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Xylem Inc.

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Introduction

Water is essential to life, the foundation of prosperous societies and thriving ecosystems. Yet today, billions around the world face water scarcity, pollution, and the threats of aging infrastructure. For over a decade, Xylem Inc. has stood at the crossroads of technology, sustainability, and society—pioneering new ways to safeguard one of humanity’s most precious resources. As one of America’s premier S&P 500 companies and the world’s largest pure-play water technology provider, Xylem’s journey is a compelling narrative of ingenuity, resolve, and transformation.

This book traces Xylem’s origins to its bold spin-off from ITT Corporation in 2011—a strategic move that gave rise to a company singularly focused on water. Over the years, Xylem’s approach has been defined by rapid growth, deliberate acquisition, and a relentless pursuit of innovation. From early building blocks in pumps and analytics to acquiring cutting-edge companies that propelled its digital and international expansion, Xylem has consistently anticipated the changing needs of a complex, evolving industry.

At the heart of Xylem’s story is not just business growth, but a deep-rooted mission: to solve water. This mission has guided strategic decisions, catalyzed investments in research and development, and fueled the company’s leadership in sustainability. Through a broad range of solutions—from submersible pumps and smart meters to integrated software platforms—Xylem empowers public utilities, industries, businesses, and communities to manage water efficiently and resiliently.

But the true impact of Xylem Inc. extends beyond financial performance and technological innovation. The company’s culture, diversity, and commitment to employee empowerment have fostered a dynamic, inclusive workplace, while its Watermark program and ambitious sustainability targets demonstrate a profound sense of social responsibility. Xylem’s efforts have delivered millions of people access to clean water and sanitation, cementing its reputation as a force for good in the world.

As we enter an age where the global water crisis grows ever more urgent—fueled by climate change, urbanization, and shifting population patterns—the stakes have never been higher. Xylem’s journey is instructive not only for industry leaders and policymakers but for anyone invested in the future of our planet. With ongoing investments in advanced technologies and a vision of universal water security, Xylem is shaping the landscape of tomorrow.

The chapters ahead will chronicle the remarkable history of Xylem Inc., providing a

rich account of its business evolution, strategic decisions, and enduring impact. Through this lens, we will explore how one American company came to define the cutting edge of water technology—and how its story offers hope for a more sustainable world.

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CHAPTER ONE: The Origins: ITT Corporation and the Birth of Xylem

Before Xylem Inc. emerged as a standalone leader in water technology, its roots were firmly embedded within the sprawling conglomerate known as ITT Corporation. For decades, ITT was a diversified American industrial giant, involved in everything from defense and aerospace to fluid technology. Within this multifaceted organization, the water-related businesses quietly but steadily developed, laying the groundwork for what would eventually become an independent entity focused solely on the world's most vital resource.

ITT's engagement with water technology was not a fleeting venture; it boasted over a century of experience in the water and wastewater environment. This extensive history included developing pioneering innovations like the first electric submersible pump. Through the years, ITT's water businesses grew to encompass a wide array of solutions, from the transport and treatment of water and wastewater to advanced aeration, filtration, ozone, and UV treatment systems. This deep expertise meant that when the idea of a spin-off eventually materialized, Xylem would not be starting from scratch but rather inheriting a rich legacy of innovation and market presence.

The water segment of ITT Corporation was a robust collection of brands, each a leader in its respective niche. Brands such as Flygt, known for its submersible pumps for contaminated liquids; Leopold, specializing in filtration; Sanitaire, recognized for its diffused aeration systems; and Wedeco, a pioneer in UV disinfection and ozone oxidation technologies, all operated under the ITT umbrella. These brands, developed through significant investment in research and development, provided comprehensive solutions across various sectors, including public utilities, construction, industry, and mining. They formed the backbone of ITT's water and wastewater offerings, serving as a testament to the company's long-standing commitment to the industry.

Beyond organic growth and internal development, ITT Corporation also strategically expanded its water-related portfolio through a series of acquisitions prior to the spin-off. These earlier moves demonstrated a clear intent to broaden capabilities and strengthen its market position in water technology. For instance, in 2002, ITT Industries acquired the Pure Water Division of Waterlink, Inc. This acquisition brought in Water Equipment Technologies, a unit specializing in designing and building water purification systems for residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal markets. The Pure Water Division also included WETTEC, which provided sales and service for deionization tanks.

Another significant acquisition in the pre-Xylem era was OI Corporation. ITT Corporation acquired OI Corporation for approximately \$29 million. Based in College Station, Texas, OI Corporation was a leading provider of innovative instrumentation for laboratory and environmental testing. Their expertise lay in total organic carbon (TOC) analyzers and gas-chromatography related instrumentation, as well as consumables and services. This acquisition was particularly important as it enhanced ITT's burgeoning Analytics business, a segment that would later become a core part of Xylem's offerings. The Analytics business itself had been formed earlier with the acquisition of Nova Analytics.

These strategic additions were more than just assets; they represented the accumulation of specialized knowledge, patented technologies, and established customer relationships that would prove invaluable to the future Xylem. The focus on integrating these diverse water-related businesses under one roof within ITT fostered a synergistic environment. It allowed for the sharing of expertise and the development of more holistic solutions to complex water challenges. This period of consolidation and growth within ITT's water segment ensured that when the decision to create a separate entity was made, it would be a formidable player in the global water technology market from day one.

The rationale behind housing these distinct water businesses within a larger industrial conglomerate like ITT was, for many years, a sound business strategy. It allowed these specialized units to benefit from ITT's financial stability, global infrastructure, and corporate services. However, as the global water challenges became more pronounced and the water technology market evolved, the strategic advantages of being part of a diverse conglomerate began to shift. The distinct needs and opportunities within the water sector increasingly suggested that a dedicated, focused entity could achieve greater agility and market penetration.

The impending separation from ITT Corporation was not merely a cosmetic change but a strategic pivot designed to unlock the full potential of its water-related assets. It was recognized that a company solely dedicated to water issues could better respond to the growing global demand for innovative water solutions, address aging infrastructure, and navigate increasingly stringent environmental regulations. This strategic re-evaluation within ITT set the stage for one of the most significant transformations in the water technology industry in recent memory.

Thus, the story of Xylem begins not in a vacuum, but within the deep historical currents of ITT Corporation. It was here that the foundational technologies, key brands, and initial strategic acquisitions were nurtured, evolving over a century of continuous development. The diverse portfolio that Xylem would inherit—from pumps and filtration systems to advanced analytics and disinfection technologies—was a testament to ITT's long-standing commitment and foresight in the water domain. This

rich inheritance would provide Xylem with an unparalleled springboard for its future endeavors as an independent global leader in water technology.

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