

Press Release

Chance for process excellence How digitization is changing the textile industry

Manufacturers and equipment suppliers in the textile industry today are faced with rising production and energy costs, shrinking margins, shorter production times, and higher demands on quality and flexibility. Digitalization and Industry 4.0 are the key to process excellence – and thus the opportunity to save costs and resources, says Thomas Höpfl, sales manager at Mahlo GmbH + Co. KG.

"Through the possibilities of digitalization, manufacturers can strengthen their production, improve their competitiveness and react more quickly to changes," declares Höpfl, who looks back on more than 30 years of experience in the textile industry.

Data is now the most important factor in the production process. They provide manufacturers with everything they need to know about their goods. However, this is only of any use if the data is analyzed and processed in a profound way. To do this, a system of intelligent networking must exist between people, machines, and processes in production. "For our customers, we have developed the cross-platform system mSmart, which facilitates the use of data from Mahlo machines," explains Höpfl.

Utilizing data in real time

Goods that pass through a production line constantly bring information with them in the form of process parameters such as distortion, temperature, yarn density, weight, residual moisture. Suitable measuring systems record these values. Using I 4.0, the systems are able to communicate in real time with other machines that use this info to control the fabric. "Real-time management is the true main actor of digitalization and brings immense benefits," Mahlo's Head of Sales knows. These include more consistent products, better control, less scrap, and less raw material consumption. The direct consequences are lower costs and higher product quality, which in turn increases customer satisfaction.

Through the optimized processes and resulting reduction in unnecessary material consumption, digitalization also creates opportunities to contribute to sustainability from raw materials to finished garments. "This is a point that is becoming increasingly important, especially among end customers."

Transparency in the production process

The best information is of no use if it is lost again. "Logging, storing and evaluating the data using suitable software is absolutely necessary." At Mahlo, data management is handled by the newly developed powerful mLog software. "With this analysis tool, the manufacturer can track throughout the entire production process when something was handled where, in what quality and with what efficiency," Höpfl continues. It is precisely this data that makes the production process transparent by serving as a reference for customers and suppliers alike. "The exact logging of process data is also always an insurance against unjustified lawsuits or devaluations of goods."

Not to be neglected is the time-saving factor. "In the digital age, no one has to wait for printed reports." Managers can access data in real time and on-demand from anywhere in the world.

Maintenance management I 4.0

But seamless networking is not only required within the company's own production, but also externally. "For example, with the service department of the machine supplier. Because if a problem occurs at the



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plant, every minute of downtime costs money." Quick access via remote maintenance saves time and money, since a technician does not have to travel to the site first, but many things can already be solved in remote mode. "In the mLink module, for example, Mahlo combines all tasks related to networking, data exchange and communication with as well as among the machines." In this way, intervention is possible at any time when the customer needs support, he says.

"The age of Industry 4.0 is advancing with great strides," affirms Höpfl. In order not to miss the boat, textile manufacturers must redesign their manufacturing processes in the direction of a digital production system. Even if implementation brings challenges, this is the right path into the future.

Mahlo GmbH + Co. KG

Mahlo GmbH + Co. KG belongs to the worldwide leading manufacturers of measuring, control and automation systems for the textile and finishing industry as well as the coating, film and paper sector. Mahlo is located in Saal on the Danube in lower Bavaria but operates worldwide: Five branch offices in Italy, Belgium, Spain, China and the U.S. serve as support stations for the key markets. Numerous international agencies and service stations offer customer support throughout the whole world.

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