



Rotary Screen Printing

By Gary N. Mock

As the 75th anniversary of the founding of AATCC approached in 1996, Herb Pratt, long-time historian of AATCC, asked me to write a paper on “75 Years of Change in Dyeing and Finishing.” I delivered the requested paper at the fall 1995 National meeting. In the paper, I described the introduction of rotary printing by European manufacturers in the early 1960s.

Immediately following the talk, William Hoffman told me he had envisioned such a development while a student at Philadelphia Textiles. He had built a working model of rotary screen printing for his senior thesis in 1947, but even though it was taken to a leading machinery company in Philadelphia for possible commercialization, the idea languished. Several US and European companies built commercial machines that failed to be accepted by the industry.

During a study leave from North Carolina State University in 1997, I was fortunate to visit two individuals who were pioneers in developing successful rotary screen print machines. The first visit was to Peter Leijdekkers, of Stork Brabant, in Boxmeer, Netherlands. He and several of his team described first-hand how they solved problems bringing the first machine to market and surprising the industry by showing a prototype at ITMA in 1963.

The second visit was to Peter Zimmer at the Zimmer factory in Kufstein, Austria. Zimmer explained how he and his team developed their first commercial rotary screen print machine. One was already secretly installed in 1960 at a company in Germany. Out of an abundance of caution while profitably selling their flat screen machines, they elected to go to ITMA 1963 with only photos of the new machine to show to special customers. Stork outplayed them.

After meeting William Hoffman, Peter Leijdekkers, and Peter Zimmer, I felt I had enough material to develop a paper for the 1998 National Technical Conference of AATCC. The paper documented the many attempts to test and commercialize the idea of a continuous rotary screen print machine.

The article in the link below was adapted from that paper and was published in November 1999.

Mock, Gary N., “The Development of Rotary-Screen Printing,” *Textile Chemist & Colorist & American Dyestuff Reporter*, November 1999, Vol.1, No.3, pp 43-49.

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