

In Focus: Textiles

BUSINESS

Apparel Textile Sourcing Canada Widens International Scope

- The ATSC event aims to improve and strengthen international relationships amidst the U.S. trade war.

BY TRACEY GREENSTEIN

As **Apparel Textile Sourcing Canada** comes to a close, event organizers revealed that this year's internationally focused and expanded show broke its attendance records. Show exhibitors hailed from China, India, Ukraine, Switzerland, Spain, the U.K., Turkey, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Indonesia, the U.S. and Canada to partake in various seminars, panels and networking. The three-day long event is taking place Aug. 20 to 22 in Toronto.

In its third year running, ATSC reached record-breaking numbers by amounting to nearly 1,500 visitors in a single day, according to the organization. The ATSC invited apparel and fashion executives, influencers, designers, retailers, importers, wholesalers, merchandisers, buyers and suppliers to liaise with Canadian businesses in the textile trade at its expanded show that featured twice the number of exhibitors as last year and debuted new categories, the firm said. The show housed more than 500 booths from 17 different nations, including a

selection of "high-profile VIPs" across international governments and businesses that "endorsed Canada as a sought-after trade partner" at its Opening Ceremony. This year's show was sharply focused on forging international business relationships with the intent to ameliorate U.S. trade relations, according to show organizers.

Jason Prescott, chief executive officer of JP Communications and producer of ATSC trade shows, said, "International trade is the foundation of the global economy and Canada is a very attractive market for world players, as is evident by the unprecedented number of global exhibitors at this year's event looking to do business and make deals with Canadians, even offering first dibs on local market rights. As the U.S.-China trade war escalates, face-to-face global networking and educational platforms are more important than ever for anyone in the Canadian apparel and textile trade, and the ATSC group is proud to bring this opportunity to Canada, and to support free trade and intellectual property rights."

"ATSC presents everything and anything you need to do business – and stay up to date – in the apparel and textile industry globally under one roof, right at your doorstep without having to travel overseas," Prescott said. "This is a completely unique opportunity for Canadians to make global



A look from Apparel Textile Sourcing Canada.

industry connections and secure unprecedented deals with international players eager to do business in this country."

To further develop international relationships in the textile trade, the organization introduced its first-ever Brand China exhibition, "Avenue ATS," which added new categories such as accessories, giftware, home electronics, footwear, luggage, housewares and general merchandise. In addition, ATSC

welcomed an India Pavilion; its "Made in Ukraine" showcase, as well as additional international showcases from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Vestex Guatemala and The Americas.

Highlights included a panel on China's commitment to free trade with Canada, moderated by Clay Hickson of Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP), featuring Cao Jiachang, Chinese Ambassador Lu Shaye and Wu Zhengping. The panel discussed "incentives for Canadian brands to continue sourcing from China and future outlooks, advantages of further investment in sourcing, and the reality of Chinese reliability on quality control, infrastructure and logistics," according to the firm.

Additional sessions homed in on the U.S. trade war and its effect on Canadian and American retailers, brands and businesses, the ATSC said, including a discussion with Bob Kirke, executive director at the Canadian Apparel Federation, regarding the "new realities of international trade and how to strengthen relationships with global markets," as well as Julia Hughes, president of the U.S. Fashion Industry Association, who discussed strategies for stopping new tariffs on apparel and footwear from China. Both speakers "reinforced that a full-blown trade war between the U.S. and its key trading partners will disrupt the global supply chain and impact trading volumes, with far-reaching repercussions for the Canadian and U.S. industry." In addition, Jeff Streader, an industry veteran and private equity partner, spoke about succeeding in a digital landscape, which included impacts of AI and digital disruption across the global supply chain.

TEXTILES

Textile Exchange Partners With Bluesign for Conferences

- This year's annual events will be held Oct. 18 to 24 in Milan.

BY TRACEY GREENSTEIN

Textile Exchange, a global nonprofit organization for the textile industry, said that it has partnered with Bluesign, a Switzerland-based solution firm for sustainable textile production, for its fifth biannual conference on Oct. 18 and Oct. 19. The event will be held back-to-back with Textile Exchange's annual Textile Sustainability Conference from Oct. 22 to Oct. 24, with both conferences taking place in Milan over a five-day period.

Hosted by Bluesign, its conference will be held at Cavallerizza, part of Milan's recently renovated Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia, followed by Textile Exchange's conference at the Milano Congressi (MiCo). This year's themes are "TraceAbility. NetworkAbility. TransformAbility: Stitching the blue way together" and "United by Action: Accelerating Sustainability in Textiles and Fashion," respectively.

Consumer psychologist and trade industry professional Simonetta Carbonaro will open Bluesign's conference to inform attendees of the challenges regarding textile industry transformation and transparency. Bluesign said it will also introduce non-textile case studies to "provide



Attendees at Textile Exchange in Washington, DC.

insights beyond the industry in an effort to gather new ideas while supporting common ones" in addition to "high-level discussions [that] will explore finance in sustainability and additional topics important to a ceo's agenda while proving the business case of sustainability to redesign today's business models," according to the firm. And the head of the Ethical Fashion Initiative of the International Trade Centre, Simone Cipriani, will present a closing keynote speech regarding how ethical fashion can be realized in the world's "most

challenging locations."

At Textile Exchange, brands, retailers, corporate social responsibility professionals, product and business developers, designers, educators, advocates and sourcing and supply chain leaders – along with other members of the global textile supply chain – will convene to discuss sustainability challenges facing the sector. This includes talks focused on sustainability solutions, the organization said, including "high-level" discussions surrounding the United

Nations' Sustainable Development Goals regarding fiber and materials, circularity, microplastics, water and sustainability in the luxury sector. Textile Exchange said it expects to attract over 500 international attendees.

Confirmed speakers at Textile Exchange include: Pacific Institute's president, Jason Morrison, on the apparel sector's water stewardship opportunity; World Resources Institute research analyst, Deborah Drew, on methods for apparel and textiles to drive the circular economy; Forum for the Future's chief executive, Sally Uren, on how to drive sustainability strategies; and the Hohenstein Institute America's managing director, Ben Mead, on various models for financially viable sustainable farm practices.

"We are pleased to cooperate with Textile Exchange and connect professionals around the world to drive the sustainability transformation in the industry," said Jill Dumain, chief executive officer at Bluesign Technologies. "The fifth Bluesign conference will offer plenty of opportunities for matchmaking and networking with other attendees and sharing your business prospects with like-minded colleagues in the industry."

LaRhea Pepper, managing director of Textile Exchange, said, "Textile Exchange recognizes the importance of collaboration in order to accelerate sustainability in fashion, and this year's Textile Exchange conference is noteworthy for highlighting collaborative initiatives transforming our industry in more sustainable ways. We offer content for every level of expertise and every role in the value chain – from our Basics Day to our Round Tables and Working Groups to our more expert plenaries and breakout sessions."