

JUMBO-TEXTIL - INNOVATIVE NARROW TEXTILES REDEFINED
A DYNAMIC FAMILY BUSINESS AS A FUTURE-ORIENTED SOLUTION PARTNER FOR HIGH-TECH ELASTICS

The various branches of the German textile and fashion industry generate a combined annual turnover of around € 32 billion. Of the approximately 1,400 companies, the vast majority are medium-sized. Special solutions made in Germany are in demand. The importance of technical textiles has been growing for years - as has their share of turnover. Textination spoke with Andreas and Patrick Kielholz about innovative product solutions, the importance of family businesses in today's world, traditions and innovations, challenges and the courage to fail, aircraft construction, the automotive industry, medical technology and diving suits.



The history of today's company "JUMBO-Textil GmbH & Co. KG" goes back to the last millennium. Founded in 1909 in Wuppertal, you have moved beyond the production of pure yard goods for the lingerie industry and are now a demanded competence partner for high-tech solutions for narrow textiles. Which industries do you focus on when developing your technical textiles?

Andreas Kielholz: JUMBO-Textil focuses on particular competences in the field of narrow textiles and not on specific industries. We produce narrow fabrics, narrow braids and knitted fabrics. In these three fields we bring out our special competences: Elastics, individual solutions and individually fabricated elements in combination with non-textile components. There is, of course, a long-standing intensive cooperation with customers from the automotive industry, for example. In this sense, JUMBO-Textil is also an "interior expert". However, this does not imply a focus on a specific industry. Quite the opposite: We are very broadly positioned in terms of industries. New sectors are opening up all the time; most recently, we supplied the toy industry with textiles specially developed for babies and toddlers. We also supplied the medical technology sector with narrow-textile solutions in form of skin-friendly elastics.



Andreas Kielholz
 Managing Partner of
 JUMBO-Textil GmbH & Co. KG,
 vombaur GmbH & Co KG and
 of the Textation Group GmbH & Co. KG.



Patrick Kielholz
 Head of production at JUMBO-Textil and, as Business Development Manager and authorised signatory, responsible for the corporate development of the entire group

Speaking of Elastics - how did the specialization come about?

Patrick Kielholz: The specialization in elastic narrow textiles began as early as the 1920s. In our entrance area you can see one of the first specialized braiding machines that was purchased for this purpose. It is about 100 years old. A landmark decision: It made the step from apparel textiles to technical textiles, which - many years later – became essential for survival, if not possible, then at least considerably easier.



CEO Andreas Kielholz (r.) and Business Development Manager Patrick Kielholz in the state-of-the-art production facility of JUMBO-Textil GmbH & Co. KG.

What characterizes elastics? Why is the property so important for technical textiles?

Andreas Kielholz: Technical textiles, as well known, are textiles that are developed for a specific technical function. They have to, if you like, be capable of doing something: securing a load, sealing an opening, protecting from heat ... Many of these industrial functions can only be accomplished with elastic textiles - from applications in aircraft construction to protective suits for divers and to textiles in medicine. It is often the specific, highly precisely defined strength-elongation-ratio that makes use in such extreme, highly demanding applications possible. Innovative fibers are manufactured and finished by us on highly modern, digitally controlled equipment. In this way, we achieve highest precision and safety in the elongation properties and produce a textile high-tech product with high-performance fibers for extreme, often individually requested technical applications.

And what does your product portfolio look like for your customers as a whole?



Velcro elastic strap for numerous applications in medicine, PPE, sports and many other industries



ElasTool – a flexible heavy-duty tethering system for elastic cords and cables



Innovative elastic band in textile melange look

Patrick Kielholz: The spectrum ranges from woven tapes and belts to braided tape, tubular braids and braided cords to nets - in all widths, made from numerous raw materials and with specific, even demanding properties, special features and fabrications. As a solution partner, we often guide our customers from the initial idea to the finished product.

The importance of narrow textiles as components is growing visibly. Since they are very light, very efficient and at the same time very quiet, they are being used more frequently as an alternative to components made of other materials. The demands placed on the textiles are growing with their tasks: Their specifications are becoming increasingly more precise, the tolerances increasingly tighter. In the automotive sector and in protective equipment, for example, fire safety requirements play an important role. Therefore, we only have success with narrow textiles that are permanently flame retardant. We are currently addressing many inquiries for fitness bands with highly precisely defined strength-elongation-ratios. We are also responding to the sustainability question with our portfolio: We are increasingly working on projects with recycled materials or recyclable products. This development is embedded in a comprehensive sustainability strategy, which we are addressing for the entire Group - also in connection with the new planning of our sister company vombaur GmbH & Co KG.



At the company headquarters in Sprockhövel, more than 70 employees develop and produce tapes & cords, nets & net systems and textile components.

What has particularly influenced the company's development process of about 110 years? Were there any significant changes of direction or decisions?

Andreas Kielholz: In the 1970s, we broadened our range enormously by no longer producing technical narrow textiles only for the apparel industry, but for all industries. At the same time, we continued to specialize - in elastics. This is not a contradiction: We implement what we are particularly good at, however, for all industries.

In the recent history of the company, we made a strong push with our new building in 2016. Optimal production conditions were created. With a variety of new production plants, we are at the advanced level of technology and high production capacity. The environment also has an effect on our team. You can feel that people enjoy working here. At the beginning of 2019, we again set an important strategic course when we combined our competencies with vombaur GmbH & Co KG under the umbrella of Textation Group GmbH & Co. KG.

These two traditional companies for demanding high-tech narrow textiles will remain independent as companies and brands. Why did you decide to take this step, what is the market response and what can you recommend to other producers in terms of partnerships?



Andreas Kielholz: We have had very good experiences as a sister company: Knowledge transfer, trade show appearances, digitization workshops - the partnership is beneficial in many ways. But - unlike in real life - we were able to choose our sister. The partner companies have to be compatible. Sure, you have to pay attention to that. They should have things in common without doing exactly the same thing. Because if they are too similar,

there is a risk of competition, even cannibalization of one of the brands.

Our construct is perceived by our market companions as a good and elegant solution. We could serve as a role model for one or the other. Perhaps we will also expand our circle in the next few years, which we are open to. And our move has also been well received by our customers. In addition to all the other positive effects, succession issues can also be solved more easily in the Group. We are thereby demonstrating future prospects and security.

In the medium-sized textile industry, companies were and still are shaped by people - founding personalities, owners, families who live and breathe textile tradition and innovation. In your opinion, what qualities do people need to have in order to be successful in our niche-oriented German industry?

Andreas Kielholz: Successful and formative are people with curiosity and drive. People who like to explore new territories, first in their thinking and then consistently in their implementation. You should be able to inspire others in these explorations. In addition, you should keep a close eye on the market and act accordingly, i.e., constantly questioning the status quo. Self-criticism is therefore also important: Is our path still the right one? Are we fulfilling our aspirations? To move forward as a company, you have to work tirelessly not only in, but also on the company.



Patrick Kielholz: The important thing is to recognize change and see it as an opportunity, not as a threat. I fully agree with that. However, I would strongly question the idea that it is the one founder, the one owner, and therefore individual people who make a company successful. We live in a very complex and fast-paced world that cannot be overseen and comprehended by a single person. Don't get me wrong, great ideas can come from individuals and help a company succeed. But we can't rely on that. A company today must be managed in such a way that ideas are developed by divergent teams. An environment must be created that

gives each person the opportunity to make a difference. A leader must therefore understand how to develop functioning teams.

Mr. Kielholz Snr., you are the managing partner of JUMBO-Textil GmbH & Co. KG and one of the managing directors of vombaur GmbH & Co KG. For about two years now, you have your son Patrick at your side as Business Development Manager of JUMBO-Textil. How did that come about? Did you encourage your son to follow in your footsteps?



Andreas Kielholz: Not explicitly. My sons - there's also Kevin, Patrick's brother - had a lot of freedom in their childhood and youth. It was always up to them how they wanted to live their lives. During their school education and their studies, I tried to support everything in a trusting manner. Education has a lot to do with leading by example. I always had a lot of joy in what I did, even if it wasn't always easy. They witnessed this joy every day - and so I may have implicitly encouraged them.

The fact that Patrick is now part of the team, performing a very good job and already bears a lot of responsibility - of course I'm very happy about that. He is a good, trustworthy corrective for me, because he can do some things better than I can. There is a high chance that Kevin will also join us after completing his technical studies.

Mr. Kielholz Jr., you completed your studies with a master's thesis on family businesses. How do you assess the future of family businesses in a global textile industry in general? And where do you see JUMBO-Textil here?



Patrick Kielholz: Family businesses are usually employers that retain their employees for a long time - by providing a family-like working environment and a corporate culture that creates trust. These include values that are important to the younger generations. Status symbols are becoming less important. This can create a working environment in which highly innovative and flexible work can be done - if it is not prevented by an overly patriarchal structure. Family businesses can usually still work on this. We are trying to create such an innovation-friendly environment in the Textation Group with JUMBO-Textil and vombaur, and in this way to be the best solution partner for narrow textiles in the future.

You manufacture exclusively in Germany. Why? Have you never been tempted to benefit from lower wage levels in other countries?

Andreas Kielholz: We position ourselves as a highly qualified solutions partner and aim to provide our customers with excellent expertise in the field of narrow textiles. We can do this best in a country with very good education and training opportunities, which for us, is Germany as a location. Of course, we also work in close cooperation with partners in Eastern Europe.

Customized instead of solutions for major customers: The topic of individualization up to batch size 1 takes up a lot of space today. At the new site in Sprockhövel, you have invested significantly in innovative production technology. What is your opinion of individual product solutions, and in which areas of application have you already implemented them successfully?



Andreas Kielholz: We don't produce tailored suits; we produce goods by the meter. Batch size 1 - this has a special meaning for us: We develop in exchange with our customers for one project - a car seat in an off-road vehicle, a crab on a crane, an exoskeleton, a baby grab ring, whatever - so we develop a textile component for this one project. Individually specified for the particular concrete application and its requirements - for example, with regard to elongation, temperature resistance, skin-friendliness, etc. All the properties of the textile are configured individually. And then it is

produced in the required quantity. This is definitely a customized solution. So; if the customer project is the tailored suit, then "individualization up to batch size 1" is our day-to-day business. Because that's what we do.



What does it take for such solutions?

Patrick Kielholz: A close exchange is important for such individual solutions, but also precise industry knowledge and knowledge of the applicable standards. We assist some customers all the way to product registration and advice on technical delivery conditions and documentation. For individual solutions, know-how and experience go far beyond technical textile expertise. The key basis here is to understand the customer's product, the manufacturing process and its purpose. We want to offer a complete solution that

provides the greatest value for the respective client company. This starts with the selection of the raw material and ends with the use by the end consumers.

Breaking new ground means being willing to make decisions, overcoming fears - and therefore also having the courage to fail. Not each project can succeed. In retrospect, which entrepreneurial decision are you particularly glad you made?

Andreas Kielholz: The courageous decisions to reconstruct JUMBO-Textil, the corporate alliance with vom-baur and the planned new building here are among them - and: having my son on the Executive Board. He brings a new, different perspective to the company, which enriches us enormously. In addition, I simply enjoy it. Who sees their grown-up children every day?

Patrick Kielholz: Yes, that took courage to fail. (laughs) Seriously, not every result of a decision can be dated as firmly as the commissioning of our new building. We are right in the middle of some processes. We started digitization early on, for example, and it will certainly never be completed. It has an infinite number of facets - from materials management to product development, from quality assurance to internal and external processes. It's an unbelievably dynamic topic that is constantly evolving and opening up new potential for improvement. You need smart people who want to work as a team to advance the issues, otherwise you'll be

lagging behind instead of moving forward. The same applies to sustainability - also a topic that must be viewed as an opportunity rather than an unwanted evil, as is so often the case.

Andreas Kielholz: That's the crux of the matter: As a company, it's important not to be driven by such major issues, but to actively drive development forward yourself.



How important is the concept of sustainability in corporate decision-making? Which certifications do you use and where do you go beyond legal requirements?

Andreas Kielholz: Our quality management system is certified according to IATF 16949:2016, an extension of ISO 9001 developed by the automotive industry. We have also been awarded Formula Q-Capability according to the VW Group's customer-specific certification with a score of 95%. In the area of environment and sustainability, we are certified to the environmental management standard ISO 14001:2015, and many of our products meet the OEKO-TEX® Product Class I certificate. In addition, we expressly stand by the claim to enforce human rights, labor, social and ecological standards in economic value-added processes, as formulated in the Code of Conduct of the German Textile and Fashion Industry.

Patrick Kielholz: A specific feature of family businesses becomes apparent here as well. The demands on the company and the values it stands for are much more personal demands. People must and want to be measured against these demands as individuals. They cannot and do not want to hide in the anonymity of stock corporations. A family business owner is also personally connected to the stakeholders of his company and therefore has a stronger interest in pursuing social, environmental and economic sustainability.

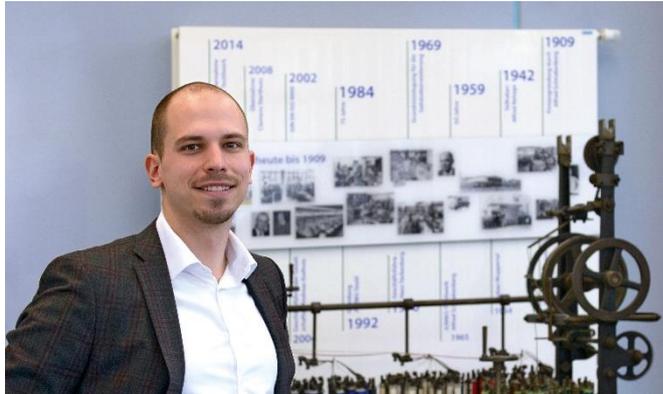
How do you judge the efforts of other countries, such as China, to increasingly address the issue of sustainability? Will this mean that an important unique selling point in the comparison between Europe and Asia will be lost in the future?

Andreas Kielholz: The topic of sustainability has not yet reached its peak, in other words: demand will continue to rise here as well. China is getting stronger, but Europe is also working on not losing its pioneering role. Increased demand and competition will benefit us all, especially agile companies.

The COVID19 pandemic has also left its mark on the textile and clothing industry. When you look back on just under a year of "state of emergency" - what positive experiences do you take with you, where do you see a need for improvement, for what support are you grateful and where did you feel left alone?

Andreas Kielholz: By facing up to the challenges early on and - thanks to our timely, multi-layered controlling - always knowing where we stand, we were able to adapt quickly. This is how we have largely come through

the crisis well. The newly developed forms of work - mobile working and video conferencing, partly also in-house - will continue to exist. We have also made significant progress in digitalisation and new media.



If you had to introduce your company in 100 words to someone who does not know JUMBO-Textil: What would you say? What makes you unique?

Patrick Kielholz: JUMBO-Textil is a solution partner - our customers are always at the center of our thoughts and actions. For them and their projects, we develop and manufacture sophisticated technical narrow textiles: precise, custom-fit and Made in Germany.

Andreas Kielholz: I don't even need that many words: Highest quality standards, intensive customer relationship, reliability and unique Elastics expertise.

Patrick Kielholz: These were eight. (laughs)

*The Interview was conducted by Ines Chucholowius,
Managing partner of Textination GmbH*

About the persons:

Andreas Kielholz has worked as an independent entrepreneur for 40 years out of 48 professional years and with JUMBO-Textil in the textile industry since 2004. The 65-year-old is managing partner of JUMBO-Textil GmbH & Co. KG, vombaur GmbH & Co KG and Textation Group GmbH & Co. KG.

Patrick Kielholz studied economics in Munich, Wuppertal and San Francisco. As a Master of Science (Entrepreneurship and Innovations), he joined the group in 2018, initially for a subsidiary, Acker Textilwerk. Today, the 30-year-old business development manager and authorised signatory is responsible for the corporate development of the entire group and manages the production of JUMBO-Textil.