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## RFID moves seamlessly into a sewn-on fashion label

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**The benefits of radio-frequency identification (RFID) in the apparel supply chain are well documented, helping to improve everything from inventory visibility to the prevention of theft. But now a new woven label takes this to the next, logical step by incorporating the technology seamlessly into a sewn-on brand label.**

The all-in-one solution has been developed by Switzerland-based TexTrace AG, a subsidiary of ribbon and narrow fabric specialist Jakob Müller Holding, and is described as a "truly textile" RFID label for the fashion industry.

Offering an alternative to the paper hangtags, adhesive labels or woven labels with an inlay that have up until now been used to keep tabs on apparel items, the new sewn-on brand label has an interwoven high-performance antenna yarn assembled with an encapsulated RFID chip - making it indistinguishable from a normal fashion label.

"What we're offering is really the individual brand label with the technology inside, without any compromise on look and feel," Sybille Korrodi, the company's head of marketing, tells just-style. "From the front of the label, it is impossible to tell there is RFID in it."

She adds that seamlessly integrating the RFID technology inside the labels offers "much added value to fashion brands and retailers," in everything from protecting a brand against counterfeits and the grey market, to stock management and electronic article surveillance - but also ensures they are durable enough to withstand production processes such as stonewashing.

"Because the brand label is sewn on, it's not that easy to remove," Korrodi explains. "Also, from a psychological perspective, people are reluctant to remove a brand label so they can show it off. If a product has been stolen it will be hard to resell if it doesn't have the brand label inside any more."

The beauty is that you can do all this with one label that is not even an additional label. You have it anyway, but now it's smart."

Standard ultra high-frequency (UHF) RFID chips feature in the TexTrace labels so that "the tag can be read with any standard hardware and software," according to Sybille Korrodi, the company's head of marketing.

"Size-wise, you don't want to have a huge transponder inside the garment, as you would have to cut it out - and of course you don't want to cut the brand label out as that gives the garment its value. If you want to do brand protection you have to do it inside the brand label because that's where it happens."

Crucially, it also provides an alternative to other sewn-on textile tags into which the inlay is laminated, making them bulky, stiff and uncomfortable.

Korrodi adds that while most early RFID projects focused on warehouse and in-store inventory counting, "people are now realising that the potential is almost unlimited."

As well as customer loyalty, retention, marketing and brand protection, "think of future mobile applications where people can read the chips in the garments and get brand information like when the next store is going to open, updates on sales and promotions, and VIP events."

"Also, in e-commerce stock accuracy is absolutely crucial. And the more luxurious the products are, the higher the expectations. With RFID, warehouse data on incoming and outgoing goods goes into your online portal, so when customers click on the product they can see if it's available in their size, or when it will be delivered. And since the stock information is accurate, you make sure you can deliver on what you promise."

TexTrace's new woven brand label incorporates RFID technology without compromising the

label's look and feel. And because it is sewn on to the garment, its applications can even go beyond the point of sale, contributing to a closed-loop garment supply chain where RFID can be used to track quality issues, handle warranty cases and product recycling.

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