

Ecofiltro



“Ecofiltro manufactures low-cost water filters that can be assembled using local materials and labor.”

COMPANY INFORMATION

★ Headquarters

Guatemala

Countries of operation

Guatemala

Year founded

2009

Annual revenue

~US\$744,000

Employees

26-100

Sector

Water

COMPANY HISTORY

The Ecofiltro was first invented in 1981 but was not widely manufactured for many years. Ecofiltro began as a foundation that relied solely on grants and donations to function. But Ecofiltro's NGO partners purchased filters erratically, and Ecofiltro struggled to survive until it became an inclusive business. In 2007, after a World Vision program helped kick start distribution, the brand took off. In 2011, Ecofiltro built a new factory to expand its annual production capacity from 25,000 filters per year to 120,000.

WHO THEY ARE

The Ecofiltro is a safe, inexpensive, and ecologically friendly clay filter used to purify contaminated drinking water that can be assembled using local materials and labor.

The filter is composed of three materials: clay, sawdust, and colloidal silver, and it can easily be produced in any developing country. The filter's pores are large enough to allow water through but small enough to trap bacteria, parasitic cysts, and fecal residues. The filter also eliminates smell and color and keeps water refreshingly cool. It is highly portable, and since it is manufactured from local materials, it is also inexpensive.

HOW THEY REACH THE BOP

Most Ecofiltro customers had no access to clean water before Ecofiltro arrived in their homes. Since they survive through their own farming or seasonal work at local coffee and sugar plantations, getting intestinal infections from contaminated water posed a serious risk to their livelihoods.

ECOFILTRO'S IMPACT

When a family begins using an Ecofiltro in their home, they use less firewood (since they no longer have to boil water) and spend less on medicines (to treat intestinal infections from contaminated water). Since children are drinking clean water, they get sick less often and spend more time in school—and parents spend more time at work.

Ecofiltro's value proposition for urban customers is also clear. The average urban family in Guatemala spends more than \$200 a year on bottled water. Ecofiltro's product provides abundant filtered water for only \$35. Ecofiltro sells upscale filters to urban consumers at a profit (pictured), which allows them to sell filters in rural communities at a subsidized rate, as well as donating filters to schools and hospitals.

Ecofiltro also creates employment opportunities directly, running a factory where it employs 33 people from rural communities, providing housing and food, teaching employees to read and write, and paying them over three times what they were making before. Ecofiltro also employs women who had no income prior to Ecofiltro, training them as saleswomen and sending them out with catalogues to go door-to-door and sell and distribute Ecofiltros to customers living at the base of the pyramid.

LINKS AND RESOURCES

Official website	http://www.ecofiltro.org/ (Spanish) http://www.ecofiltro.org/en (English and Spanish)
Product video	http://www.ecofiltro.org/documental-institucional-0 (Spanish)
Testimonials	http://www.ecofiltro.org/testimonios-0 (Spanish)

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GEOGRAPHY/EXPANSION

In the past three years, Ecofiltro has sold over 53,000 filters benefitting more than 300,000 people. Ecofiltro sales increased by 50 percent last year, and its profitability more than tripled over the prior year. Its client base now includes 10 NGOs and 326,000 BOP customers reached through eight distributors and 73 door-to-door saleswomen. Whereas an earlier facility produced only 20,000 filters a year, a newly opened plant has the capacity to produce 120,000 filters a year.

Ecofiltro sold US\$750,000 in filters in 2011 and expects to sell US\$2.5 million in 2012.

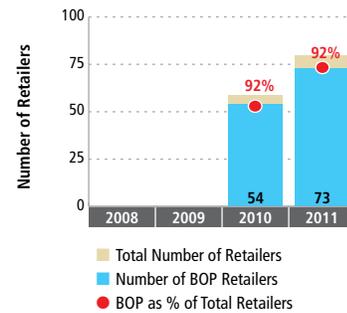
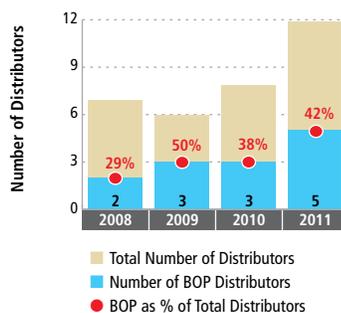
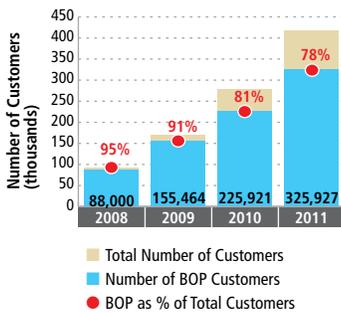


“ The Ecofiltro model can be replicated in any developing country. ”



KEY DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

Ecofiltro has 326,000 BOP customers reached through 73 door-to-door saleswomen.



“ Ecofiltro has recently expanded its production capacity to catch up to the high demand for its filters. ”