

World Nonwovens Industry: Ten Smaller Producers: part 3 of 3, 2008/09

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Abstracts

Worldwide sales of nonwoven roll goods continued to increase at a mid-single digit growth rate in 2007 the latest year for which comprehensive data are available reaching nearly US\$17 bn. Of this total, about 79% of sales, worth around US\$13.4 bn, was generated by just 40 producers. Sales achieved by the ten smaller producers profiled in this report which rank from number 31 to number 40 among the world's leading companies ranged individually from US\$861 mn to US\$230 mn and together accounted for about 5% of the global total.

These ten smaller producers include some relatively new players as well as long established ones. South Korea's Toray Saehan, for example, was formed as a joint venture company as recently as 1999. Italy's Albis was formed in 1995.

Many of these producers have benefited from new market development. Precision Custom Coatings, based in New Jersey, USA, has added three new high loft lines to meet demand for its flame retardant materials in the bedding market while Hof is positioning its spunlaced nonwovens in a number of industrial areas.

Also, many producers have been working to make their products more environmentally friendly. Foss Manufacturing, for example, estimates that 60% of its needlepunched nonwovens are made from regenerated plastic bottles while Suominen Nonwovens is seeing increased success with its Biolace sustainable spunlaced nonwovens.

Other drivers of growth are new technologies and new product markets. SP2C and Easy Care interlining products from Textilgruppe Hof have coatings to enhance performance in fashion fabrics. The same company is offering a new generation of mouldable nonwovens for use in trunk applications and wheel arch covers, as well as a

new technology to manufacture multi-axial fabrics for the composites industry. It has also developed non-flammable nonwovens for automotive applications. Precision Custom Coatings has diversified into OmniStretch hydroentangled liners for the automotive market.

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