaning now needed has also reduced considerably. Verkade says it really appreciated the fact that Zehnder’s units are so easy to install, with no extra wiring, no pipe work and no disruption to production. The company also likes the fact that the cost of the air purifiers can be spread over a number of years.



Flour dust in the air you breathe

“In a company such as ours, dust is always a problem,” says Arie Visser, Production Manager at Verkade. “We used to have a lot of dust in our buildings, mostly where we did dough preparation and flour sifting. **It was not just an unhealthy work environment; the costs for cleaning were sky-high.** But even with all the cleaning, we could not control the dust. We needed a better approach to the problem.”

This was the situation in 2007 when Zehnder’s Dick Stoorvogel offered to measure Verkade’s air quality, with a view to coming up with a solution to their dust issues. Following Dick’s findings and subsequent recommendations, Verkade was convinced, and initially ordered seven air cleaners with pre-filters and Flimmer filters, and a cleaning capacity of 3,000 m³ of air every hour. So pleased were they with the results that between 2008 and 2010, the company ordered a further 18 units and today has a total of 25 Zehnder air cleaners at its factory.

A happy production manager

“We’re really happy with the results – they’re exactly what we needed,” says Arie Visser. **“Working conditions have improved considerably, and we need to clean less frequently nowadays.** The fact that the units are easy to install and do not require any extra piping or cables is great, too. Because of this it was easy to decide to install air cleaners in the other departments as well.” There are other things that Visser likes about the Zehnder partnership. A real advantage of working with Zehnder, he says, is knowing the costs for the entire lifetime of their agreement. It means Verkade can concentrate on what it does best – great baking.



