VDMA's Role in Transforming the Textile Industry at ITMA 2023

Caption: f.l.t.r. Nicolai Strauch, Dr. Harald Weber, Wolfgang Schöffl, Dr. Janpeter Horn, Dr. Uwe Rondé, Verena Thies, André Wissenberg.

Image source: VDMA

At ITMA 2023, the world-renowned Milan-based trade fair for textile machinery, the impressive presence of member companies from the German Engineering Federation (VDMA) stood out. These 110 companies, part of a large contingent of 200 German exhibitors, represented an array of machinery sectors, including spinning, nonwovens, weaving, knitting, warp knitting, braiding, and finishing.

The VDMA-hosted press conference at ITMA, titled "Transforming the World of Textiles: efficient – digital – circular", saw the unveiling of groundbreaking solutions by five esteemed member companies. These solutions are set to redefine the textile industry landscape in terms of sustainability, circular economy, digitalisation, efficiency enhancement, and resource saving.

André Wissenberg, representative of VDMA Textile Machinery and VP of Oerlikon Polymer Processing Solutions Division, presented the EvoSteam process, a revolutionary procedure that could potentially save up to 10 million litres of water annually. Wissenberg emphasized Oerlikon's digital Ecosystems, which offer real-time alerts, condition monitoring, machine learning, and predictive maintenance, bringing digital efficiency to all plant operations.

Dr. Uwe Rondé, a VDMA Textile Machinery board member and CEO of Saurer Group, stressed Saurer's commitment to sustainable fashion through their spinning and twisting solutions for yarns derived from recycled or regenerated fibres. Dr. Rondé spoke of Saurer's portfolio, optimised to spin and twist recycled or regenerated yarns, fulfilling the early-anticipated need for processing short fibres.

Wolfgang Schöffl, of Lindauer Dornier, discussed the industry's commitment to tackling the textile sector's challenges through innovative machinery, pushing the boundaries of productivity, quality, and innovation, while safeguarding the environment and human life.

Dr. Janpeter Horn, chairman of the VDMA Textile Machinery Association and managing director of August Herzog Maschinenfabrik, explained how textile machinery facilitates CO2-neutral energy production. He pointed out that Herzog's leading position in braiding, winding, and rewinding technology aids in developing braided products vital for a circular, CO2-free economy, such as ultra-durable ropes for wind energy and deep-sea exploration.

Verena Thies, of the company Thies, focused on addressing circularity in the dyeing process. Thies's Signature Series introduces an advanced after-treatment process, enabling a decrease in dyestuff consumption by up to 20% and minimizing water usage by 52%.

The press conference also saw Dr. Harald Weber, managing director of VDMA Textile Machinery, showcase a web-based demonstrator for the digital networking of machines using the OPC UA standard. This tool will aid in machine status monitoring, order management, and process information exchange.

The VDMA's commitment to nurturing the industry's future was evident in their financial support of €95,000 for junior engineers to experience high-tech live in Milan. This investment, Dr. Weber noted, is crucial for the development of marketable technologies for the textile industry, emphasizing the importance of fostering highly-qualified engineers.