GROZ-BECKERT®

Press Release

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Groz-Beckert's answer to the challenges of the digital age: Smart INH

Lean production, Industry 4.0 and digitalization entered the clothing industry and the clothing production process a long time ago. With the INH (Ideal Needle Handling) quality management, Groz-Beckert has been offering a way of improving the complex handling of sewing machine needles in the production process since 2016 – with Smart INH, Groz-Beckert has taken another important step towards digitalization.

As early as the development stage of the INH quality management, Groz-Beckert identified its ‘smart’ potential. In addition to the basic version, where the documentation of the needle breakages takes place physically, the so-called “Smart INH was therefore created for digital documentation of needle breakages and all needle changes. Different evaluations can also be carried out and data managed using Smart INH.

The INH process is based on the so-called needle output trolley. It prevents unnecessary paths and wait times during needle changes in the factories. Using the needle return box also prevents errors. The process is simplified further with the needle storage sheet, which creates an all-round more efficient process for the needle change – whether following a needle breakage or during the normal replacement process.

In the smart version, the trolley is expanded to include a tablet, which carries out the digitalization of the documentation. The patented Smart INH consists of two software components here: the mobile app INH@site and the management program INH@office.

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Using the INH@site app, the relevant needle sections are photographed in the event of needle breakage or a needle change. Relevant data like the place and time of the needle breakage or the production order are assigned to the photographs directly. The resulting image data set created in this way is saved digitally.

The management program INH@office is used for entering and maintaining all relevant data, like production orders, sewing lines with machinery and personnel. The saved image data sets can be called up at any time via INH@office. Status messages and different statistical evaluation options are also available.

The possible connection of the brand owner and customer to INH@office enables an audit to be carried out at any time and checks to determine whether the factories are fulfilling their duty of documentation. INH not only improves the process, but also offers additional benefits such as a secure evidence base and improved disposal options for needles.

There are a wide range of expansion options for the future: INH@site provides the basis for connecting the customer warehouse management system, for example, which can trigger an automated order process and also avoid gray inventories in production. The collection and evaluation of data on the needle changes provides valuable experience that can be useful in production to increase the productivity and improve the quality. An additional networking among the customer factories also enables experiences to be exchanged. Smart INH therefore has the potential to become a comprehensive tool in the future, which collects and evaluates important information for the customer.

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About Groz-Beckert

Groz-Beckert is the world's leading provider of industrial machine needles, precision parts and fine tools as well as systems and services for the production and joining of textile fabrics. The products and services support the fields of knitting, weaving, felting, tufting, carding and sewing. The family-owned company, founded in 1852, employed more than 8,800 people and generated a turnover of around €740 Mio. in 2017. Groz-Beckert operates with agencies, production and distribution subsidiaries in more than 150 countries around the world.