Micrex Letter #3

In this issue: Microcreping as a market research tool: Modifying nonwoven roll goods to be Microcreped: Microcreping polypropylene and other lightweight nonwovens.

Our earlier Micrex Newsletters focused on the benefits of Microcreping including our new wet wipes technology. For more information, visit http://www.micrex.com/wetwipes%20Q&A.htm, or request a copy of our prior newsletter.

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MICROCREPING AS A MARKET RESEARCH TOOL:

Some companies compete on price while others compete by product improvements. Most companies encourage their suppliers to suggest ways to improve designs and lower cost. A good way to learn if your customers are interested in Microcreped versions of your existing products is to show samples. We will be happy to run a 12" wide pilot line Microcreped sample of your nonwoven. Depending on your customers needs, you can have:

- Added softness and better hand,
- Stretch up to 100% and good recovery,
- Double the thickness,
- Greater absorbency, and
- Higher opacity.

Customers pursuing lower cost probably have been buying or producing the same nonwoven for some time and their specification often is simply a grade number or fiber type and weight in company with many like products. In reality, they want specific performance properties such as opacity, toughness, or thickness to enable their product to stand alone and with added value. Micrex can deliver these properties and improvements, sometimes at a cost saving, because Microcreping a lower weight nonwoven can result in a product that meets or exceeds performance criteria at lower weight and total cost.

As an example, if thickness is an important specification, Microcreping can increase thickness by 100% with 20% or less reduction in area (compaction). What about added processing cost? If the web is Microcreped as part of an existing operation such as slitting, added cost is minimal. A lower weight, lower cost web can perform better and be more competitive. If your application is novel, you might be able to patent it!

Having Micrex crepe samples of your product can help you open customer's doors and their thinking. Offering Microcreped nonwovens is a good way to "re-search" for opportunities in your market. For information about our trial program please visit http://www.micrex.com/trial.htm.

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MODIFYING NONWOVENS TO BE MICROCREPED:

Traditionally, customers think of Microcreping existing products without any changes to the base web to improve performance or solve a problem. Considering the high cost of developing a new nonwoven, there is little question about why our customers hesitate to develop a

approach to optimizing a nonwoven for maximum Microcreping advantage without the need for all the time and cost of making a new grade. This example may serve to illustrate the point.

Adding stretch and recovery to nonwovens is a great way to add a new dimension to a grade. Microcreping to put stretch in the web usually isn't a problem but getting enough recovery so the fabric repeatedly springs back can be. Stretch after Microcreping is always in the machine direction so MD oriented fibers do most of the work of springing back and the more MD fiber alignment, the more "spring back". Many nonwovens, both dry lay and wet lay, are formed using a porous belt to collect and convey fibers prior to bonding and there lies an opportunity to change to fiber orientation. Increasing the collector speed increases fiber "draft" (the difference between fiber velocity and belt speed) and fibers become more MD oriented. The greater the MD fiber orientation, the better the creped product will spring back. In this case, a small change in machine settings might make a new line of stretch products (using existing production capacity) perform in a new and novel way and is quite practical to pursue.

There are many other low or no cost ways of modifying nonwovens to optimize them for Microcreping. We invite you to ask Micrex's assistance in identifying opportunities for significant improvements to your current grades to optimize them for Microcreping. The potential benefits of design change discussions include shortening the time needed to reach a successful project conclusion and identifying potential new products.

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PP AND OTHER LIGHTWEIGHT NONWOVENS, A GLANCE AT THE FUTURE OF MICROCREPING:

It is well known that polypropylene (PP) is by far the most important polymer in the nonwovens industry. One reason for its popularity is it's a low melting point. But, in the past, nonwovens made with low melt point fibers have been difficult to Microcrepe because of unintended high process temperatures caused by frictionally generated heat in the Microcreping cavity. That problem is solved! Please contact us if you are interested in Microcreping PP and other nonwovens made using low melting point polymers.

In the past, some lightweight nonwovens have also been difficult to Microcrepe for a variety of reasons including low mass, low cross direction stiffness, poor uniformity and overall low strength. They tend to run into wrinkles and crepe unevenly.

But in this case, past is not prologue and changes in Microcreping technology have solved this problem for many substrates. We would like to hear from you if you have an interest in the potential to Microcrepe nonwovens made of low melting point fibers and/or lightweight grades that previously could not be creped.

- Spunbond, thermal bond, hydro-entangled and other technologies made of:
- Polypropylene, polyethylene, polyester, nylon, (plus other polymers) and/or cellulose fibers.

We can now Microcrepe nonwovens in weights down to 16 grams per square meter. You are invited to call us to discuss low cost Microcreping product improvement opportunities for nonwovens that, in the past, could not be Microcreped.

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absorbency, drape and decorative effects in paper, textiles and nonwovens, please contact us.

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If you feel this newsletter might be of interest to others, please send us an email with the email address. Alternatively, if you have no interest in the Micrex Newsletter, simply send an email with "delete my name" in the subject line to Julie.Robbins@micrex.com.