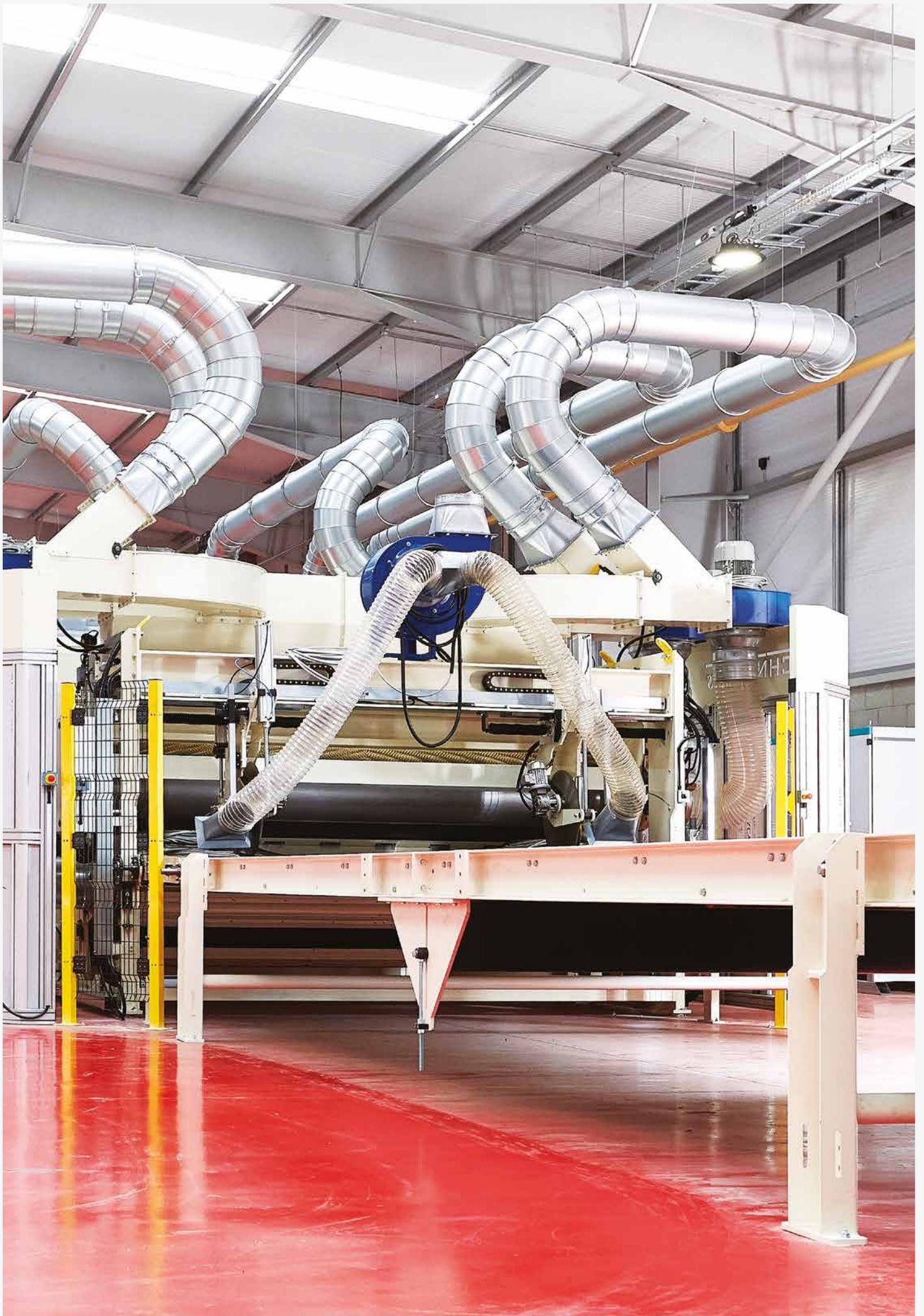


TEXFELT MATERIAL GAINS



Texfelt
Underlay & Fibre Technology



WE TALK TO TEXFELT ABOUT THEIR NEW FACILITY, THEIR EFFORTS TO KEEP UP WITH A CHANGING INDUSTRY, AND SOME OF THE SURPRISING NEW MARKETS THEY'VE FOUND WORK IN...

MATERIAL GAINS

Texfelt is a subsidiary of James Robinson fibres and forms part of JR Group UK Ltd, manufacturers of non-woven products who primarily manufacture products for the flooring, furniture and bedding industries but they aren't exclusive in those markets.

“We’re also looking at producing a range of thermally and acoustically efficient insulation products for the construction and automotive industries, and that’s all come around in the last 12 months while we’ve been developing the new site at Bradford to house our new manufacturing process,” explains James Taylor, the company’s Managing Director. “Prior to that we were a fairly

“WE’RE ALSO LOOKING AT PRODUCING A RANGE OF THERMALLY AND ACOUSTICALLY EFFICIENT INSULATION PRODUCTS ”

small company in an old textile mill in Elland with a needle punch line making traditional carpet underlay.”

Carpet underlays may not, at first, sound like the most glamorous field of work, but that’s not been enough to put off five generations of Taylor’s family. He tells us, “I’m the fourth generation in the family business and my son who’s 18 has just come into the business while studying at college.”

A business that’s been around that long is going to see its market

change substantially, and it’s meeting the challenges of these changes that has driven Texfelt to build its new, state of the art facility in Bradford.

AN EXPANDING OFFERING

“I think the main driver was that we’ve been in the situation for a number of years where we were trapped in the confines of an old mill and the technology we were using was quite old. The market in the flooring industry over the last 15 to 20 years has moved on substantially and become indoctrinated by cheap polyurethane foam underlay” Taylor says. “The traditional needle-punch underlay was seeing a decline, so we were faced with the question of “What’s next? What do we do?””

Of course, one of the first steps any company takes under these circumstances is to expand their offering, and Texfelt has certainly done that.

“We had already expanded our trading activities in order to grow. We also had an online business where we were selling carpet underlays and flooring accessories to consumers on a home delivery network,” Taylor points out. “We’ve also been doing a little business in the special effects industry.”

You see, it turns out we were wrong about the glamour of the carpet underlay sector. You may have seen the results of Texfelt’s handywork while watching >>

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Investment in a state-of-the-art Kytech non woven plant



“WE KEPT SEEING REGULAR ORDERS THROUGH OUR ONLINE BUSINESS FOR UNDERLAY TO FILM PRODUCTION COMPANIES IN THE UK”

James Taylor
MD
<<

Star Wars: The Force Awakes, the James Bond film, Spectre, Assassins Creed, Jurassic Park or even the TV series Game of Thrones.

“We got involved a couple of years ago,” Taylor says matter-of-factly. “We kept seeing regular orders through our online business for underlay to film production companies in the UK. We started talking to them and understanding what



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they were using it for. We found our products were being used in major blockbuster movies for sound attenuation for film sets, and for pyrotechnics to create explosion scenes, controlled fires, that kind of thing. They were using our product and dousing it in flammable substances and setting fire to it. So as a result of that we got more involved and with more than one studio, we still do a bit of that now.”

However, while Texfelt has remained open to new opportunities, Taylor has been keen to make sure they don't move away from their core values.

“All these things that we bolted onto the business to add value were taking us away from manufacturing, which isn't what our core values are

about,” he says. “Our whole business has evolved from being manufacturers of textile materials, and I was quite keen to get back into that.”

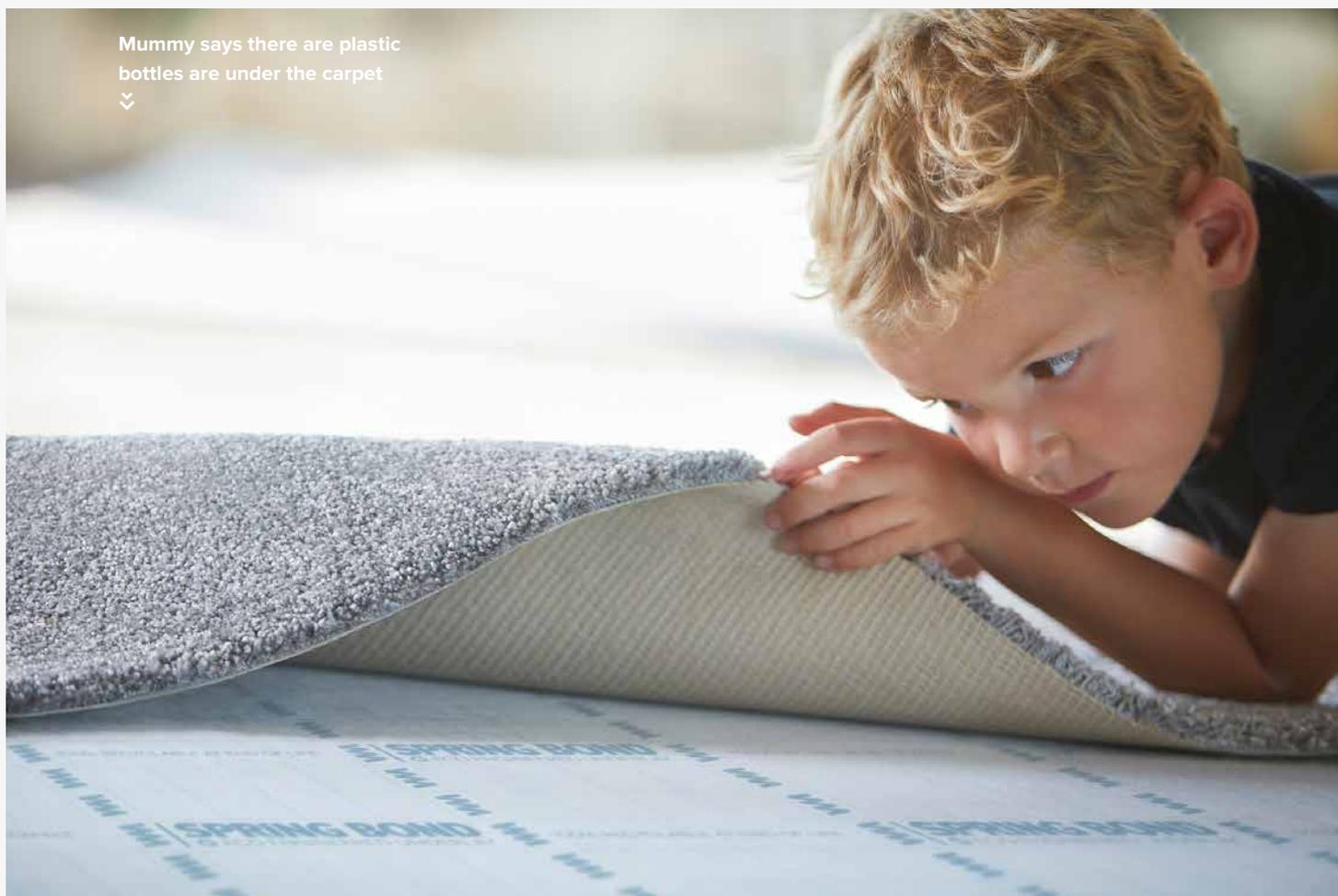
FIT FOR THE FUTURE

In response to the decline in their traditional markets, Texfelt has invested heavily in new machinery and modern technology, which has been five or six years in development, the result being a state-of-the-art Kyttech non-woven

plant, which is a collaboration between Texfelt and four other machinery manufacturers. “It gives us a unique technology which allows us to make technical non-woven products, fit for the future and for different industries as well as the sectors that we're currently working in, engineering our new SpringBond™ virtual spring structure into the products which perform very well for resilience and acoustic performance. The new brand name being derived

“IN RESPONSE TO THE DECLINE IN THEIR TRADITIONAL MARKETS, TEXFELT HAS INVESTED HEAVILY IN NEW MACHINERY AND MODERN TECHNOLOGY” >>

Mummy says there are plastic bottles are under the carpet
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“WE’RE JUST IN THE FINAL THROWS OF COMMISSIONING THE LINE AT FULL PRODUCTION NOW WHICH WILL SOON BE COMPLETE”

from the combination of our virtual spring technology and our process of thermal bonding various regenerated fibres. We’re flexible enough to be able to utilise various textile waste streams and regenerated fibres derived from recycled plastic bottles, and single use plastics and turn them into products for the flooring, furniture and bedding industries. They’re fantastic products, being highly efficient, with extremely low levels of VOC, sustainable, made from recycled materials and 100% recyclable, and as such tick all of the green credential boxes. They’re fit for the future

and reinforce our company’s eco credentials by providing an environmentally conscious and safer alternative to Polyurethane foam products, that are used widely in underlays, furniture and mattress fillings which cannot be sustainable in the future” Taylor says.

Of course, building a development of this size across four separate equipment manufacturers is not a simple operation by any means.

“Our biggest challenge has been from a technical aspect having a system produced which is bespoke, across four



“OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE HAS BEEN FROM A TECHNICAL ASPECT HAVING A SYSTEM PRODUCED WHICH IS BESPOKE, ACROSS FOUR DIFFERENT LANGUAGE SPEAKING MANUFACTURERS”

managed to achieve so far and pays tribute to their employees and their Kytech manufacturing partners for their hard work and commitment to the project and also to the construction team lead by architect and surveyor T D Jagger Ltd for designing and constructing the 60,000sq.ft manufacturing plant in Bradford.

“It’s working, we’ve come through those issues now,” he says. “We’re just in the final throws of commissioning the line at full production now which will soon be complete. It’s been a case of empowering our staff to learn the new skills and technical knowledge to operate the new machinery. It’s fair to say we’ve pushed the machinery beyond the parameters of what it was

intended to do by allowing our engineering team time to exhaust all the research and development trials and product development. They’ve had an opportunity to really push the machine to its capabilities.”

In many ways, Texfelt’s position as a company in search of new markets has gifted it a kind of flexibility most companies would envy. Taylors reflects, “We’ve been fortunate in a way that we’ve not had ready-made markets for some of the new products which has allowed us breathing space to do researching and testing and trialling for lots of different customers in different sectors. Going through that experience has been invaluable.”

Just like a character in one of the blockbusters Texfelt have supplied their products to, the company has gone out searching for fortunes in new territories using technology, and has taken them on a journey that has come right back to where it all began, in manufacturing.

“We’ve had more than five generations of family within the textile industry and this is where we’ve got to!” Taylor says happily. “We’ve looped back into manufacturing again.”

⤴ **SpringBond™ underlay contains approximately 180 plastic bottles per roll helping to reduce plastic waste entering our rivers and oceans**

different language speaking manufacturers. That’s certainly given us a few headaches over the last 12 months,” Taylor admits.

How do you coordinate different companies processes and software on such a huge project? Taylor answers with a laugh, “With difficulty!”

Joking aside, Taylor is clearly proud of what the company have





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