

Dow Chemical launches sustainable textile treatment

Dow Chemical Company has announced a new technology that significantly improves resource efficiency during the dyeing process. EcoFast Pure debuted recently at the American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists (AATCC) International Conference, also enables unique, brighter colours on natural textiles. The patented technology allows for the uptake of reactive, direct and acid dyes on natural fibers and fabrics, from apparel to home textiles. The acid dyes are used to achieve colors such as fluorescents, which had been unavailable on cotton. EcoFast Pure also improves color fastness.

"Dow has leveraged over a century of material science knowledge to help address the performance and sustainability gaps in the textile industry," said Esmá Talu, market manager for Dow. "By pretreating textiles with EcoFast Pure, manufacturers can deliver longer lasting, new generation colors on natural textiles while simultaneously reducing water, dye and energy use."

Materials treated with EcoFast Pure require fewer rinses and lower water temperatures during dyeing to ultimately decrease water use by more than 50% and cut down on overall energy use. Manufacturers can also decrease dye use by 75% through increased dye uptake and reduced cycle time. The enhanced resource efficiency can even be achieved without the addition of salts to the dye bath. "Better manufacturing processes are key to more responsible textile production," said Ms. Talu.

EcoFast Pure falls in line with Dow's commitment to deliver breakthrough sustainable chemistry innovations, a key pillar of the company's 2025 Sustainability Goals. ■ *Source: Home Textiles Today*

Online growth among housewares buyers extends to adjacent categories

US online sales of housewares products increased by 18 percent in 2017, according to e-Commerce insights from The NPD Group's Checkout consumer receipt mining service. On average, nearly a quarter of online buyers purchased housewares in 2017, buying three to four of these items online during the year. In addition, more than half of these buyers also purchased other items for their home.

The top penetrated categories among US housewares e-Commerce buyers were food storage, gadgets, and tabletop, with more than one in four buyers purchasing them online, outpacing the housewares industry average. Three-quarters of these e-Commerce buyers also purchased home improvement items online, and about half made kitchen appliance and home textile purchases. A smaller segment of online housewares buyers also purchased major home appliances online in the last year – these bigger ticket purchases further exhibit the consumers' willingness to spend online for their home.

The connection between online housewares buyers and other industries goes

deeper than the category level. Over 60 percent of online buyers who purchased a private label housewares brand in 2017 also purchased private label products outside of housewares. However, housewares private label buyers, were also more likely to commit their dollars to branded products like Apple, Nike, Philips and Samsung than those who did not buy private label housewares brands.

"e-Commerce has changed the way consumers shop for home products," said Joe Derochowski, executive director and home industry analyst at NPD. "A view into the online buyer journey provides unique insight into how the market and consumer are evolving, how to anticipate and meet the consumer's core needs, and effectively target marketing efforts to capture their spending dollars."

NPD's newly enhanced Checkout e-Commerce service, which is based on information collected from more than three million consumers through data provided by our partner Slice Intelligence, offers the most complete and accurate view of the online channel – including first and third-party sales for Amazon, Jet, and Walmart.com, more than 550 e-Commerce retailers, including direct-to-consumer, and an early read on emerging players.

"The home industry has enjoyed significant growth over the past few years, and online shopping will be a vital component to harnessing the momentum in the years to come," said Lora Morsovillo, President, Home, The NPD Group. "Checkout's e-commerce measurement and analytics capabilities provide our clients with the comprehensive view of this channel necessary to drive their omni-channel strategies forward." ■ *Source: NPD*



EPCH honoured at Exhibition Excellence Awards for organising 'Leading Show of Handicrafts, Carpets & Gifts'



The award being received by Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Joint Director, EPCH and Mr. Vikas Goel, CFO, EPCH

EPCH was awarded for organising the 'Leading Show of Handicrafts, Carpets & Gifts', a coveted honour at the Exhibition Showcase's 3rd Exhibition Excellence Awards, organised on 17th March 2018 at India Expo Centre, Greater Noida. This award was conferred on EPCH in recognition of the IHGF Delhi Fair- Autumn 2017 edition.

An initiative to provide visibility & recognition to the Indian exhibition industry, this awards event is supported by IEIA, UFI, IAEE, IESA, ICPB, IIA, PIOCCI & ASME. Exhibition Excellence Awards presented by Exhibition Showcase, India's leading magazine on trade shows, is the first Indian and Asian awards program honouring excellence in the exhibition & convention industry with a mission to draw attention to the unique and dynamic nature as well as the rich potential of the Indian exhibition industry and honour its real heroes.

"Receiving such an award has taken me down memory lane when this fair was started in 1994 in one hall at Pragati Maidan with 313 exhibitors only and has seen an eventful journey with the recent edition signing off with 3000 exhibitors from across the country," said Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Executive Director, EPCH and Chairman, IEMIL. ■

Delegation from Alibaba Group visits EPCH



Alibaba Group Business Head, Mr. Jason Zheng and West & Eastern Regional Head, Mr. Simm from China approached EPCH Kolkata Office on 16th March 2018, to discuss possible opportunities that can be explored with EPCH Kolkata & Alibaba.com in the Eastern Region. The meeting was fixed for 19th March 2018 at the EPCH-Eastern Region office in Kolkata.

Mr. O P Prahladka, Chairman, EPCH, welcomed the delegation. Mr. Jason Zheng briefed him about the Alibaba Group. It is a Chinese multinational e-Commerce, retail, Internet, AI and technology conglomerate founded in 1999 that provides consumer-to-consumer, business-to-consumer and business-to-business sales services via web portals, as well as electronic payment services, shopping search engines and cloud computing services. It owns and operates a diverse array of businesses around the world in numerous sectors, and is named as one of the world's most admired companies by Fortune.

Mr. Jason spoke on what they can offer to EPCH member exporters in terms of business, logistics & online business partnerships as well as a huge accessibility to Chinese buyers/ market. They requested for collaborative work like conducting seminars in India on benefits of digital marketing.

The Group offered EPCH for branding the Council's Logo by having it displayed in the Handicraft section pages on their website. Mr. O P Prahladka urged the delegates to make a fair agreement for Indian exporters and guide them on legal terms, Chinese custom issues, HS Code obligations in Chinese Custom and ensure of proper authentic freight forwarder in China. ■

June compliance deadline set for formaldehyde rule

Almost eight years after US Congress first adopted limits on formaldehyde emissions from products such as furniture containing composite wood, a compliance deadline for meeting those limits has been set. A federal judge signed an agreement on recently between the US Environmental Protection Agency and the Sierra Club, setting a new June 1, 2018, compliance deadline for the federal formaldehyde rule and settling a lawsuit filed by the Sierra Club last October.

The American Home Furnishings Alliance represented the residential furniture industry in the settlement negotiations. The agreement was reached Friday, March 9. US District Court Judge Jeffrey White previously ruled on Feb. 16 that the EPA had illegally delayed the compliance deadline within the Formaldehyde Standards for Composite Wood Products Act, which is Title VI of the Toxic Substances Control Act. Under the federal rule originally finalised in December 2016, EPA set a December 2017 deadline for wood products to comply with the formaldehyde limits established in the standard. But the agency later extended the deadline to December 2018, attempting to adjust the compliance timeline to reflect a delay in the rule's effective date dictated by the Trump Administration.

Last October, the Sierra Club and A Community Voice-Louisiana filed a lawsuit challenging the EPA's year-long delay of the compliance deadline. In an amicus brief filed with the district court on behalf of the industry, AHFA pointed out that reverting to the December 2017 compliance date would have retroactive consequences for composite wood products sold, supplied, offered for sale, manufactured or imported into the United States since that time. ■

Source: Furniture Today

Physical and digital retail intertwining at rapid rate

The lines between physical and digital retail are blurring, according to new research by USA's National Retail Federation and Forrester. Consumers are increasingly shopping seamlessly across touchpoints, and the industry is using both platforms to better serve them, as reported in the annual State of Retail Online study.

This report shows more than ever that retail is retail regardless of where a sale is made or how the product is delivered. Products ordered online are increasingly picked up in-store or shipped from a nearby store, and digital technology being used at bricks-and-mortar locations lets retailers help customers find what they want or make the sale even if the product is out of stock. Traditional retailers have seen the opportunities of online selling for years now, and those selling online increasingly see that stores are part of the key to success.

Of the companies surveyed this year, 32% are "pure play" online retailers while 57% are multichannel retailers, including traditional bricks-and-mortar retailers that also sell online. This year's data reveals that 43% of store-based retailers surveyed expect a net increase in the number of bricks-and-mortar stores they operate by the end of 2018 compared with 2017, and only 16% expect a net reduction. Additionally, retailers are proactively working on their real estate assets, whether testing new formats such as opening some type of pop-up store (24%), and opening new warehouses or distribution centers (12%). New physical locations are important because 42% of retailers surveyed said that faster delivery of online orders is their top customer-facing priority, and many plan to use stores to achieve that goal. Omnichannel services such as "buy online, pick up in-store" are an in-store priority for 21%, along with 15% that cite "ship-from-store" as a fulfillment priority.

More brands plan to open stores versus close them this year, which proves that the physical retail store is not doomed as many think it is. Personalising the shopping experience was another top priority, cited by 15% of store-based retailers. Retailers surveyed are also focused on using technology to better enable store associates to help customers (12%), as well as improving the in-store experience (12%). To support their store associates providing service to customers, 61% of retailers surveyed plan to spend more on employee training. Digital continues to contribute significantly to retail overall, both directly and as it influences sales in stores. Seventy percent of retailers surveyed noted that online conversion rates - the number of people browsing an item online who actually follow through and make a purchase online - increased in the past year.

More good news: 62% said repeat customers were up and 57% said average order values had increased. While online sales coming from desktop computers currently runs double those of mobile browsers, mobile sales are growing 36%

per year versus 8% on desktop. Mobile app sales are growing at an annual rate of 16%, and accordingly, 89% of retailers plan to increase investments in mobile initiatives. ■

Source: Home Textiles Today

