



Long-Lasting Odor Control and Freshness in Apparel and Textile Products are Priorities for Millennials

By Karel Williams

“Opportunities,” it has often been said, “should not be neglected because they rarely visit us twice.” That is sound advice for the global textile and apparel industry when it comes to marketing to millennials, whose mindset, consumer behaviors and spending power are reshaping the global economy and creating a substantial and viable marketing opportunity for product manufacturers and brand owners.

How substantial an opportunity? Millennials, generally defined as people born between about 1980 and the early 2000s, number 1.7 billion people or approximately one out of every four people on the planet.

Shared Values

A growing body of research shows that while millennials are impacted by their local cultures, there are more commonalities among them than there are differences. That is because they share the same information channels and media content with their peers in other countries, courtesy of

the internet and social media, helping them form common perspectives, values, behaviors, and motivations.

The research highlights some overarching trends that provide a roadmap to successfully marketing textile and apparel products to millennials no matter where they live. Findings from the research company Nielson, which are confirmed by Dow Microbial Control proprietary research, show that:

- ❖ Among the most prominent trends in millennials is a desire for sustainable, balanced and healthy lifestyles along side a need to assert greater control over their personal and family health and wellness.
- ❖ Almost 75 percent of millennials are willing to pay extra for sustainable offerings and believe that their personal values are more important than personal benefits, such as cost savings.
- ❖ Millennials expect today's products to have increasingly better performance benefits than yesterday's products.
- ❖ Millennials want to be more informed about how the products they purchase perform and the business practices of the companies that produce and sell them.

Dow: Ahead of the Trend

Dow Microbial Control recognized the emerging need among millennials and others for a healthy, more sustainable lifestyle and developed a strategy to help apparel and textile manufacturers take advantage of these trends. That strategy initially played out in September 2012 with the introduction of SILVADUR™ Antimicrobial, Dow's advanced odor-control technology for apparel and textiles.

This intelligent technology neutralizes odor-causing bacteria on fabric surfaces, which directly plays into consumer desires for healthier and sustainable lifestyles. For example, apparel products treated with SILVADUR stay fresher longer, which reduces the need for frequent launderings, saving water and energy, as well as time that is so valuable to today's busy millennials.

Since its introduction, SILVADUR technology has enabled many brands to provide long-lasting odor protection across a wide array of product lines. These include, but are not limited to, commonly-worn base-layer products where odor can build up, such as t-shirts and underwear, sports and fitness

apparel, socks and shoes. SILVADUR is also adding value in denim, including jeans, and casual clothes for men, as well as home textiles, such as bed linens, sheets, pillows and rugs, and other product categories.

Extensive testing has shown that SILVADUR has a high degree of efficacy against a wide range of odor-causing bacteria and is highly durable. Feedback from apparel manufacturers indicates that the technology is efficient and effective and the application process is easy to adopt and use. The solution is compatible with softeners, optical brighteners and most auxiliary agents and does not react with other chemical treatments. It can easily be incorporated into the existing operating systems of a mill, using either exhaustion or padding processes, without requiring excessive processing temperatures, times or added binders. It can also be applied by spraying or other methods.

Giving Consumers Peace of Mind

SILVADUR is an ingredient technology, making it invisible to millennials and other consumers who want information on the products they purchase and their performance attributes. In July 2016, Dow Microbial Control addressed this issue by introducing the INTELLIFRESH™ brand, which is designed to give consumers peace of mind that the products they purchase are providing the reliable, durable odor control and long-lasting freshness protection that is so important to them. The INTELLIFRESH brand on a product is a signal that Dow's SILVADUR technology is in the product and performing at a high level.



INTELLIFRESH is available to select manufacturers and retailers of consumer goods who collaborate with Dow through a brand licensing and quality assurance program. The quality assurance program is designed to ensure that all products featuring the INTELLIFRESH label meet measurable and quantifiable performance standards, specifications and quality protocols and comply with industry and regulatory requirements.

An Opportunity for the Taking

Clearly, the opportunity has never been greater for those manufacturers and retailers of apparel and textile products

who understand the enormity of the millennial cohort and the importance they and other consumers place on personal and family health and wellness. Those who partner with Dow Microbial Control to take advantage of this opportunity by manufacturing and marketing products that feature advanced odor control technology and longer lasting freshness can be rewarded with increased sales, higher margins and repeat purchases by loyal customers.

The author Karel Williams is global strategic marketing associate director and brand manager for Dow Microbial Control. He can be reached at klwilliams@dow.com. ♦