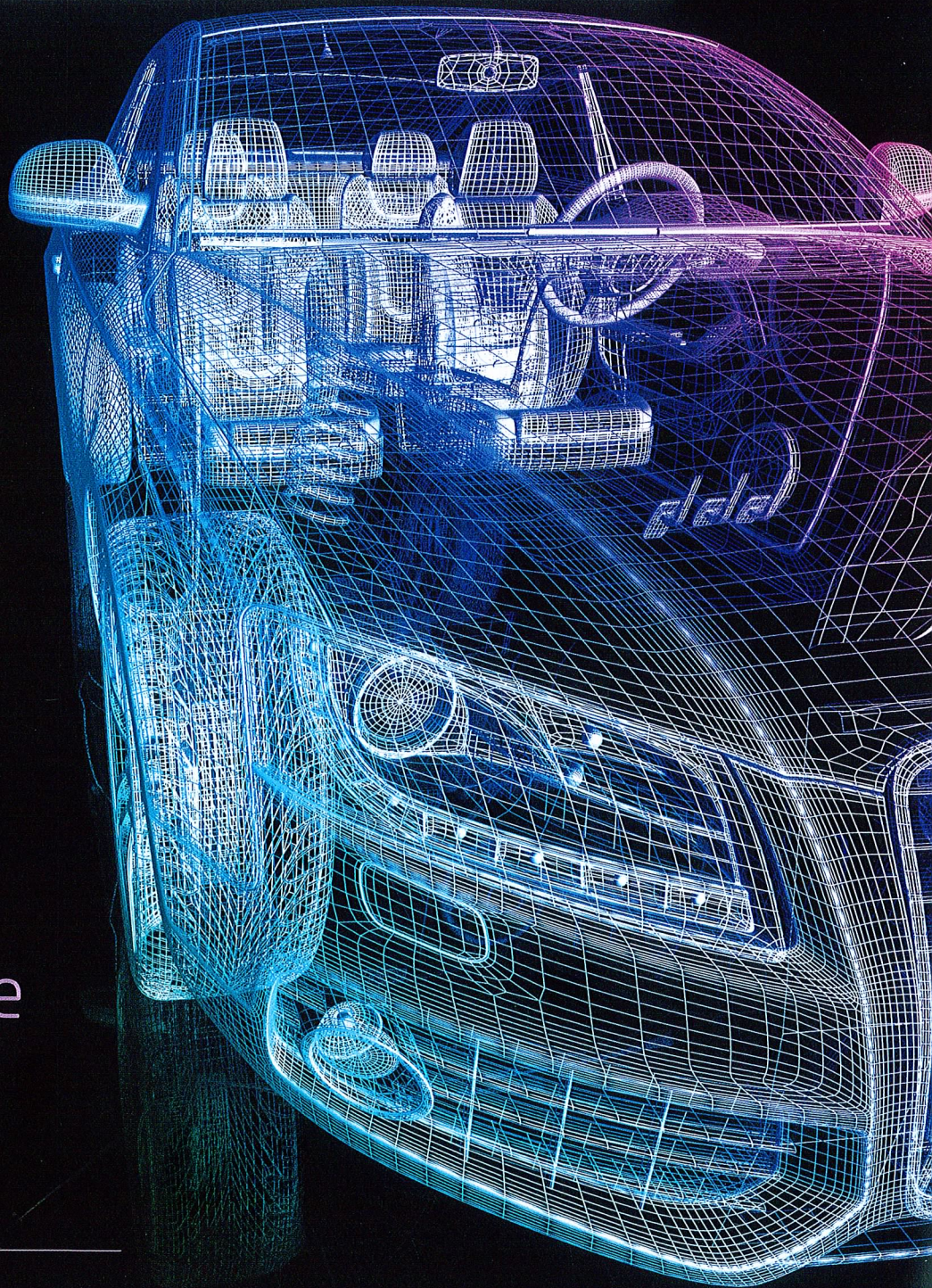


SNW

August / September 2016

SUSTAINABLE NONWOVENS



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Ten questions for...

Stefano Gallucci

CEO, Santex Rimar Group.

Sustainable Nonwovens: You recently exhibited at ITM in Turkey. How successful was the show for you? Which technologies were the most popular with attendees?

SG: The participation was quite satisfactory and we had the chance to meet new customers from Turkey and close-by countries. We participated with two different booths, one for the group and one for SMIT (weaving machine manufacturer acquired by the Santex Rimar Group) which lured a lot of enthusiastic visitors happy to see a SMIT loom running. At the group's booth we presented a Decofast 3.5 under the Sperotto Rimar brand, an evolution of our concept of decatising which implements our new sustainability effort of adding value to textiles while reducing the carbon footprint of the finishing industry.

SNW: In relation, how large is the Turkish market for Santex in comparison to other locations?

SG: Turkey is one of our largest markets, considering that SMIT alone has almost 4,000 looms installed in the country. Some of our most cutting edge customers are based in Turkey, it is a very good benchmark for us. Turkey demands high standards and cost control, high productivity and quality, and we are very good at this. Santex Rimar and its brands in weaving, textile finishing and technical textiles are putting a lot of effort into this high end market.

SNW: In which markets are you expecting the most growth in the next 12 months?

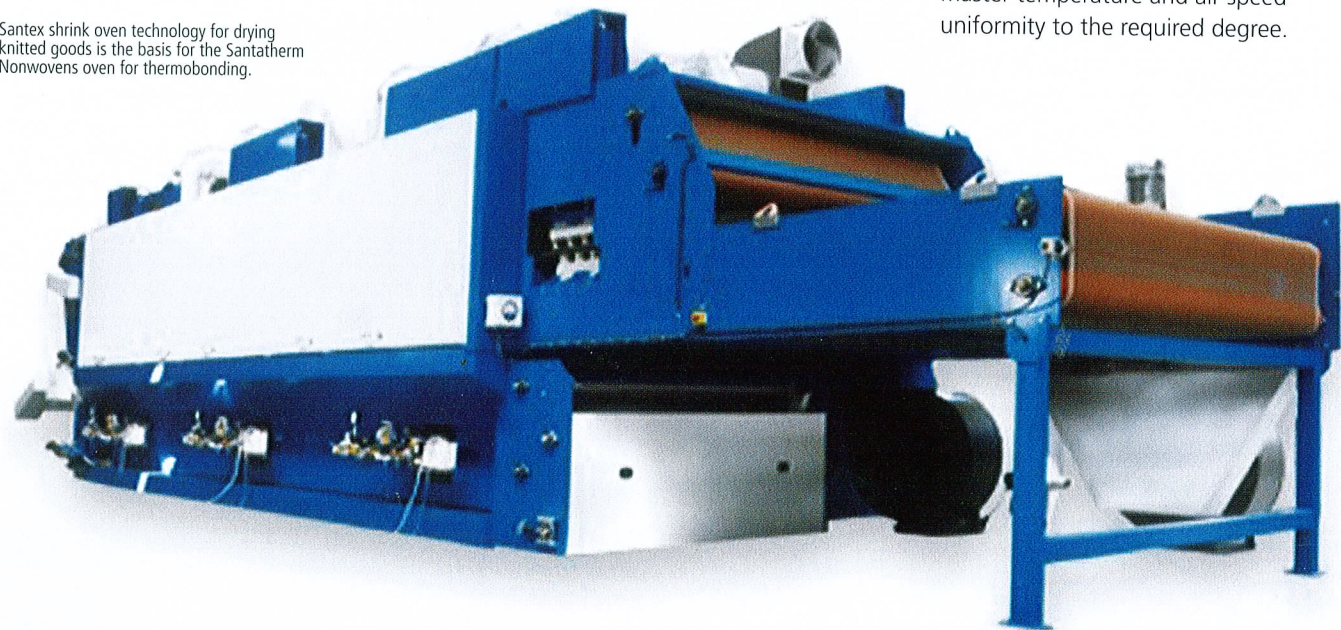
SG: We see good opportunities in the Middle East. Iran has the know-how and

now the opportunity to adopt the latest technologies and solutions to be competitive on international markets. We have visited several Iranian customers and we are already developing custom technological and financial solutions to meet their needs.

SNW: What distinguishes your Santatherm thermobonding oven technology from the competition?

SG: Our shrink oven technology for drying knitted goods is the basis for the Santatherm Nonwovens oven for thermobonding. This process is adapted for the large variety of fibres for hygiene, home textiles and technical applications. Santex can claim technological expertise in all thermobonding processes with all fibre types, low or high speed, high density or utmost loft. With our process dependent nozzle systems, we can master temperature and air speed uniformity to the required degree.

Santex shrink oven technology for drying knitted goods is the basis for the Santatherm Nonwovens oven for thermobonding.



SNW: What general trends do you note in the nonwovens industry?

SG: The nonwovens industry worldwide is growing and in certain regions of the world there is still a two-digit growth. In its portfolio Santex has machinery for hygiene markets driven by high birth rates, as well as by an ageing population. Our machines for the hygiene industry are successfully used to manufacture nonwovens for baby diapers, adult incontinence and feminine hygiene products. Furthermore, our Santatherm thermobonding oven has been a reliable machine for manufacturing high loft nonwovens for automotive, furniture, mattresses and bedding as well as the building insulation industry.

SNW: How key is global customer reach for Santex, in comparison to domestic partners?

SG: We have customers who have been using the same machine from Santex Rimar Group for more than 25 years and eventually change it only for another Santex Rimar. This is what we call quality. Any entrepreneur making a project in textiles, technical textiles or new applications calls Santex Rimar. Our solutions perform consistently. We help our customers achieve their goal: our success is their success. We do this with a full vision on our customers' business, from looms to finishing or impregnation or coating.

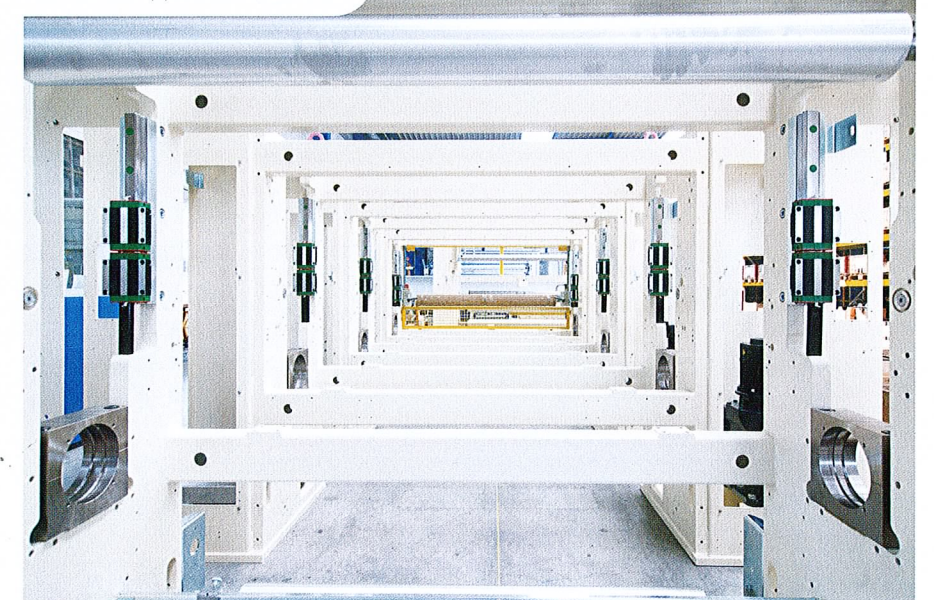
SNW: How important is the development of cutting-edge new innovations, versus amendments and improvements to existing technology for Santex?

SG: The Santex Rimar Group stands in general for customised solutions and is open to develop new processes and machines together with customers. A competent R&D team and the capability to use our technology centre enables us to create continuously innovative solutions. Every year we invest 4 per cent of our turnover in R&D activities with the goal of implementing Internet of Things technologies to have more intelligent machines.

SNW: What was the reasoning behind your new nonwovens division?

SG: The history of the Santex Rimar Group began more than 100 years ago. This enabled us to build up an excellent experience and know-how over many decades. The group stands for innovation, quality and reliability and the synergy between our group members allows us to choose the best possible solution for our customers. Customisation is our strength. Santex Nonwovens will now be the key to further develop the technology as well as make these proven machines available to a wider market. In the past these machines were marketed under the Cavitec brand.

Santex Rimar Group plant in Tobel, Switzerland.



Now we are rebranding them as Santex Nonwovens to clearly distinguish the portfolio from Cavitec's business of coating and laminating of textile and technical textile fabrics.

SNW: What are some of the key challenges for Santex in terms of machinery developments? How are these impacting the company's role in the sector?

SG: Nowadays the real challenge is to keep high quality level standards at reasonable costs and acceptable sales price: our decision to keep intensifying R&D activities will bring additional future benefits for customers.

The recent acquisition of SMIT will aid our vision of helping our customers to reach the highest quality and better performances with solutions from weaving to coating and laminating.

SNW: In terms of consumer trends, does the market appear to be shifting from the desire for more cost-effective to demanding the most up-to-date technology and machinery at a higher price?

SG: Our R&D projects focus on state of the art technology thinking about our customers' needs. Attention on cost effectiveness is always on demand and we are constantly working to keep a good balance between cost effectiveness and updated technologies. **SNW**