



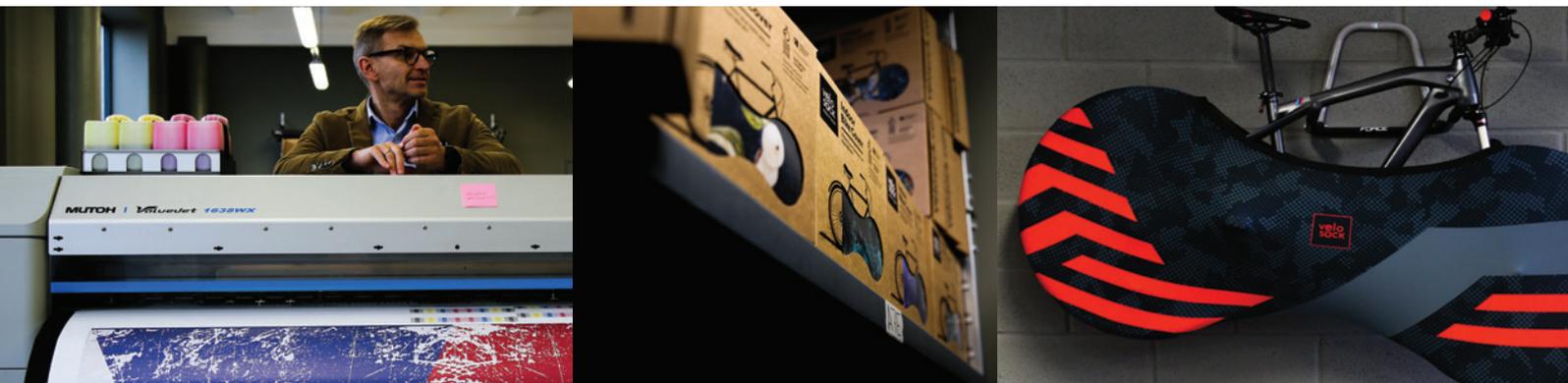
#### THE CHALLENGE



VELOSOCK started out as a local company from the small Baltic state of Latvia. In just a couple of years, they've turned into a global brand with numerous prestigious design awards and a versatile clientele from all over the world. Who could have thought that such a straightforward idea - a stretchy bike cover for easier bicycle indoor storage and transportation - would take the cycling world by storm? Gvido Bajars, the co-founder of VELOSOCK, reveals how using Mutoh printers helped them build a successful brand and what grand plans they have for the future.

Product in user story: [ValueJet 1638WX](#)

Gvido Bajars had a Master's degree in law, but zero knowledge in printing. Still, he decided to follow his gut feeling to co-found VELOSOCK, an indoor bike cover brand. Two ValueJet 1638WX printers later, VELOSOCK is a rapidly expanding company with customers all over the world, including cycling legends, an Ironman World champion, and the national Dutch track cycling team.



Gvido Bajars - Co-founder

#### A PRACTICAL NECESSITY

The first prototype of VELOSOCK came to life as a practical necessity - to keep the house and car clean when transporting or storing a bike. Imagine coming home from a rainy day's ride. There's dirt. There's mud. How do you avoid getting that mess on the walls and floors of your apartment? There were no bike covers on the market at the time, so the creators of VELOSOCK decided to make one themselves.

Gvido Bajars, one of the founders of VELOSOCK, reveals: "From the very first moment, I thought it was a great idea. I just had a gut feeling that this bike cover would have huge potential. And when you feel it in your bones - you have to go for it." VELOSOCK has set out on a mission to improve everyday quality,

by providing unique covers. At the moment, the company focuses on the cycling world and produces indoor bike covers, full bike covers for transportation, kids bike covers, as well as lifestyle products such as luggage and fitness ball covers.

#### WHY MUTOH

Gvido has a Master's degree in law specializing in commercialisation, product development, and intellectual property, which proved very handy for him in building the VELOSOCK brand. However, Gvido had no experience in printing. "I didn't know anything about printers, and I learned everything from scratch."

At the very beginning of their operation, VELOSOCK outsourced their production and printing.

But demand grew and Gvido wanted to oversee production himself to ensure the customers top quality. That's when he made the decision to purchase their own printer - Mutoh's ValueJet 1638WX. "Why Mutoh? There was actually no doubt about it. I knew right from the start I'd go with Mutoh, as they offer the best choice of printers in the world and great customer service right here in our home country Latvia."

Gvido remembers how he studied the printer, tried it for a couple of weeks himself, and then passed on his knowledge to the other colleagues. "It was very easy to learn to use the printer - I think, that's one of the greatest benefits of Mutoh. They haven't overcomplicated anything, and it's a treat to use such technologies."



Among other benefits of Mutoh, Gvido names the high-resolution printing, the speed of the printer, as well as the ability to produce very fine prints. "You can create basically anything. And that's super important for us, since VELOSOCK prints custom designs for our clients. It also works perfectly with the calendar that we use. Besides, the ink we use is water-based, so it's non-toxic and not harmful to humans." All in all, the perfect combination that meets all VELOSOCK's needs for quality and even health-wise.

#### INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

Currently, VELOSOCK ships to 65 countries worldwide, especially focusing on the regions with a strong cycling culture - like the German-speaking countries, Italy, France, Spain, the UK, USA. But their reach doesn't stop there - VELOSOCK bike covers are used by athletes as far as French Polynesia. Even the national Dutch track cycling team has a set - with their names on each individual bike cover.

Other unique designs have traveled to the legendary German cycling sprinter Marcel Wüst and his Casa Ciclista team, as well as Patrick Lange, Ironman World Champion 2018 and 2017.

"The way we spread the word about VELOSOCK is through different digital marketing channels - particularly Facebook Ads," explains Gvido. "We also participate in many cycling events and exhibitions, like Ironman. People come and meet us, see VELOSOCK in real life, and then order it on our website or Amazon page. At the moment, we don't work with retailers or distributors, most of the purchases are placed online. This greatly facilitates the logistics side of the business and lets cycling enthusiasts from all over the world have access to our bike covers."

Gvido also confirms that they have copy cats who've tried to replicate what VELOSOCK does. "But we're not worried about that," he says, revealing that VELOSOCK is protected by an industrial design patent and registered as a trademark.

#### EXPANSION

VELOSOCK has been rapidly expanding, so after 2.5 years of operating with one ValueJet 1638WX printer, the company purchased a second one. "In the beginning of 2019, we opted for a second ValueJet 1638WX printer, because it perfectly fits our needs. It's large enough to print our full bike cover. And it has two print heads, which means it's perfect for high-speed large-volume sublimation," says Gvido, emphasizing that he couldn't imagine his company without Mutoh. "It just wouldn't be the same without these printers. We use Mutoh for everything we print, and that's how we can provide such high-quality designs for each of our customers."



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## FUTURE PLANS

At the moment, VELOSOCK focuses on operating in the European market. However, in the future, they plan to expand to the US and even Japan. "Japanese people have small living spaces and are required to cover their bike fully to be able to transport it on the train," explains Gvido. "In my opinion, VELOSOCK would be the perfect indoor storage and transportation solution, and I really hope we'll be able to click with Japan."

VELOSOCK has other exciting surprises up their sleeve. "This year, we're introducing completely new products that have long been anticipated. We're launching BMX covers, folding-bike covers, and even pro-line covers that are water-resistant and absorb damage and protect the bike from scratches," Gvido reveals.



"Sure, bike covers are our main line of production. But we plan on creating covers for other sports and lifestyle items as well. This could be anything, starting from skis, snowboards, wakeboards, and other gear." And we're really looking forward to the result.



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