

# How Denim Continues to Win Market Share

In a hyper competitive market, jeans are finding new ways to remain on consumers' shopping lists.

ALTHOUGH JEANS REMAIN a fashion favorite, increasing competition from other casualwear options, as well as just the sheer number of denim brands in the market, has challenged brands and retailers to find new ways to keep their products exciting.

"Today the two biggest challenges we face in the denim market are: Convincing the consumer, who already owns several pairs of jeans, to buy one more pair; and Increasing the profit margins on our products for both retailers and manufacturers," said Jane Singer, Director and Head of Market Intelligence at *Inside Fashion*.

The old days of simply competing on price are fading fast. The 'new consumer' is much more demanding. They read labels,

## The Real Deal

In a market that is increasingly driven by 'innovation' consumers are getting savvier about what properties are actually adding value to a garment.

"Advertising and marketing does not equal innovation. We need to be serious about fabric development and which properties will actually enhance the fabric for the end consumer," said Amy Wang, General Manager of Advance Denim.

"We should be focusing on developing crossover materials and more eco-friendly denim fabrics," she added.

"Even a 1 percent change in fiber and chemistry can make a huge difference in denim fabrics," said Leo Gu, General Manager at

performance to standard LYCRA® T400 fiber, and the use of recycled PET means that there is less waste going to landfill.

"Most recycled fibers are not stretch fibers. At the same time, most stretch fibers made partly from renewable sources don't offer the level of stretch performance that LYCRA® T400® EcoMade technology offers," said Ms. Hegedus.

## Stretch Stays Strong

Stretch properties have become a core part of most apparel, especially in jeans. Even looser silhouettes are looking to stretch fibers to boost shape retention and provide greater comfort to the wearer.

"We see continued growth in demand



Jane Singer, from *Inside Fashion*



Amy Wang, from Advance Denim



Daniel Chuangxing Fang from Conshing



Peter Guo, from Texhong



Jean Hegedus, from INVISTA



Leo Gu, from Prosperity

research products before buying, and will return products if they are not satisfied with them.

"New technologies are providing brands with fairly easy ways to elevate their products," said Ms. Singer, speaking at Intertextile Shanghai (March 14, 2018).

"For example, many brands have turned to LYCRA® T400® technology to add improved stretch and retention to jeans. This has helped to give consumers jeans that fit better, something that's at the top of most consumers' 'wish lists' when shopping for jeans," said Ms. Singer.

"In recent years the denim industry has benefitted from the successful use of new technologies throughout the denim supply chain," said Daniel Fang, Garment Center Marketing Dept Manager at Guangzhou Conshing Clothing Group Co. Ltd.

"The wide use of super-stretch and bi-stretch has greatly improved the comfort and shaping performance of denim garments," he said.

Prosperity Textile (HK) Ltd. Prosperity continues to invest not only in developing fabrics with added performance, but also in reducing the environmental impact of denim production through the use of sustainable fibers, an alkali recycling system and other initiatives.

## Greener Jeans

Sustainability remains a key concern in the denim sector. The goal is to hit sustainability targets without compromising the look and feel that has made denim a consumer favorite.

New fiber technology is helping to make this possible.

Newly released LYCRA® T400® fiber with EcoMade technology is made in part from a combination of recycled PET and plant-based materials. "Fifty percent of the fiber is made from recycled materials while another 18 percent is plant based, bringing the total sustainable content to 68 percent," said Jean Hegedus, Global Segment Director - Denim & Apparel at INVISTA. LYCRA® T400® fiber with EcoMade technology has similar

for stretch yarns," said Peter Guo, Marketing Director at Texhong (China) Investment Co. Ltd., one of the world's largest spinners of cotton core spun yarns.

Further developing stretch properties, INVISTA offers three options for bi-stretch functionality. Dual Warp technology provides easy-to-control levels of shrinkage and stretch, while retaining the authentic look of the fabric.

Easy Set LYCRA® fiber (T562B) is for fabrics with low to moderate stretch, and offers easy to handle warping, sizing and beaming. Popular LYCRA® dualFX® technology offers excellent growth and shrinkage, even for high stretch fabrics.

For true 360-degree flexibility, LYCRA® XFIT technology is developed to add stretch to the warp for more even stretch in key areas including the seat, thigh and knee.

"Once you go stretch, you never go back," said Mr. Gu, emphasizing the key role that stretch denim is playing in the market. "Function is replacing fashion. Consumers want to be comfortable," he added.