

Mahlo provides solutions for every fabric: S Kehry

Quite recently, Mahlo GmbH + Co KG celebrated its 72nd birthday. The development of the first automatic weft straightener put the company in the position of a global market leader and today, Mahlo employs over 200 people and operates in more than 100 countries. Mahlo is still a family-owned business that emphasises quality,

partnership, trust and respect. Right from the year 1948, when Dr Mahlo developed and produced the first electrical moisture meter for the textile industry, named Textometer RMS till today quality and energy saving are at the heart of its weft straightener. "With more than 25,000 sold units we also claim the technological leadership in all areas related to

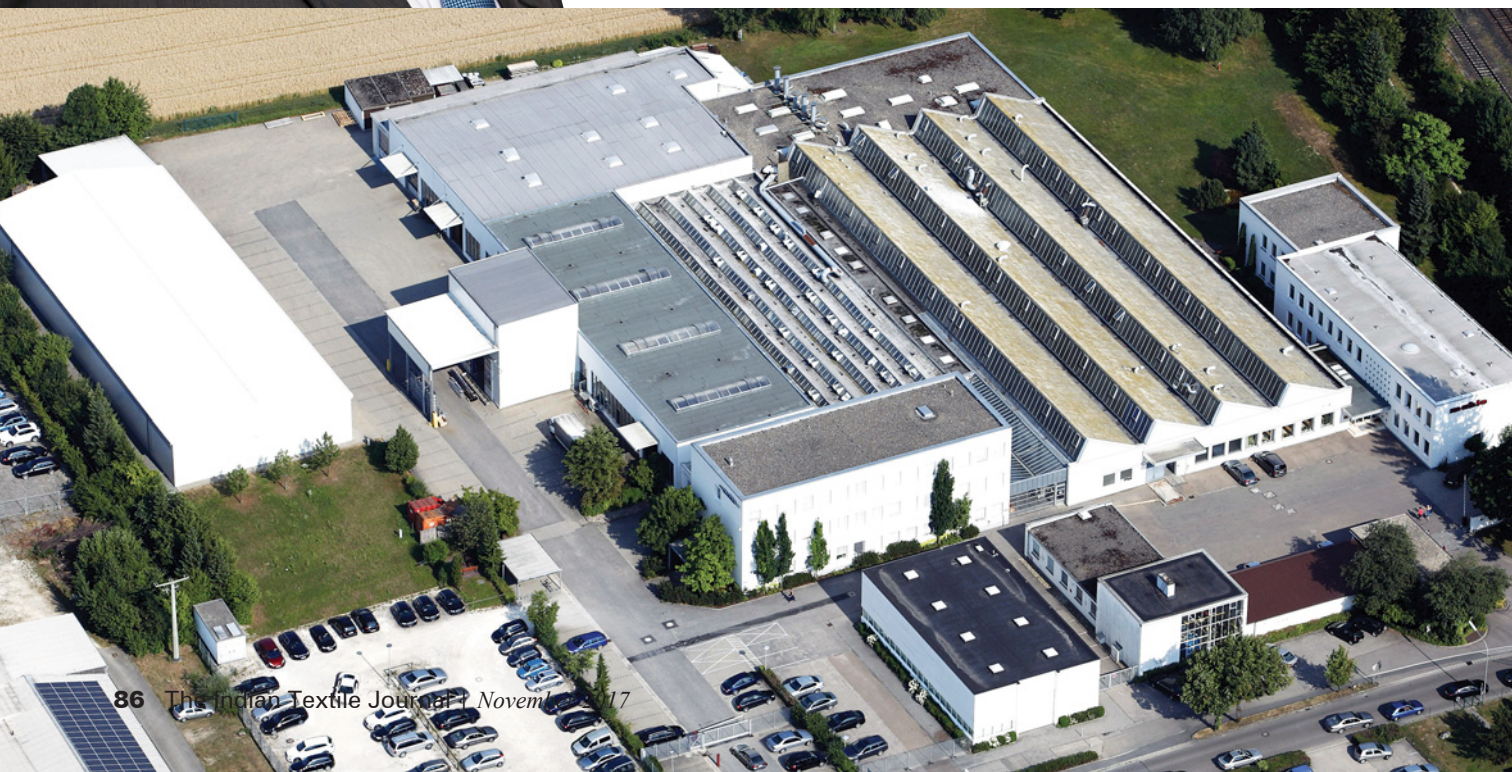
weft straightening," asserts **Stephan Kehry**, Mahlo's **Area Sales Manager for India**, during an exclusive interview with the **Editor of ITJ**, via email.

How do you rate your presence in Indian market since the beginning? Elucidate with some details.

As Mahlo invented the weft straightening, it goes without saying, that we brought the answer to distorted fabric also to India. At the beginning of our sales activities several decades ago, Dr Mahlo and his team spent several months travelling in India, as the infrastructure during this time was not as advanced as today. But ever since, weft straightening and Mahlo are synonymous in India.

Among quality control, monitoring and inspection equipment, which are the ones doing quite well in India? Which have more potential in the present context?

With the well-known weft straightening, Mahlo covers already a great deal of the textile industry. This unit, situated at the very end of the production process, saved millions of Dollars for our customers. It also created some awareness for quality in the textile production chain and the positive impact thereof. Having said so, quality control was the starting point for the monitoring and inspection equipment, which



is now defining the success of Mahlo in a totally different area of operation: our latest innovation is focusing on a series of sensors, which are measuring and controlling width, weight, thickness and other characteristics. They can be used not only for textile but also for the nonwovens, coating and film industry.

How do you think is quality optimisation important for India in the current scenario? What are Mahlo's solutions?

In the past years, we could clearly observe a paradigm shift. Whilst 10 years back, mainly the price of a textile good was defining the success of our customers, today quality has become more and more important. So, instead of the price, it is now the quality and the price which are defining the baseline of sales. The positive impact that Mahlo can provide in this area of conflict is quite simple: By adding quality into their production process, our customers save a huge amount of money simply by avoiding reprocess work or claims. At the same time they strengthen the relationship to their customers, gaining a better reputation and expand their market share.

Weft straightening is another crucial area. What has been the reach of Mahlo in the Indian market?

We are proud to say that Mahlo is by far the market leader in this segment. Not only in India, but worldwide. With more than 25,000 sold units we also claim the technological leadership in all areas related to weft straightening. With opto-electronic detection, camera systems and line scanning, we provide solutions for every fabric. With the increasing diversification in terms of fabric construction this is a very important advantage, as we can always provide the best solution to the customers.

What are your various services for the Indian industry? Your marketing & after-sales services, particularly.

With our agent A.T.E., we have a very strong partner, who is also handling service issues in a very competent and reliable way. This is very beneficial for our customers, because support is available in the same time zone and in the same language, which ensures quick and straight forward communication. We train our service partners frequently in our headquarters in Germany in order to always maintain the same high standard throughout our partners around the globe. For this purpose we have an innovation centre next to our production facility in Germany, where the latest models are displayed for training and customer trials.

This service excellence is one of the strong assets of Mahlo. Our customers know exactly, that they don't only purchase a piece of equipment, when they buy a Mahlo. They enter a partnership for life, providing support and assistance in all aspects of weft straightening. This surely leads to the strongest Marketing tool of all: The word of mouth. Mahlo is very well known for its performance and quality. This is the best advertising you can think of.



How do you look at the future markets in India for your products? Any new strategies?

On the one hand, the market always dictates the actions. In the case of India, we're glad that the trend follows our philosophy of quality-driven success. In many cases, textile producing companies still don't have sufficient process capability, simply because they don't measure their different process steps. But without information, every decision is merely based upon assumptions. With a wide range of process control options, Mahlo can turn these assumptions into facts and consequently helps to save valuable resources like water and electricity. On the other hand, quality is not only an issue for the textile industry. Also in the area of nonwovens or converting, thousands of Dollars can be saved by simply eliminating the safety margin. The continuous production processes offer a lot of savings in this aspect. Our aim is to consult every customer individually and get the best out of his production.

Give us some details about your other markets globally, particularly with other Asian markets.

Whilst western industrial areas have been concentrating more on high-value articles like technical textiles in the past, India is still focusing on commodities. Consequently, our supply of products is much higher to the US or the European market. China is an exception in Asia; it has been one of our most successful markets in the past years. However, we see a strong interest of process control systems in Asia, which is pointing towards higher quality awareness in this region. Particularly Vietnam made a huge progress in this aspect, when a lot of Asian companies invested in Vietnam, hoping for a free-trade-zone. They knew exactly that any investment without an appropriate quality assurance will never pay back- no matter which markets they are delivering. There's clear evidence that this trend will also take over for the rest of Asia- including India.