



Building the future: Voith Sulzer Paper Technology in China



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Beijing on a dull November morning. Our limousine makes its way slowly through the yellow-grey smog, for traffic jams have already built up on the third ringroad. What a contrast to the “good old days” when a lonely black limousine sailed through a throng of bicycles – now they overtake us all the time!

After quite a long journey, Beijing International Exhibition Centre looms up through the fog. We soon find a warm welcome at the Voith Sulzer Paper Technology stand, where the message

is clear: Chinese customers can shop here for all their papermaking needs. In other words, Voith Sulzer Paper Technology has come to stay.

Our customers stayed on for some long discussions and friendly chats, in fact they felt very much at home: “Your booth this year is very Chinese and very very good!”. The new Chinese brochures and our first two coloured Chinese editions of *“together”* magazine (Nos. 7 and 8) were so popular, that only one day later



they were nearly all gone. Happy reading to all our Chinese business friends!

At the Voith Sulzer press conference held on the opening day of this trade fair, questions asked by journalists clearly showed what interests China's paper industry most of all: local manufacturing, service and roll cover centres, and high-tech equipment such as our ModuleJet headbox.

Voith Sulzer's customer seminar, held on the last day of the China Paper & Forest '99, was a rendezvous for high-ranking officials and top paper industry managers from all over China. Here again, the main focus was on **Building the Future** in the Chinese paper industry – comprising some 4700 mills, mostly small and outdated.

Chinese leaders have seen the necessity of modernizing their paper mills for meeting tougher competition in years to come. But an industry with around 4700 mills churning out 28 million tonnes of paper and board annually – and still im-

porting 6 to 7 million tonnes p.a. as well – is not so easily retrofitted.

The last few years have seen some of the world's biggest and most efficient machines come on stream in China for various grades, but so far they only cover about 20 percent of national paper and board needs. At this rate, replacing all the outdated machinery will take quite some years.

At the same time, according to Chinese economy growth forecasts, paper and board consumption will rise by 2010 to about 60 million tonnes p.a. as against 34 million t.p.a. at the present time. In other words, another 60 or so machines, each with 200,000 t.p.a capacity, will be required for graphical grades and 70 more for board production. This is on top of the 40 paper and 50 board machine replacements required for current needs.

Just think what that means – **120 board machines and 100 paper machines are going to be required over the next decade!**

Although the challenges to be faced in China are quite different to those in Europe or America, our seminar guests in Beijing were asking the same kind of questions:

- Which supplier should I choose as my overall papermaking process partner in order to minimize risk?
- Which high-tech components are most appropriate for upgrading my old paper machinery?
- Will investing in the greater efficiency of a high-tech paper machine and/or stock preparation line give me a leading edge over competitors?
- Which concept best utilizes the raw materials already so scarce in China?
- Where do I get the necessary financing?

Despite the advent of computers and Internet technology in China, books and newspapers will be a more economical

Fig. 1: The Voith Sulzer Paper Technology stand at the China Paper & Forest '99 trade fair in Beijing.

Fig. 2: Lu Shin Lin, President Director Minfeng Corporation, talking with Hans-Peter Sollinger and Harry Hackl.

Fig. 3: Official opening of China Paper & Forest '99 in the presence of high-ranking government officials, including Deputy Light Industry Minister Yang Hay Shan.

Fig. 4: Information centre on the Voith Sulzer stand.

Fig. 5: Frank Opletal and B. Z. Chen (both of VPT Beijing office) welcoming guests to the customer seminar.

Fig. 6: Jiang Heping (Chairman Jiangxi Paper Group) and VPT Beijing office manager Ming Ming Liu, singing a Chinese folk song together.

Fig. 7: Ming Ming Liu talking with Zhao Wan Li, General Manager Hongta Renheng, Zhuhai.



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answer for decades to come – especially with regard to education: each year 15 to 20 million children start school in China.

With growing competition, there will also be a higher demand for packaging. Better wrapping and protection of all the goods produced by Chinese and foreign enterprises will increase folding boxboard and corrugated container needs enormously. Furthermore, tissue requirements for cosmetic and hygiene purposes are also growing rapidly.

Against this background of economic expansion and promise for the future, the Voith Sulzer Paper Technology seminar in Beijing was particularly appurtenant. Our most reputed customers in China gave some very interesting reports on experience with their LWC and cigarette paper lines, packaging paper and folding boxboard machines – in fact their boundless enthusiasm was so infectious, that these addresses were the highlight of the seminar.

The day was rounded off by a much-appreciated address from the banking world – how many interesting possibilities there are for financing such a vast modernization process!

And during the traditional Voith Sulzer banquet that evening, appropriately entertained by Chinese folk singers, a special kind of “Twogetherness” was celebrated: an exciting partnership for Building the Future.

Sincere thanks to all our customers for being with us: you made this seminar a memorable occasion! We also owe a great deal of thanks to our colleagues from all over the world for their outstanding presentations. And finally, where would we be without all the help and hard work by our enthusiastic people in Beijing?

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