

Planning beyond the crisis through digitalization

By **Joe Link** 25 October 2020

Marco Girola, JK Group and MS Printing Solutions marketing and communications manager, tells WTiN about the companies' offering at Innovate Textile & Apparel and their plans for 2021.

Why did JK Group and MS Printing Solutions decide to exhibit at Innovate Textile & Apparel and what do the companies hope to gain by attending the virtual event?

Since before Covid-19 the Trade Show segment was in deep change with an ever-greater integration between physical and virtual spaces. Covid-19 era has only speed up the spread of virtual initiatives: a safe way of continuing to promote commercial relations and keeping in touch with customers. The Innovate Textile & Apparel Virtual Trade Show by WTiN seemed to us highly skilled; therefore, the right place to meet the digital textile printing professionals.

What are JK Group and MS Printing Solutions showcasing at WTiN's virtual trade show?

We are focused on two themes of utmost importance in our opinion: sustainability & Digitalisation. Both are crucial to face the new global textile printing scenario. We are speaking about:

- In-line foam preparation of the fabric on MS Printing Solutions' single-pass LaRio machine, which reduces set-up times, the quantity of chemicals used, and the waste produced in the printing process.
- The multi-pass Mini Lario machine which combines flexibility, quality and energy efficiency, the best solution to restart with.
- The integration between inks and machines by studying dedicated waveforms to maximise the yield of the print heads, the quality of the results and the consumption of the process.
- The latest generation of JK Group's pigment ink, Digistar K-Choice 4.0. It is versatile water-less technology which provides high brightness and fastness.

Innovate

Textile & Apparel

VIRTUAL TRADE SHOW

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JK Group's and MS' booth



In what way has Covid-19 impacted JK Group and MS Printing Solutions, and what are the companies doing to overcome these hurdles?

Since the beginning of the outbreak we have worked to build up continuity plans, which would guarantee the service to our customers in the most efficient way possible - even in a full emergency. This was possible thanks to the competence, the dedication, and the reliability

of the whole team. We focused on prioritising workforce protection, strengthening our long-term strategies, and putting measures in place to mitigate the effects of any disruption.

In terms of new products, what are JK Group and MS Printing Solutions working on and when can we expect to see a new product from either company?

We believe the future of textile printing lies in a sustainable supply chain; a guarantee of affordable and ethical results; and the integration of automated, cutting-edge technologies. The pandemic has accelerated our actions, enhancing our solutions that combine connectivity, sustainability, innovation and overall cost reduction.

Digitalisation is an opportunity for remote and real-time services which are not constrained by distances or cost. We are testing the new digital platform, MyMS, that will increase the level of service our customers receive. The Italian version was released at beginning of October and the international version will follow soon.

As JK Group, we are designed for maximum functionality: an essential condition for competitiveness in these new production scenarios. We have accelerated the construction of our dedicated reactive inks production line and we are working on obtaining upgrades and new certifications for our inks range. This is an indispensable condition to support customers in achieving a sustainable textile printing production chain.

As part of Dover Corporation, are JK Group's digital inks now formulated in a way that best suits MS Printing Solutions' machinery, or are your inks still targeted at the broader inkjet textile printing market?

We are an ink manufacturer; therefore, we continue to develop inks that are compatible with the best textile printing machines available across the market. But of course, the strict collaboration with MS is giving us the chance to design inks in connection to MS' hardware. We are customising performance at the highest level, starting from the waveforms to increase both printing quality and printability to give our customers a significant competitive advantage.

Regarding ink chemistry innovation, what developments can we expect over the coming years - factoring in entire market trends - and what are print service providers increasingly demanding from their digital inks?

We have made a clear choice, since the beginning of our story, to develop only water-based inks. Now more than ever we believe that this is the right choice. We will proceed to develop inks that are compliant with European and international regulations. Relating to chemical risks, our inks will adhere to the most rigorous international standards and legislations.

What do print professionals ask? There is great attention to the ecological aspect either of the finished product or of the entire production process, with a strong focus on water and energy consumption. Therefore, inks must be accompanied by a full certification program and must be in full compliance with the international laws regarding hazardous chemicals and labelling.

We recognise that our customers will always expect cost-effective and efficient inks, but our inks are also attentive to ecological considerations across the textile supply chain. Despite this, the performance of our inks hasn't, and will not, be sacrificed; our inks will continue to enable fast and efficient textile printing and will remain competitive in terms of performance and price.

What plans does JK Group have for 2021, and is the company likely to explore more virtual trade shows?

We are currently carefully examining all the opportunities offered by virtual events like WTiN's Innovate Textile & Apparel virtual trade show. We want to remain closely connected to our customers even from a distance if that is all what global situation allows.

There is still time to register to attend Innovate Textile & Apparel. The virtual trade show concludes on October 30, so sign up now and witness the latest innovations to impact the textile & apparel value chain by clicking the link above.

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