



*“Our know-how supports
the success of our
customers in their segment!”*

*Dr. Jens Müller, Senior Vice President for Products & Services
in the Voith Paper Fiber & Environmental Solutions Division*

The specialty paper market imposes stringent requirements

Hand in hand with the customer to achieve market growth

The manufacture of specialty papers demands extensive know-how and many years of experience. Voith Paper produces paper machines for all kinds of specialty papers. In this interview, Dr. Jens Müller and Dr. Michael Trefz, experts on specialty papers at Voith Paper, talk about current growth potential and the effective application of products.



For almost five years Dr. Jens Müller was divisional manager for specialty papers at Voith Paper. On October 1, 2008 he was appointed Senior Vice President of Products & Services in the Voith Paper Fiber & Environmental Solutions Division. Dr. Müller's previous task will be assumed by Dr. Michael Trefz, up to now Head of Coating Technology. This means that Voith Paper is bringing the specialty paper and coating areas closer together, with the goal of achieving even more efficiency for our specialty paper clients.

twogether: Mr. Müller, on the whole, specialty papers are an up-and-coming market. What trends do you see for the near future?

Müller: The specifications for the manufacture of specialty papers are very sophisticated and specialized. This is why there are many highly specialized companies, often family owned, that focus on just a few kinds of paper. This is not likely to change. Expertise in the manufacture of specialty papers continues to be found mainly in Europe.

In recent years we generally observe that due to the expanding market in specialty papers some paper manuf-

acturers are converting their graphic paper machines to produce specialty papers. Although Asian countries have up to now generally produced commodity paper, such as graphic paper or packaging paper, I observe steady growth here, too.

twogether: In the papermaking industry Voith Paper is often regarded as a big company specializing in large paper plants. What expertise do you have to support specialty paper manufacturers?

Müller: Our engineers specialize in specialty paper machines. We have systematically dedicated ourselves to this sector since our inception.

This is why Voith Paper has the largest number of installed references for specialty papers worldwide. This market is very important to us, and we work with all paper plants, regardless of their production capacity and machine size. Specialty paper machines in particular have complex specifications that have to be met. Very often the challenges and the opportunity for extra added value are to be found in the coating technology. This is why I am absolutely delighted that with the appointment of Dr. Trefz we will be bringing the specialty paper and coating technology segments far closer than was previously the case.



“It is also one of our aims to make paper manufacture increasingly environmentally compatible and cost efficient. That applies in particular to the processing of high-quality specialty papers.”

Dr. Michael Trefz, Vice President for Specialty Papers at Voith Paper

Specialty paper manufacturers should focus on reducing their consumption of a number of raw materials: Energy, water and fibers.

Trefz: Our customers benefit from our extensive know-how. However, above all we take into account what our customers need and want. Together we are navigating the potentials of the respective paper machines, preparing precise budget plans and carrying out rebuilds. What is crucial is that in our case everything comes from one source, and we can access a solid base of knowledge and experience. That is our “powerhouse”. We use our products in a needs-based way and position new components to the best advantage of our customers.

twogether: Can you give an example for the effective application of products?

Müller: We always make sure that quality and process stability are in tune. For example, the curtain coater can simplify the paper manufacturing

process and save the cost of expensive coating color, while the quality of the coating improves. In this conjunction I would also like to mention the HydroFormer, an inclined wire former that has proven effective in the manufacture of wet laid nonwovens and highly porous, long-fiber filter papers. This is an ideal product for the expanding market in this sector. Opportunities include automotive filters, coffee filters, glass fibers as a base for bitumen boards and peel-off wallpapers, which are a mixture of long vinyl fibers and paper fibers. However, it is not just individual products that are important but improvement of the entire process. For example, we tailor the headbox and WEP (wet end process) to one another.

twogether: Many specialty paper manufacturers are considering how

they can make their production more efficient and more profitable. What do you recommend they do?

Müller: They should focus on reducing their consumption of raw materials:

Energy, water and fibers. In recent times the issue of energy in particular has become extremely important. We have to drastically reduce our previously high energy consumption in paper manufacturing. We have to reduce the use of fibers and replace them with less expensive alternatives. Recycled paper is not a realistic option, as specialty papers have to meet stringent requirements, i.e. automotive filter paper in terms of fiber length. It is absolutely essential to incorporate the treatment of water and waste material into our planning.



Dr. Michael Trefz, assumed responsibility for Specialty Papers on October 1, 2008.

Trefz: Voith Paper has established a separate business unit for the development of appropriate products for this purpose: Voith Paper Environmental Solutions. In addition, we offer our customers the opportunity to carry out trials in our Paper Technology Center (PTC) in Heidenheim and in the HydroFormer pilot line in Düren to verify specific optimization possibilities for their specialty paper machines.

twogether: What is the current order situation in your sector of specialty papers?

Müller: As the specialty paper market is an expanding one, the prospects are good. For specialty papers investments take place in proximity to the market. This means that our customers go where there is

market growth. And we go there, too. For example, the demand for gasoline filter papers in China and India is on the rise due to the increasing number of cars on the road and the emerging automobile industry in these countries. We have sales engineers all over the world visiting and advising our customers in person.

Trefz: We can mention quite specifically some interesting startups and orders this year. In the décor paper sector we won the order to convert a photographic paper machine to produce innovative décor papers. In Eastern Europe we are going to equip a paper manufacturer with a new installation for producing one-sided smooth papers. The most efficient machine for single-ply tea bag paper is now being designed in Germany. And in Scandinavia we

have commissioned a new system for one-sided smooth special packaging papers. In the plug wrap and cigarette paper sector, two of the machines supplied by us to Asia went into production this year.

twogether: Mr. Trefz, what goals and visions do you have for the future?

Trefz: We want to continue to deploy the entire spectrum of Voith Paper and our know-how to benefit our customers in the best possible way. Our customers should have the opportunity to be the market leader in their segments. With every new project, our goal is to find tailor-made solutions. It is also one of our aims to make paper manufacture increasingly environmentally compatible and cost efficient. And that also applies in particular to the processing of high-quality specialty papers.