

Case study: Birla Cellulose talks trends in the global textile market

At Yarn Expo Spring 2019, Messe Frankfurt visited the ever-busy Birla Pavilion to chat with Mr Manohar Samuel, Senior President of Marketing & Business Development at Grasim Industries Ltd (of the Aditya Birla Group), about shifting trends that open up new collaborative opportunities for the yarn and fibre market.



The Birla Pavilion at Yarn Expo Spring 2019

Messe Frankfurt: Thank you for taking some time to meet with us, Mr Samuel! To begin, please could you tell us more about current industry trends?

Mr Manohar Samuel: The global textile market is going through an exciting time! We find that there are four key trends, which are evolving very quickly. First of all, there's sustainability, and in turn traceability, digitalisation and innovation. In recent years, we've seen a quantum jump for sustainability from brands across the world. What's shifted is the traceability of products. Our role now, as a fibre manufacturer, is to establish a common definition of sustainability. We understand our brands' requirements and translate that on the ground – for example, with the Birla LivaEco brand, as well as eco-friendly Birla Spunshades and Birla Excel.

Circularity in the textile supply chain still needs to be worked on, but interestingly, we now see all stages of the supply chain working together to be more sustainable. A spinner cannot be sustainable by themselves. We see it as B2B2C. All of us face the common consumer, because the entire textile supply chain is now visible to the consumer. It's through meaningful collaboration that we can prove to consumers that a product is fully sustainable, from start to finish.

MF: And how do you see digitalisation impacting the yarn and fibre industry?

MS: The entire industry is going through a metamorphosis. Firstly, there's e-commerce – yes, it's known for fast fashion, but the advantage is that each click of the smartphone creates data, which provides a lot of market insight. By aligning with e-commerce brands, we can better understand consumer demand and adjust production accordingly. There's enough information for us all to innovate and find sustainable solutions. The market is full of innovation now, everyone is focusing on innovation! I've been at this fair for eight years, and I feel this trend has shifted a lot in China. Everybody at Yarn Expo is exhibiting something interesting now.



Birla Cellulose's innovative fibres from nature

MF: Last year, Birla Cellulose described Yarn Expo as a platform where yarn and fibre companies can be visible to the wider textile industry. Are you still experiencing this?

MS: This sourcing trend is definitely growing, for two important reasons. The first being sustainability – creating an environmentally-friendly product begins with fibre, and brands are increasingly recognising this. The second reason is innovation – in order to create product differentiation, to be more rooted in industry trends, brands are required to collaborate with companies further up the supply chain. For example,

at Birla Cellulose we come up with our own innovations, and we even work with trend forecasters around the world, like WGSN. This can be very useful for brands.

MF: How do you capture these opportunities with fashion brands?

MS: We access the market through different levels of engagement. We work with the headquarters of globally acclaimed big brands, and we work with buying houses and brand offices. To find these opportunities, we always participate in Yarn Expo. It's important to be here, because it provides a good platform to meet everybody in one place over just three days. We've also met more brand offices, coming from different stages of the supply chain, at this fair. And to work with smaller companies, we use technology as a major tool. We have started a website called [LAPF Connect](#) to make networking easier.

MF: It's great to hear that the Birla Pavilion continues to find exciting opportunities at this platform. As one of Yarn Expo's most prominent pavilion leaders, what do you think are the strongest benefits of exhibiting here?

MS: The strongest pillars of Yarn Expo are the opportunities to connect with customers, and the opportunities to see what is new in innovation. Birla Cellulose has a lot of customers here at Yarn Expo – not only spinners, but from the entire supply chain. The concurrent events, like Intertextile, also support this. We meet brands from Europe, the US, Hong Kong and more here – and our existing customers all come here to see what is new. We use Yarn Expo as a marketing platform to tell our own innovative story. We are happy to see that our peers in this hall also have yarn and fibre innovations, which are more relatable to our own brand. The fair has grown a lot, it's huge – we would like to bring a larger team next time!

MF: Thank you Mr Samuel, and enjoy the rest of the fair!

Yarn Expo overview

Yarn Expo Spring 2019 was held concurrently with Intertextile Shanghai Apparel Fabrics – Spring Edition, Intertextile Shanghai Home Textiles – Spring Edition, PH Value and the China International Fashion Fair (CHIC) from 12 – 14 March 2019, and featured 468 exhibitors from 12 countries & regions and 28,302 trade buyers from 87 countries & regions. The fair is organised by Messe Frankfurt (HK) Ltd and the Sub-Council of Textile Industry, CCPIT. The next edition of Yarn Expo Autumn will take place from 25 – 27 September 2019, once again at the National Exhibition and Convention Center (Shanghai).