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Successful Symposium on Automotive Textiles in India Justifies Long Term Plans during Global Meltdown

In spite of the present global economy dynamics and the financial meltdown impacting the economies worldwide, emerging countries like India are actually thinking long term by way of upgradation of technology bearing in mind a 'do or die' situation . The Indian Automotive Industry (passenger cars) which is amid the top ten in the world with an annual yield of over 2 million units may not be looking so vibrant as of today but certainly has very good future potential for India once the recessionary dust has settled. This was reflected at the symposium on Automotive Textiles that opened to a packed audience and turned out to be a huge success.

The Italian Trade Commission (ICE), the Association of Italian Textile Machinery Manufacturers (ACIMIT) and Business Co-ordination House (BCH) organised a 'Symposium on Automotive Textiles' on January 22, 2009 at Shangri-La Hotel, New Delhi which focused on 'Italian Technology for Automotives- Engineering Innovative Materials'. The symposium was attended by over 130 delegates who comprised of the key players across the automotive textile industry value chain and the traditional textile industry of India. Additionally there were leading OEMs like BMW, Honda, Maruti, TATA present along with Tier I and Tier II suppliers amongst regulatory bodies and researchers. The symposium's core concern was application of contemporary Italian Automotive Textile Technology for Indian automotives. Leading Italian machinery manufacturers proposed their most up-to-date innovations in spinning, weaving, knitting, nonwovens, dyeing and finishing thus covering each manufacturing process. The deliberations proved to be very fruitful in an era when OEMs strive to work hand in hand with their suppliers and their supplier's suppliers to offer innovative and cost competitive products to the consumer.

The symposium was a one day event and had presentations on the technology, potential and status of this emerging and dynamic automotive industry with ample networking sessions in between. To take complete benefit of the symposium, attendees had the opportunity to have business oriented meetings with the Italian companies. These meetings were held after the symposium and continued at BCH on the next day. The symposium also had a section where presenting companies had on display their brochures and product samples to show their respective offerings to the audience.

The organizers were the right mix each excelling in their own field which contributed to the success of the symposium. According to Ms. Cecilia Oliva from the Italian Trade Commission office in Rome, ICE is working aggressively to promote the 'Made in Italy tag' to facilitate in creating an exclusive market for the Italian Automotive Textile Technology in India. On the other hand ACIMIT has taken a lot of initiatives in the recent past which include a market survey conducted by them on the Indian Technical Textile Industry .Last year they organised an Indian delegation to Italy in collaboration with BCH to visit the Italian machinery manufacturers' facilities. BCH is an authoritative and trustworthy access for overseas companies in striking reciprocally beneficial alliances with the budding Indian Technical Textile and Nonwovens Industry by offering customized services.

The program commenced with a welcome to the participants by Ms. Alessandra Marcarino from the Italian Trade Commission, India who opened her speech on a very optimistic note stated, "Leading American, European, Italian, Japanese and Korean automobile companies have either set up their own manufacturing base in India or have tied up with the Indian automotive firms to

roll out new products from the Indian market.” Mr. Mauro Badanelli from ACIMIT then started the symposium with his attention-grabbing presentation, ‘Italian Textile Machinery - Matching Your Needs’. He said, “The offerings of the Italian machinery manufacturers include creativity, quality, reliability along with technology”. During the opening session, Mr. Samir Gupta from BCH spoke about the market perception of Automotive Textiles in India and emphasized on the vital statistics of the industry in order to bring about the entire market potential. According to him, “The technical fabrics used in this industry which include webbings, air bags, tyre cords, seating fabrics, headliners, safety belts, interior trims & carpets, filters, NVH components, etc. form a very crucial component of this industry and the right technology adopted can lead to production of internationally accepted goods. This could add further impetus to this industry which is growing at a CAGR of 11% in the domestic and 19% in the export market.”

Mr. Guido Zanon from SMIT S.p.A then presented the industrial fabric machines offered by SMIT, highlighting technical machines for weaving perfect airbags and fabrics for car upholstery. This was followed by a presentation on novelty knitted and woven products for automotives made with electronic crochet machines, warp knitting machines and weaving needle looms by Mr. Rossano Ugazio from COMEZ S.p.A. Mr. Domenico Craviolo from BONINO CARDING MACHINES S.r.l. spoke about automotive nonwovens made with Bonino’s and HDB’s technology . Another interesting presentation on Innovative nonwoven technologies was made by Mr. Vasco Pagni from CORMATEX S.r.l. who spoke about the revolutionary airlaying systems patented under the name of ‘Lap Form Air’.

“Innovation in Automotive Textiles” was deliberated upon by Mr. Mauro Fassi from LORIS BELLINI S.p.A. whose paper highlighted the special features of Loris Bellini dyeing machines which offer quality, flexibility energy and cost efficiency. Dr. Monica Scioni from OT-LAS S.r.l. spoke on the laser treatment and finishing of technical textiles for automotives. ‘Nipco Technology’ which is an innovative technology for calendaring was presented by Mr. Ettore Guarneri from RAMISCH GUARNERI. Finally the measuring, winding and packing technology for automotive technical fabrics and nonwoven tissue was presented by Mr. Luca Ravasio from PLM IMPIANTI S.r.l.

The general perception was that this kind of a platform was very much required to bring the industry together and discuss the ways to take it to the next level. Adoption of appropriate technology is one of the most important steps required to be taken for this effect. According to the delegates present, the content of the symposium gave them lots of ideas for expansion and diversification. The networking sessions held during tea and lunch breaks as well as after the event that followed up till the next day at the BCH showroom proved to be very fruitful and marked the beginning of many promising business decisions.

For further information

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