

Indian JV Brings KARL MAYER Closer To The Customer



R-L: Peter Obrist, Haresh Panchal, Roland Kohn, Navin Agrawal, V.M. Shah

These are interesting times for KARL MAYER, A.T.E. Enterprises, & Rabatex Industries. The three companies have inked a technology joint venture, to manufacture KARL MAYER warp preparation machines in India. On the sidelines of ITMA 2019, we spoke with **Roland Kohn**, President Business Unit Warp Preparation, **Peter Obrist**, Senior Sales Manager, Business Unit Warp Preparation, **Navin Agrawal**, VP, A.T.E. Enterprises, **Haresh Panchal**, Managing Director, Rabatex Industries, **V.M. Shah**, VP, Technical, Rabatex Industries, about their vision for the joint venture.

How important is the Indian market for KARL MAYER?

Peter: India is a market that at least contributes 15-20% of our business revenue, in the best of years even up to 30% of the revenue comes from India. So, this is a very important market. And it will continue to be the most important market for the next 5-10 years.

The Indian textile industry is always ready to adopt new technologies. We introduced our latest technology sizing machines four years ago, & India is the biggest market for this machine today.

Navin: Today, the Indian customer wants the best technology, which we can offer.

The B segment customers too have begun studying the cost performance of technologies. We are the number one selling brand for warp preparation machines in India. We have 1000 machines installed in the country, and 250 customers, and the numbers are growing everyday.

The Indian domestic market is growing exponentially, as are exports, so

demand for KARL MAYER machines will grow in the years to come. KARL MAYER has always had a strong presence in the corporate sector.

Today, the decentralised weaving sector also needs our machines. Earlier 60-80% of our revenue in India was from corporates, today, it has reversed, and 60-70% revenues are from markets like Ichalkaranji, Erode, Salem, Palakkad, Madurai, etc. The first machine sold by Peter 28 years ago is still running with the same high level of efficiency. So that's a testimony to our quality.

Shah: Another reason for our optimism is the increasing use of varied fibres, other than cotton and synthetics, by Indian fabric manufacturers. This requires new technologies, and our latest technologies are well equipped to handle all kinds of fibres. Moreover, Indian weavers are investing in the latest technologies, and this requires high-end warp preparation technology.

What is the goal of this JV? And its status?

Roland: I agree that the Indian market will grow fast in the next years, driven by its domestic market demand. KARL MAYER believes in being close to its customers, which is why we have manufacturing facilities in Japan, USA, China. We have a long term relationship with A.T.E.

We were in discussions with Rabatex, and we developed a mutual understanding that we can do something together. And that's how we three partners decided to start Indian production of warp preparation machines.

Haresh: In fact, our discussions had started during the last ITMA in 2015 for a joint venture to service the Indian and Asian market. Rabatex has 58 years of production experience. We have good infrastructure, and a world class set-up for manufacturing machines in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. We've already assembled three out of five KARL MAYER machines at our facility. Two have been delivered to our customer, and we are monitoring performance parameters.

Navin: Realising the growing impor-

tance of the Indian market, KARL MAYER, A.T.E. and Rabatex decided on this joint venture. We felt that it would be viable to manufacture KARL MAYER's warp preparation machines in India, thus enabling us to offer the best technology, competitively. We want to make KARL MAYER machines, with KARL MAYER design & technology in India. We believe that Rabatex can produce for us so we are confident that what we are offering in the market as part of the JV is the global KARL MAYER quality. So this is a technology tie-up with KARL MAYER having the majority shareholding.

How will you ensure that this JV works smoothly for all partners?

Navin: For A.T.E., I can say that we have had a long, successful experience in this field. We were instrumental in bringing Truetzschler in India long back, and that has proven to be a very successful joint venture between a German and an Indian company. Today, Truetzschler has a state-of-the-art set-up with A.T.E. in India. A partnership can grow when all partners are at the same wavelength, working towards the bigger goal. For short term goals, no partnership can work. In this case, our goals and aims are quite high for the long run, and we are hopeful that we three together can reach those goals. This is just the beginning.

Peter: We are all from the same field of textile technology, and I think that will certainly help. Also, we were able to incorporate our know-how, that we gained during an earlier JV with an Indian manufacturer in 1991. The experiences and challenges from back then are a good base to lead the new JV to success.

Haresh: The three partners in this JV have common interests and goals.

What would be your sales strategy, both KARL MAYER and Rabatex have their own sales network globally?

Haresh: Earlier, the target was mainly the A segment customer. Now we are targeting the B and even the C segments of the market. So we have new products for a new clientele in India and globally. The details have to be ironed out. And A.T.E. will be the sales agent for the JV products. The detailed strategy will be defined by all of us by studying the market. ■

High-End Embroidery Machines...

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'Saurer's strength is in its unity' How big is the global embroidery market and what is Saurer's share?

The global market for all embroidery machines is around US\$ 1 billion. Out of

working at Saurer. To give an example, it would have cost us US\$ 20-30 million to develop a production management platform on our own. However, another business unit had been working on such a system, called Senses, and within three months, we had it connected to

bly, capitalising on obvious logistical advantages. We have also begun delivering services from India to certain countries. Our Indian crew did installations in Egypt, Indonesia and Thailand. Of course, our Indian team serves the Bangladesh and Sri Lankan markets too. We believe in the global sharing of services, and will equip our team in India with more capabilities.

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