



NEXTUP EXPERT INTERVIEW



An interview with **Thomas Michaelis**,
Head of Textile Coatings EMEA/LA, Covestro

How the textiles industry is preparing for the future

Textiles are all around us – but how will they be used in future? In this interview, Thomas Michaelis explores textiles trends from sustainability to digital printing, and how Covestro helps customers create future-proof solutions.

Collaborating to create high-performance, future-proof textiles coatings

1

Question 1:

What are the biggest trends in the textiles industry, and how do they shape Covestro's innovation?

Sustainability is obviously a major driver in the textiles industry. Consumers care more and more about the environmental and social impact of their purchases, and so our customers – including original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and consumer brands – are now taking a closer look into their products' carbon footprint.

These customers are looking for material developments that help them meet their sustainability targets while still offering performance and price-competitiveness. That demand has helped shape the development of our partly bio-based and mass-balance-based raw materials, for example.

Related to sustainability is a big trend toward digital printing, since this is less energy- and resource-intensive than traditional roller printing. But digital printing offers a second advantage in the personalization of materials at scale. That's because you use the pigment at exactly the moment you need it, and the printer does most of the work – making it much easier and more cost-effective to create one-off designs.

Finally, there's also a trend to combine performance with new functions, particularly in automotive applications. These textile coatings need to offer performance properties such as resistance to stains and wear. But using translucent coatings creates additional opportunities to incorporate LEDs into automotive interiors, for example, enabling lighting and signage.

2

Question 2:

How can application testing enable the development of future-proof materials?

We're always aiming to meet our customers' future needs – in terms of both performance and sustainability – across the various applications in the textiles industry. It's why we've worked to build up a wide range of textiles coating solutions, including partly bio-based options.

Application testing means we're not just telling our customers: "Here's a material, it should work." We're saying: "Okay, we can test and refine and make sure that this material can definitely fulfill what you need it to..."

To simulate our customers' varied production processes, we have a wide range of application machinery in our Technical Center. Because of the ability to test properties directly in the application, we can also support customers with their formulation and process development, enabling them to develop new – and often more sustainable – materials.

As an example, we recently worked with one customer to help them develop a new, more sustainable material with a significantly reduced carbon footprint, thanks to a water-based PU coating with approximately 67% bio-based carbon content*. This customer was able to develop and pre-test the materials on our pilot line, fine-tuning the properties to create a product they're really happy with.

3

Question 3:

What application possibilities are opening up for textiles coatings?

When you think about textiles, you might think about fashion and clothes, or soft furnishings and household materials. But textiles are even more versatile than this, and the industry is also exploring new application areas.

For instance, textiles are increasingly used in technical applications like conveyor belts, expansion bellows, and tents. We are also seeing some innovative approaches to using textiles in construction, since they are easier to shape than traditional materials like steel. This could open up much more flexibility in building designs – think of rounded bricks!

It's critical to use the right coating for each of these applications – which is why we aim to offer a broad range of coating solutions for our textiles customers. What's also critical for us are continuous conversations with partners across the value chain – that way, we can keep our finger on the pulse of textile developments and harness the opportunities this brings for our customers.



“

Continuous conversations with partners across the value chain are critical – that way, we can keep our finger on the pulse of textile developments and harness the opportunities these bring for our customers.

”

*Expressed as fraction of total carbon content, calculated internally and analytically verified through external C14 measurement.

Key drivers in textiles



Hover over the boxes below to read more:



Interested in learning more?

Contact Thomas and our other textiles experts.



Covestro Deutschland AG
Kaiser-Wilhelm-Allee 60
51373 Leverkusen
Germany

statusnext.covestro.com

The manner in which you use our products, technical assistance and information (whether verbal, written or by way of production evaluations), including any suggested formulations and recommendations, is beyond our control. Therefore, it is imperative that you test our products to determine suitability for your processing and intended uses. Your analysis must at least include testing to determine suitability from a technical, health, safety, and environmental and regulatory standpoint. Such testing has not necessarily been done by Covestro, and Covestro has not obtained any approvals or licenses for a particular use or application of the product, unless explicitly stated otherwise. [EMEA only: If the intended use of the product is for the manufacture of a pharmaceutical/ medicinal product, medical device¹ or of pre-cursor products for medical devices or for other specifically regulated applications which lead or may lead to a regulatory obligation of Covestro, Covestro must explicitly agree to such application before the sale.] Any samples provided by Covestro are for testing purposes only and not for commercial use. Unless we otherwise agree in writing, all products are sold strictly pursuant to the terms of our standard conditions of sale which are available upon request. All information, including technical assistance is given without warranty or guarantee and is subject to change without notice. It is expressly understood and agreed by you that you assume and hereby expressly release and indemnify us and hold us harmless from all liability, in tort, contract or otherwise, incurred in connection with the use of our products, technical assistance, and information. Any statement or recommendation not contained herein is unauthorized and shall not bind us. Nothing herein shall be construed as a recommendation to use any product in conflict with any claim of any patent relative to any material or its use. No license is implied or in fact granted under the claims of any patent.

¹ Please see the "Guidance on Use of Covestro Products in a Medical Application" document.

Edition: 2026