



Gero Leson is Vice President of Special Operations at Dr. Bronner's, the top-selling brand of natural soaps in North America and producer of a range of organic body care and food products. He joined the company in 2005, helping the company transition to sourcing all its major ingredients directly from certified fair trade and organic projects. Under Gero's leadership, Dr. Bronner's has become a pioneer in the global movement to establish socially just and environmentally responsible supply chains.

Dr. Bronner's enlisted Gero to build a new fair trade and organic supply chain from the ground up, when the company became concerned about potential labor abuse and exploitation in its existing supply chains, and could not find fair trade third party suppliers for its main ingredients. Gero thus established Dr. Bronner's sister companies, Serendipol in Sri Lanka, Serendi Coco in Samoa, and Serendipalm in Ghana, to supply organic and fair trade coconut oil and palm oil, respectively. These vertically integrated projects purchase raw materials from 500-2000 smallholder farmers and include processing operations, i.e. coconut and palm oil mills with up to 300 employees. He also developed close partnerships with independent operations such as Canaan Fair Trade in Palestine, for olive oil, and Creation Biotech in India, for mint oils. Gero's work to restructure Dr. Bronner's supply chains resulted in the company and all its main products becoming certified Fair Trade under the Fair for Life program in 2007.

Today, Gero manages the establishment of new production facilities and oversees ongoing operations and community development endeavors such as local education, healthcare, and environmental infrastructure projects in communities that supply Dr. Bronner's ingredients. He coordinates the sale of products from Dr. Bronner's own projects to other companies who are committed to fair and sustainable supply chains. Finally, he identifies and vets emerging projects that supply minor ingredients needed by Dr. Bronner's, such as several essential oils, and supports their fair trade certi-

cation and shift to more sustainable agricultural practices.

In addition to these operational aspects, Dr. Bronner's Special Operations team, led by Gero, focuses on the education of farmers in these communities, to develop practices such as composting, cover cropping, mulching, and other regenerative organic methods that build up soil fertility and organic matter. These practices increase yields and profits for small farmers, and aid local communities' resiliency to heat waves and storms, thus mitigating the effects of climate change. Overall, Dr. Bronner's sourcing of organic and fair trade raw materials now benefits some 25,000 farmers, employees and their families, worldwide—improving livelihoods while simultaneously regenerating soil.

In addition to his role in creating Dr. Bronner's supply chain from the ground up, Gero has helped the company explore its ancestral roots in his own birthplace of Germany. He also worked closely with company President and co-owner Michael Bronner to establish Dr. Bronner's Germany, Dr. Bronner's sister company and base of operations in Europe. In the last five years, the German operation has grown to \$2.8 million in annual sales.

Gero was born in Cologne, Germany, and holds a masters in physics and a doctorate in environmental science and engineering. While he spends half of his time at projects, he still enjoys traveling and immersion in other cultures. He lives in Berkeley, California with his wife Christel Dillbohner.

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW



In all we do, let us be generous, fair & loving to Spaceship Earth and all its inhabitants. For we're All-One or None! All-One!

GERO LESON

Vice President of Special Operations

"Imagine how it feels to work for a company that tackles, for a living, persistent global problems in an intelligent, strategic, constructive, not-dogmatic, and enjoyable way." —Gero Leson

INTERVIEW ANGLES AND TALKING POINTS

- **Regenerative Organic Agriculture:** Gero and his Special Operations team have been promoting and implementing regenerative organic farming and agroforestry practices at all major supply projects, including those operated by close partners. This includes training of farmers and implementing composting, cover cropping, conservation tillage, and replanting of trees using the concept of mixed "dynamic agroforestry."
- **Fair Trade:** Dr. Bronner's is committed to sourcing raw materials from fair trade projects around the world that ensure a fair price, living wage and community infrastructure, benefiting an estimated 25,000 farmers, workers, and their families around the world. Dr. Bronner's also works to catalyze policy change and grow public awareness on the importance of organic agriculture and fair trade models.
- **Sustainable Palm Oil:** Used in Dr. Bronner's bar soaps, this ingredient comes from Serendipalm, a fair trade and organic palm project in Ghana, which Gero established. This palm oil does not contribute to habitat loss for orangutans and other endangered species in areas of the world where rainforests are indiscriminately destroyed for palm production. Rather, it demonstrates that palm oil can well be grown by small holder farmers on existing farm land and benefit their farms and communities. Sales of palm oil by Serendipalm to Rapunzel and GEPA, two high profile German organic and fair trade companies, has expanded the reach of this exemplary project, which now also produces organic and fair trade cocoa.
- **Closed Loop Manufacturing:** Gero advises Dr. Bronner's fair trade partners on implementation of environmentally sustainable closed loop manufacturing processes, such as the use of coconut husks to power the boiler at the coconut processing facility at Serendipol.
- **Impact of Agriculture on Climate Change:** Dr. Bronner's supply chain demonstrates that manufacturing of products with agricultural ingredients in a "climate positive" way is feasible. In fact, in the aggregate the production of Dr. Bronner's main ingredients offsets Dr. Bronner's entire carbon footprint and still allows for the generation of "carbon insets" through regenerative practices that increase soil health and thus mitigate climate change.
- **Industry Cooperation on Clean Supply Chains:** Gero champions cooperation between natural products companies with the goal to ensure that their purchase of agricultural raw materials benefits farmers, their land and communities.
- **Over 150 Years of Soap-Making History:** Dr. Bronner's began in the U.S. in 1948; founder Emanuel Bronner's German-Jewish family began making soap in 1858. Gero worked closely with Dr. Bronner's executive leadership to investigate the history of the Bronner family's soapmaking legacy in Germany, and establish sister company Dr. Bronner's Germany in 2011, which now distributes the company's products throughout Europe.

A bottle of Dr. Bronner's Pure-Castile Soap is sold in the U.S. every 2.2 seconds.



Dr. Bronner's is the top-selling soap in the U.S. natural marketplace. Synthetic preservatives? Harsh detergents? None! Effective, ecological, vegan and cruelty-free. Made with organic oils, Dr. Bronner's is the very best soap for body, home and Earth. Clean body-mind-soul-spirit instantly uniting One! For we're All-One or None! All-One!!

DR. BRONNER'S MISSION STATEMENT

Dr. Bronner's is a family business committed to honoring the vision of our founder Dr. E.H. Bronner by making socially and environmentally responsible products of the highest quality, and by dedicating our profits to helping make a better world. "All-One!"

RECENT MEDIA COVERAGE

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To arrange an interview with Gero Leson, please contact:

Ryan Fletcher
202-641-0277
publicaffairs@drbronner.com

For more information, visit:
www.drbronner.com



DR. BRONNER'S
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