

## VAN CLEWE (Gerhard van Clewe GmbH & Co KG)

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### VAN CLEWE, GERMANY | 2018

## A leading European textile finisher with ZIMMER AUSTRIA machinery

### What does really matter to compete within the textile industry?

– insights through the voice of one of Germany's, resp. Europe's, most successful family-run textile finisher.

Interview with Ansgar Van Clewe, by ZIMMER AUSTRIA

Topics such as digitalization, sustainability and innovation as well as trust, loyalty and integrity are often mentioned as key drivers for successful business. Within this home story we could highlight one essential key factor - strong and reliable partnerships - as foundation for long-term success!

Today's markets are getting more and more complex and competitive. Especially in the textile industry the impacts of globalization are tremendous. But how to compete in this highly competitive environment? – To answer this question, we have conducted an interview with the German family-run company Van Clewe, which can be proudly presented as one of our highly valued customers.

### Quick Info

Customer	VAN CLEWE (Gerhard van Clewe GmbH & Co KG)
Interview partner	Ansgar Van Clewe (CEO)
Homepage	<a href="http://www.van-clewe.de">www.van-clewe.de</a>
Partnership with ZIMMER AUSTRIA	since 1995 (first machine bought in 1995)
Main markets	Europe (based in Germany)
Industry	Apparel & Technical Textile Products

*#InteriorSolarShading #HomeTextiles #StageAndDisplayFabrics #ClothingTextiles #AutomotiveTextiles #UpholsteryFabrics #TechnicalFabrics*

### Current Machines from ZIMMER AUSTRIA:

- **MAGNOROLL** Multipurpose Coating Machine equipped with the modules: Screen Coating, Magnetic Direct Roll Coating, MK IV Knife Coating, working width 3200mm
- **ROTASCREEN.TU** printing machine with open bearing system for high flexibility and quick set-up time during design changes, working width 2400mm
- **COMPACT.HC** High Capacity Hot Air Dryer with THERMOCURE technology
- **KÄLIN.DLR** Dust and Lint Removal Device for most efficient fabric cleaning results

*With more than 200 employees and around 50 production machineries, Van Clewe could be established among today's most successful family-run textile finisher in Germany, resp. Europe. Ansgar, could you tell us about the most important milestones and how this success story developed from your point of view?*

It all started back in 1954, when my grandfather founded the company with just one raising machine. We did classic contract-work for regional customers, basically in all areas of textile finishing. From coating to dyeing, from blue jeans to sun protection products such as interior solar blinds, where we are a leading supplier nowadays. We could successfully develop to an innovative and versatile textile finisher that offers high-quality contract-work on the one hand as well as the manufacturing of our own high-quality textile products that are distributed through our subsidiaries **VAN CLEWE SUNPROTECTION, DEKO TEX** or

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. I've started to work within the family business in 1992 and now I am leading the company in the 3rd generation with the strong willingness to hand it over to the 4th generation one day.



***You have started in 1992, right in the middle of the 1992/93 European Financial Crisis. What has determined your success or what did really matter, especially in rough times?***

That's correct, we went through some crisis in the last 30 years. Flexibility and the ability to innovate is definitely important in order to respond quickly on unexpected changes in the market. I guess nowadays, to be successful in the field of contract-work it is essential to increase the level of specialization. For example, we decided to focus on specific core competences to be able to offer the best products within the fields of e.g. interior solar shading, stage and display fabrics as well as care products.

***Is there maybe one important key factor, that you could highlight retrospectively?***

Strong Partnerships with the focus on building a long-lasting customer relationship could definitely be highlighted. We have always followed one essential approach, that could be also understood as our company motto **"FROM THE FIRST TO THE LAST METRE"** – by means of offering the best possible quality for our customers, though an awareness of the environment and strong focus on sustainability. Therefore, we have positioned Van Clewe not as the cheapest but rather as the most reliable and trustworthy supplier of high quality products. We are producing 100% in Germany and got several certifications that go far beyond industry standards in the fields of environmental protection and quality. And our long-term partners and customers value this very much.

***As Van Clewe is focused on the manufacturing of top quality goods – How important are decisions regarding plant and machinery?***

Our most important customers rely on our ability to deliver products on a constant high-quality level, since more than 20 years. In order to build such a long-lasting partnership, we also need to rely on durable machinery to achieve the desired specifications. This lead us to **ZIMMER AUSTRIA**.

*Van Clewe and ZIMMER AUSTRIA are characterized quite similar as they are both established family-run businesses with a strong focus on high-quality solutions. What factors had been decisive for your decision to rely on the strengths of ZIMMER AUSTRIA?*

To deliver 100% quality you have to work with 100% quality. For achieving this, you need to invest strategically in the best machine parks. We have chosen to make our decision towards proven and established quality, as this really matters in the fields of textile printing as well as coating. And with **ZIMMER AUSTRIA** we have found a trustworthy and reliable partner. For example, Van Clewe is printing in the application areas of sun protection, clothing and technical prints. And in this area high flexibility by means of fast and easy handling during design changes is as important as printing with maximum accuracy and in highest quality. Therefore, we are working with the **ZIMMER ROTASCREEN.TU** printing machine with open bearing system. Because this system allows us to achieve the necessary high quality and flexibility even at a large printing width of 2.40 meters as screens, color pipes and roll rods can be pre-assembled and changed simultaneously. This saves time and minimizes costs, while constantly achieving highest quality results without any problems or many machine downtimes. (more about [ROTASCREEN.TU](#))



*We are very pleased that the technology of ZIMMER AUSTRIA could help you to fulfill your aim of supplying your customers “FROM THE FIRST TO THE LAST METRE” with top quality products. Are there any specifications that you appreciate in particular?*

High accuracy, quality and highest technological standards. Furthermore, **ZIMMER AUSTRIA** is known as a reliable machine manufacturer that produces to 100% in Europe under highest quality standards. That’s what we appreciate in particular. Regarding the printing machine, **ZIMMER’s** open bearing system with the new squeegee holding device and the squeegee in combination with the Magnet System enables us to achieve way better results than with traditional roll squeegees. Since we are using the technology of **ZIMMER AUSTRIA** we didn’t have broken squeegees anymore. And due to the paste recovery system, we are also able to fulfill our environmental as energy saving standards. So all in all we are more than satisfied with our machines from **ZIMMER AUSTRIA**.

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*[Van Clewe is using the latest RH-M-ASG squeegee holding device, a high-class execution for stepless fine adjustment of the Variocolor ASG roll & magnet blade squeegee].*

### **Recently you have also invested in a new coating machine, is that correct?**

Yes, that's right. We could see that the pressure within the industry on generating growth is getting higher and higher. To compete successfully you have to be fast and flexible to satisfy international customer needs, as the globalized world is increasingly becoming more competitive. In the case of Van Clewe we could see a growing demand and trend towards high quality coatings, especially in one of our core competences, the sun protection segment. Therefore, we want to strengthen our capabilities and decided to invest in the new **MAGNOROLL** coating machine from **ZIMMER AUSTRIA**, as we could also see the advantages in terms of quality, due to the Magnet System within our coating line.

*[Van Clewe is using the new MAGNOROLL multipurpose coating machine, with the modules Screen Coating, Magnetic Direct Roll Coating, MK IV Knife Coating].*



**With strategic investments in state-of-the-art machinery Van Clewe could develop to a textile finisher that stands for highest quality. Would you say that this focus on manufacturing of outstanding high-quality products is one success factor within the textile industry?**

We offer a wide spectrum and high level of expertise in various applications, from dry and wet finishing through dyeing and pre-treatment to tumbling, coating, laminating and much more. But we have always specialized in delivering high quality results among our core competences. This is only possible due to our investments in high quality machinery, but on the other hand even more through our well trained, dedicated and high qualified employees.

**This success story around Van Clewe is steadily growing. Your customers, respectively partnerships are lasting since decades. How should this continue? Do you have any specific plans for the future?**

When you plan everything in detail, the chance of not meeting any set goals is pretty high. That's why we rather focus on

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constantly delivering high quality products by investing in the best machinery, optimizing efficiency, enhance sustainability and we make large investments in environmental improvements, as we perceive that as our responsibility. For example we've pioneered with our own waste water recycling system. Furthermore, we produce partly with self-generated electricity and got just recently in August 2013 certificated with the ISO 50001 in the field of energy management systems. The aim of all these efforts is to prepare the Van Clewe group for the next possible unpredictable events or external events such as an economic crisis. The textile industry was hit every 10 to 12 years by external events and we want to be prepared in the best possible way to lead our company also through the next rough time, as we did in the past.

### *Van Clewe could be seen as crisis approved. What was motivating you in such rough times?*

You really must be in there with heart and soul. The strong willingness to be able to hand all this over to the next generation was always motivating the entire company as well as myself. In my opinion, you cannot lead through numbers only, or technology – what really matters is a strong willingness, eagerness and most of all good partnerships, where you can rely on in any situation. In the same way as we can rely on high quality machines from **ZIMMER AUSTRIA**, or our customers rely on our proven quality since decades. Maybe it's because family-run businesses are operating differently. They are putting high efforts in long-term partnerships, sustainability and delivering of high quality products instead of operating from quarter to quarter for various shareholder interests. It's all based on long held traditions and know-how that was taught from generation to generation. Personally, I've started to work for the family business as a machine operator and that's one reason why I know exactly what I can require and expect from our dedicated employees.

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