

Sustainable and competitive? Flexibility is the key to profitable leather processing

R. Faatz¹

¹ Lectra Deutschland GmbH, Ismaning, Germany

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The current challenges of the leather industry are closely linked to consumer expectations on the one side and pressure on price in the supply chain on the other. When looking at the example of automotive seating & interior, the picture is clear. Synthetic materials are progressively replacing leather – either to cut costs, or to serve a “cruelty-free” marketing image. The result is a growing skepticism towards leather and in the end, waste. The pictures of raw hides being disposed of instead of being upcycled are all over the press.

One way to escape this downward trend is to rehabilitate leather as a premium, eco-friendly material. In order to do this, the whole processing of leather must enter the digital age. This of course affects the early stages of processing, but it also has an impact on the usage of finished hides. Lectras virtual prototyping solution DesignConcept helps optimizing material usage and costs. In addition, the digital leather cutting solution Versalis was upgraded in 2019 to provide even more flexibility and keep waste at its lowest.

The new solution has already been tested and approved by leading European furniture manufacturers as well as tier-one automotive suppliers over several months. The main benefits they identified are better yield, higher productivity and lower resource consumption. On top of this, Versalis is highly flexible due to its various possible configurations. Allowing automotive suppliers to adapt seamlessly to small orders and frequent facelifts, to all types of leather and part geometries. And enabling upholstery producers to deal with the most demanding leather types as well as customized orders.

At Lectra we strive to be a valuable and trusted partner for our customers. We believe that supporting the leather industry's digitalization efforts or even exploring new business models with our customers is essential to face the current market conditions.

Email: r.faatz@lectra.com

Web: www.lectra.de

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