



Market sensitivity

Speedo swimwear utilises 'Sensitive' fabric.

 Speedo

Sometimes we talk glibly about the impact of globalisation and then quietly carry on assuming this affects everyone but us.

Not so with Andrea Crespi of Italian knitting specialist Eurojersey. He sits and looks at you intently while his multi-functional electronic gadgetry discreetly passes him his urgent messages. It is clear that, for Eurojersey, business philosophy is a primary study. Where in this complex and changing textile and sports world network can a forty-year-old Italian company find a secure spot with steady profitability? Is not everything just going to be sucked away to Asia?

Not according to Mr. Crespi. According to him life changed at Eurojersey when Lycra first came on to the market and ten years ago the company developed a Lycra nylon fabric using its existing competence in warp knit construction. With a unique 28% Lycra and 72% nylon mix the new textile 'Sensitive' has exceptional properties. As major customer Speedo says "it supports, contours, and gives freedom of movement in any direction".

Over the last ten years Eurojersey has worked to successfully move Sensitive into new market segments from swimwear to underwear and now on to sportswear and outerwear. According to Andrea Crespi the big advantage for the fabric is that it is fashionable and technical, the two key drivers of the active leisure business.

"So the challenge is to exchange information and communicate this to customers in order

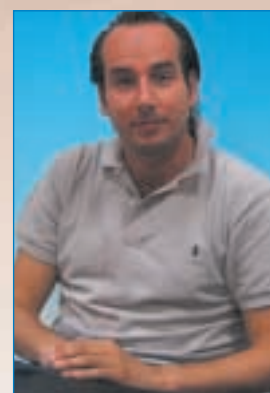
that Sensitive can take advantage of all markets," he says.

Every day, according to Crespi, Eurojersey discovers new ways in which the product can be used. In this aspect he argues that dialogue with suppliers is often as important as that with customers, so they can understand how the integration of Sensitive with alternative materials can offer new consumer benefits.

Certainly it is a versatile material, and seven versions have been produced since 1997. Its capability to penetrate the market is demonstrated by the way in which Prada and North Face are both able to work with it on the one hand and Speedo and Sloggi on the other.

In a market place where the low end is commoditised a consumer buying a branded article expects something significantly better. For Eurojersey this implies, first and foremost, having a product of the highest performance and high quality, capturing all that is best in value from a 'Made in Italy' label. Around this it is building an exceptional service package. This means that although the company ethos is much copied, customers who might slip away always return when volume in a really good quality is required. In some ways this copying has actually worked to the company's advantage.

The next target for Eurojersey is to spend more time with customers so that Andrea Crespi's proposition and branding, including hang tags and advertising, will help its customers sell the finished product. 



Andrea Crespi of Eurojersey

 Mike Redwood