With its extensive expertise in textile manufacturing and consistent market orientation, in just a few years TexTrace has developed from an RFID start-up company into a specialist provider of woven brand labels. This Swiss company now manufactures quality textile labels for international upper-mainstream brands on in-house, specially developed machines, produced in increasingly large volumes. In an interview with ‘RFID im Blick’, Sybille Korrodi, Head of Marketing and Business Development at TexTrace, talks about strategies, technical innovation and benefits for the retail industry.

Sybille Korrodi, Head of Marketing and Business Development at TexTrace, in an interview with ‘RFID im Blick’

**Robust chip encapsulation:** The fully encapsulated chip module comes on a reel, is singulated by the machine, positioned and galvanically connected to the antenna. This connection is also highly resistant to chemicals and mechanical stresses. A protective pad covers the chip module, allowing an individual EPC or QR code to be printed on it.

**Up-to-date chip generation for 2015:** TexTrace uses the latest UHF chip technologies from leading manufacturers, providing new anti-counterfeiting and consumer privacy features, as well as improved performance and mass-encoding optimization. In 2015, labels will be available with the latest chip protocol Gen2v2, including Ucode 7 from NXP, and others.

Together with 13 other fashion, consulting, and RFID companies, TexTrace has actively participated in developing the GSI Guideline: “EPC-based RFID item-level tagging” (to be published later this year), which offers practical guidance on the use of item-level RFID in the clothing sector.

What are the advantages for fashion companies when using this integrated textile RFID solution for source tagging? Source tagging offers an effective and convenient identification solution for fashion companies wishing to protect their brand. As the label is directly integrated into the item during production and remains with the entire lifetime of the product, it is more difficult to alter. Also, no changes are required in the manufacturing process. The label is sewn on, like the care label, during production. One very important aspect when it comes to brand protection: as the RFID woven brand label is an integral part of the textile article itself, this manufacturer/label code means to mark each piece to prove that an item is an unlicensed fake or has been altered.

Is the product suitable for all fashion retailers? This depends on retailers’ own supply chain and processes and the added value that they are looking for. As a result, woven RFID brand labels are not (yet) suitable for all or of interest to every fashion retailer today. A hang tag may be the simpler, practical RFID solution. For discounters, other solutions might be more appropriate to their price sensitiveness. Generally speaking, vertically integrated brands with own retail stores will enjoy genuine added value with our solution because they can use RFID for several different applications. A retailer who “just” inventories tagged goods provided by their vendors will find no significant additional benefits of RFID in a textile label. But of course, there are exceptions. For example, a woven RFID label with a custom design would provide a distinctive added value for a large department store orer with own brands.

How do you rate the market demand for textile RFID brand labels? I am convinced that textile RFID brand labels will prevail in any case. We have experienced this added value in our own internal projects, and have learned from discussion with fashion companies that theft and brand protection issues are gaining in importance. Such issues cannot be solved with conventional RFID tagging. The use of RFID in the fashion market is rising across the board. After focusing on process optimization and inventory management in recent years, brands are now looking more and more towards source tagging. The trend towards involving main fashion companies in the RFID processes continues. The customers’ shopping experience at POS and in interactive dressing rooms is the driving force for increasing uptake. Due to cross-selling and omni-channel concepts, RFID is an important distinguishing feature for vertical branded companies that have own retail outlets. They also benefit from the transparency and reliability of the returns handling, especially when using woven RFID labels.