

What do consumers want from Textiles?

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What do consumers want from Textiles & how does this relate to cotton?

Textiles contribute to almost every part of our daily lives, from the most obvious clothing and interior decorations (drape and carpet) and not so obvious medical, marine and the aerospace industry.

I will be covering the following today

- What consumers want from textiles & some current textile advancements
- What consumers are wanting from cotton
- And then finish off with where BMP cotton fits into this market.

What consumers want from textiles & some current textile advancement's?

Consumers want textiles to be Functional and have a low impact on the environment, "Eco clothing"

Functionality

Functionality built into fibres/fabrics gives the wearer benefits including anti microbial (or anti-odour), high Vis (for safety), UV blockers, soil resistance, soil release, drug release, oil repellent, abrasion resistant, flame retardant and wicking (moving moisture away from the body).

These are used in areas such as

- "Coolmax" well known in sport and uniforms for wicking properties.
- Anti-microbial on clothing to stop odors
- Anti-bacterial on hospital uniforms and sheeting to prevent bacterial growth.

"Eco" fabrics

"Eco" is the current buzzword around textiles.

While availability of organic fibres is limited, and currently is for only a niche market, there is clearly a market demand.

In 2006 "Green is the new Black" referring to Eco-Fashion becoming a new trend. In 2008 "Green is the new Gold" referring to the higher price point of buying organic, sustainable fashion.

Is this a passing fad or is it likely to become a growing trend that will impact all levels of the Fashion and Textile industries

Companies are using tracking of products to reassure their customer

- Eco/organic accreditation
- Country of origin
- Authenticity of brand
- Corporate governance policies
- Clothing range that are "green accredited"

Some current advancements of Functionality

Some of the technologies to achieve these outcomes are:

- Nano technology - Nanotechnology refers to the manipulation, of very small-scale matter, (a nanometer is one billionth of a meter), to create a new substance therefore changing its properties e.g. to repel liquids or resist wrinkles.
- Cross sectoral - Shape of fibre extrusion that makes the fibre more absorbent. Expertise in the treatment of high-curvature fibre surfaces to impart new functionality, such as shrink resistance, stain blocking and improved moisture transport
- Cellulosic fibres such as linen and viscose, containing molecules that deliver vitamins to the skin, when worn.
- New improved stretch fibres – Invista with new improved *Xtra life lycra*, and Dow with *XLA*.
- Technical textiles – Electronics built into apparel.

Some current advancements of Eco Fabrics

- **Hemp**

Hemp which has four times the strength of cotton, filters UV light and has anti microbial properties, (inhibiting odours), high absorption and will also retain dyes better than other fibres

- **Bamboo**

Bamboo, which grows quickly, classing it as a sustainable fibre. Bamboo will grow in dry or wet climates, is anti microbial, and has a lovely feel and handle being compared to a silk/cashmere blends. In terms of growing, bamboo's environmental credential for eco friendly is good but its credentials fall over when fibres are produced in a chemical intensive process.

- **Post consumer recycling**

Using post industrial and consumer waste, which includes plastic bottles, nylon fishing nets, carpets and nylon fabrics, to produce a range of recycled polyester and nylon fibres. The new fibres are made into clothing, blankets, carpets, wall coverings and auto interiors.

And of course

- **Organic cotton**

Organic cotton doesn't use pesticides or insecticides, uses less water than conventional cotton, plants which are not genetically modified

But is Organic cotton sustainable. Will we be able to clothe the world's population with organic cotton?

What consumers want from cotton?

Consumers love cotton because of its

- Ease of comfort to wear.
- It has good strength, durable, absorbs moisture quickly, drying quickly and it keep you cool in hot weather.
- Cotton blends well with other fibres to extend its great properties (eg with lycra for stretch)
- Cotton is hypoallergenic meaning it doesn't irritate sensitive skin or cause allergies. It is also good for asthmatics
- Cotton clothing is inexpensive and easy to care.

With so many applications, cotton is used by everyone every day.

The variation in the fabrics ranges from plain and textured shirting, denim, velvet and corduroy, waffle weaves toweling, seersucker, calico and heavier furnishing fabrics

We use cotton throughout the day - get out of bed which is made with cotton or cotton blend sheets, have a shower and dry ourselves with cotton towels, put on our cotton or cotton blend underwear and shirt or tee shirt and maybe even a trouser and socks.

BMP Cotton

So this brings me to BMP Cotton the *unknown* advancement in Textiles.

BMP Cotton is very positive for the Australian Cotton industry.

Cotton offers both function and now sustainability which is what customers want from textiles.

The Australian middle market sector needs a reliable source of cotton that is meeting the environmental issue but being able to clothe our population. Organic cotton is not going to be able to do that.

With the changes in the Australian manufacturing patterns, the manufacture is not aware where their fibres originate from. BMP Cotton traceability is great for an industry that relies on offshore fully merchandised production. Australian companies will be able to request Australian cotton and know that they are getting it. With the backup of marketing material and swing tickets, I feel the Australian fashion /clothing industry will embrace this fabulous initiative.