



*Marcos Furrer, President Brand & Performance
Textile Specialties, and Innovation.*

“Archroma is working closely with Pakistan’s textile industry for achieving sustainability”

Mr. Marcos Furrer, President Brand & Performance Textile Specialties and Innovation recently visited Pakistan. Pakistan Textile Journal is pleased to present an exclusive interview of Mr. Furrer for the interest of our readers conducted at Archroma Pakistan.

Welcome to Pakistan Mr. Furrer. Archroma has seen remarkable success in the short span of five years. Please share with us the motivation behind this achievement?

At Archroma, we believe in working on the solutions to help our customers achieve sustainability. We want to change the thinking about sustainable production methods. We aim to create chemical technologies that minimize environmental impact by accessing the total cost of production. What is the cost of the wasted water and the energy consumption on the product cost per square meter of fabric produced? We want to really help the industry get to the next level by providing more effective solutions for our customers through new processes such as ADVANCED DENIM, Smartrepel®, EarthColors and ONE WAY Sustainability Service.

You have had long and extensive experience in the Latin America. How do you compare the Latin American market with Pakistan as developing markets that are very important for product developments and innovations?

I’ve been in charge of the Americas for five years. I find a great deal of commonalities between Latin America and Pakistan. I see, the textile industry, per se, it is an industry whose success is based on three factors. You have to have firstly a good cost position, secondly innovations strength and the third factor is compatible infrastructure, energy and logistics with which the industry needs to grow. Countries in Latin America, I believe, have been suffering much more than Pakistan in the last five years. I see potential growth in the textile industry of

Pakistan, which is missing in Latin America. The industry here is growing despite facing infrastructure challenges and increasing cost of production.

What are some of the main product lines or areas you will be focusing for Pakistani market?

We want to reinforce our position in the denim market. We are continuously investing in Pakistan to become a number one supplier of complete chemical solutions provider for the industry. With the integration of the BASF textile chemicals business in Archroma, our portfolio is now even more comprehensive with product lines that were missing in the past. This I consider is a big advantage for us. Our focus is on adding value for the customer in terms of systems solutions where our products offer a definitive advantage for the customer. Through our performance-focus solutions, the customers are able to produce products that can achieve superior performance.

And lastly, what we consider extremely important are the environmental-focus solutions. These environmental-focus solutions give the industry an opportunity to do something different while minimizing the impact on the environment such as Earth Colors. Through our products we want to reinforce our innovations to offer environmental solutions. One example is Denisol®, the liquid indigo that is now produced in Pakistan by Archroma. This is a local solution for the denim sector that did not have a choice in the past. This would make our customers in Pakistan more competitive as indigo is the one of the major cost components in denim production.

What are some other areas where you can see expansion in the future?

Digital printing is one of the segment that we believe will grow most within the next few years. There are a number of reasons behind it. This not simply because the digital prints are attractive and vibrant, but also because of the ability of the industry to personalize more according to the demands of their customers. In the past there used to be large volumes of repetitive designs printed on the rotary printers. Only few printers with the economies of scale were successful and competitive by producing hundreds of thousands of meters. The fast changing fashion market cannot be captured through conventional rotary printing.

Personalization is the future where consumers want to be different. We shall be prominently present in this market segment to provide our customers viable solutions, such as Inkpresso® a ink delivery system that allows flexibility and personalization. The big volume business will always be there but the future is with the customization possible with the digital textile printing.

Competition is very strong, not only in your traditional European players, but from the rest of the world as well. What are some of the challenges you foresee?

I think the challenge will be for the entire industry. It is a time when pollution is becoming a major problem and shortage of raw materials is taking place more often compared to previous times. Now people are starting to realize full cost of a product that is not simply the raw material but also carries cost of



Naveed Kamil, Head of Human Resources Pakistan & Bangladesh, Shahana Kaukab, Manager HR & Communications, Qazi Naeemuddin, Head of Operations Jamshoro site, Marcos Furrer, President Brand & Performance Textile Specialties, and Innovation, Mujtaba Rahim, CEO & President, Archroma Pakistan Limited, Muhammad Altaf, Head of Operations Landhi site, Hadi Raza Lakhani, Head of Sales & Marketing

meeting stringent requirements for protecting the environment.

So I foresee for the chemical industry, that cost increase as well as availability of raw materials that will be a major problem for certain products. If we talk about the chemical industry, the big raw materials producers and suppliers, mainly from China, have been trying to increase prices for the last five years. They have been largely unsuccessful mainly due to overcapacity in the market. Now due to the pressure of the governments, again mainly in China, the overcapacity is being reduced, resulting in higher prices. The second factor is a higher demand as the global textile industry is doing well. The assumption is that this increase in demand will continue to drive the raw material prices higher.

The third factor is that people want to live long and meaningful, sustainable lives. Sustainability and green chemistry will continue to go hand in hand. We have to show our customers that a new product that is better and more sustainable can be produced in the same

way and with the same performance as they were produced before.

How do you plan to deal with these challenges?

We have been focusing on sustainability for the last five years and have a good head start to meet the new industry challenges. We have developed different tools for ourselves and different products to offer environmental-focus solutions. We are working more on those and our innovation is focused on reducing waste of energy, water, salt consumption as a process. Our ONE WAY Process Simulator is a really interesting tool to compare what you are doing today to what you could be doing. It helps mills and brand owners to develop innovative textile solutions that are both more ecologically and economically sustainable.

I believe this is the future and we want to show our customers what we can offer to them as a full package solution, tailor made to help with their total cost of production, not simply a product. We are

providing these solutions to those customers who have the acumen to sell these sustainable products to their own customers.

Not only are we banning hazardous chemicals from our product line, Archroma opened its first sustainable effluent treatment (SET) facility for a textile operational site, in Jamshoro, Pakistan in 2013. With an investment of 371 million PKR the facility supports the substantial recovery of 80 percent of water and allows effluent treatment based on zero liquid discharge. We are working towards sustainability as well as product safety. This provides us with an edge and it is an opportunity for us. This is what we stand for.

I would like your comments on the position of Archroma Pakistan in the global scheme of affairs?

Archroma Pakistan is for us one of the models to follow. We have excellent leadership here, and a team who is highly motivated. Different departments from production to supply and sales all work extremely close together as one unit. The Archroma Center of Excellence in Pakistan is a state-of-the-art textile applications lab. I have not seen many like this in the world. Above all the team is extremely close to our strong customer base in Pakistan and works hard to help them stay viable and successful.

