

englisch dek  
textilverlag

since 1866 150 Years englisch dekor

# 150 Years

being on fire for  
flame retardant fabrics

# 150 years. So what?

Often enough, anniversary publications turn into navel-gazing events. We chose to take this literally and left the two brothers and owners Heinz Wymetal-Fleischmann and Erich Fleischmann to chat about the past, present and future of their company. In doing so, they discuss the advantages their company offers for architects, as well as the development of their enterprise, and their very personal life story.





## Heinz Wymetal-Fleischmann and Erich Fleischmann talk about the past, present and future of their company

H: Our Company is 150 years old now. Reason enough to take stock. How would you introduce english dekor to someone in one paragraph today?

E: The largest selection of flame retardant fabrics in Europe. Almost all our fabrics are flame retardant ...

H: ... and all combined with first-class service - so that clients usually have the fabrics at their door within 24 hours.

E: Right. Maybe we should briefly define “flame retardant”?

H: OK. Let’s say a wastepaper basket catches on fire in a room, lit by a smouldering match. If the flames reach the curtains, for example, then the whole room could catch fire in a moment’s time. Within seconds, this can become life threatening. But if the curtains are made of flame retardant material then what happens is ... nothing!

E: That is to say, the flames cannot spread and cause life threatening smoke as would otherwise happen; the material smoulders for a moment and then the fire extinguishes. Would you have thought that this could determine your life someday?

H: (Laughs) No! But it is a great feeling to know that our products presumably have saved lives on several occasions. We both inherited this specialisation from our father. And today we offer the world’s largest range in the field. Give us a quick rundown on some facts about english dekor ...

E: Today we have more than half a million metres of textiles from the over 4,500 different types in stock. That’s a gigantic selection, always available upon request. But perhaps most impressive is the fact that up to 300 rooms are furnished with english dekor textiles every day.

H: Why do architects and home-builders choose to rely on our textiles?

E: The short answer is: technology, selection, service and know-how.

H: And the long answer?

E: As I said, we lead the way in the number and quality of colors, textiles and patterns. And this is the quality we can dispatch – because we have our own warehouse – to any location in Germany and Austria within 24 hours and to the rest of Europe within 48 hours. Moreover, we have very experienced staff, some of whom have worked with us for 20 or 30 years and are masters of the field. And then there are our own innovations, too. Key word: editor...

H: Exactly! We are, so to speak, a weaving company without looms. We develop our own fabrics in cooperation with the manufacturers. This means we can react to market trends and provide everything from feather-light organza to heavy-weight velours upholstery fabrics. All that could not be manufactured by one single weaving mill.

E: And that’s how we can offer our clients comprehensive packages: entire room furnishings where transparent curtains match the dimout fabrics and side elements, as well as stools, chairs, bed frames, bedspreads, etc. Like conductors, we orchestrate the work of





various weaving mills in such a way as to complement everything perfectly, from pattern, colour and quality to style.

H: I would describe this to somebody who has not yet worked with us as follows: whether modern, classic, boutique or cottage, we create fabric sample books to suit any style so that you can select a colour theme and finally create an overall concept.

This is only possible if you have connections with your suppliers and the knowledge of who can do what. Moreover, the fabrics have to be flame retardant as well. This limits the selection of weaving mills enormously as there aren't as many of that sort. And this is precisely the edge we offer our clients.

E: On the occasion of our anniversary, let's talk about the past. Has it always been like this?

H: (Laughs) No, not at all! We have grown and the market has also changed considerably. You used to have a single shade of blue, now you need lots of blues. In the post-war period, you were proud to have just 4 colours available. Today our colour charts count up to 70, if not 100 registered colour tones. And that's essential because clients have become more discerning as the supply and technologies have become more widely available, and there are also new products. Everyone has fabrics, now it's about having the right ones.



"In the post-war period, you were proud to have just 4 colours available. Today our colour charts count up to 70, if not 100 registered colour tones, and that's essential!"

E: Your turn again to ask a question!

H: OK, speaking of technology: why do we see ourselves as a particularly innovative company?

E: Due to our experienced field service and its close contact to the market, we have our finger on the pulse and that's often how real innovation occurs. For example: our sales people once approached us to say that they see a need for premium urine-proof fabrics for retirement homes. These homes are increasingly managed like hotels and plastic covers on seating furniture just don't do the job anymore. That's why we developed urine-proof flame retardant fabrics, produced them in the right colours and quality, and then introduced them very successfully on the market.

H: Therefore we are innovative but also in touch with our past. Shall we briefly talk about our 150-year history?

E: What are your earliest memories of the company?

H: The scent of fabrics when we picked up our grandfather and father. Textiles, their scent and their feel, have always been there. It's funny that we never really talked about the business at home. When we finished our studies we started as newbies in the business and two years later father retired and we had to jump in at the deep end. What was your worst moment in our history?

E: The beginning. When the banks told us: "In two months we will cut off your supply of money." We lacked equity capital and revenue. Major customers sent us our samples back and said: "I'm not going to work with you anymore." But we believed in ourselves and were able to convince the banks. Today we can look back on 20 years of continuous growth and call ourselves a healthy business. And that in turn is a good moment!

H: Gustav Mahler once said "tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire." What do you think of that?

E: Fire is something vivid, you have to nourish it for it to spark, you have to develop further without looking back wistfully. We are using the latest IT equipment and are often referred to as an exemplary model. The perspective that our clients will soon be able to access our stock levels and look at their order status via the Internet is an example of what I mean by carrying the flame. What about you? What's the beauty for you, what is it you burn for?

## Our history in a nutshell:

(150 Years / 7 Spots)

1) Founded in 1866 by Eduard August Englisch as an interior decoration store.

2) Our great-grandfather was an apprentice there.

3) In 1902, the company was taken over by the Fleischmann family

4) In the '60s: first collections of curtains and upholstery fabrics; meanwhile, our father started specializing in flame retardant fabrics in order to provide them to the city of Vienna for schools, hospitals etc.

5) Many years of wholesaling.

6) Today we are a textile editor: we are handling our own design and quality development for about 15 years now.

7) Thanks to this, we now occupy a special position in the market.



"A success story in the fourth generation"

H: The diversity of our job. Design developments, the variety of colours, handling fabrics – you touch beautiful products every day. What has been a special experience for you...?

E: Hm. (Thinks for a moment) I was at an international fair, and allowed myself a coffee break. I could hear a variety of languages: English, Russian, Mandarin, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian ... and observe the most diverse types, mentalities and personalities: it was amazing!

Our export ratio once was only 0.3 % and was limited to South Tyrol.

Now when we exhibit at the largest international trade fair for home textiles, our stand is really overcrowded and I get good feedback from longstanding clients. It is absolutely overwhelming.

H: So, passion, fire, tradition - that's all well and good, but what are the benefits for a customer like an architect or a builder?



E: For instance: family businesses are more likely to think in the long-term than those whose management comes from the outside where success always has to be much more quickly verifiable. If we say that we are going to make less profit for one year because we want to invest more into sample collections for example, then we know that we will see a return on the investment next year or the year after, it doesn't matter as a family.

H: I'd say: Here stands a traditional family business that has adjusted well to the modern times. We realized that it's all about service. Product and price have to be appropriate anyway, but the same goes for all other aspects. Prompt replies, fast deliveries, faultless goods, that's when the client gets something out of it. It's "good to know" that we have been on the market since before cars were even invented and even somehow amusing, but that's about it.

E: Yet we have clients who have been our clients for 2-3 generations and staff that have been with us for a very, very long time. That means dependability, not only in management, but also in sales, in the shipping department or in the packing department, where we have people who have been with us for 30 years now. This kind of continuity cannot be found at large corporations.

H: What are the next steps? Where do you see english dekor in another 150 years?

E: A burning question. 15 years ago we could not imagine what it would be like now - setting up a new hall, putting up another building shortly after, extending our storage to triple or quadruple the size ... The next step will probably be to keep developing and extending our range.

H: Exactly, and our clear focus will remain on flame retardant textiles. That's what we will also expand on at an international level. In Austria we are amongst the market leaders and that's what we want to achieve in Germany and the EU, developing ourselves towards market leadership. We want to hit the big-time in the flame retardant sector.

E: O.k., closing statements! Would you like to add anything?

H: Yes, about the environment: what I like about our work is that we work with degradable materials. Flame retardants consist of 100% polyester which is one of the cleanest fabrics of all. You cannot recycle blended fabrics but our products are made of pure crude oil. Cotton, for example, has to be treated so it doesn't shrink, get dirty etc. Afterwards it has to be treated as a special waste. Polyester stays as it is. I like that.

E: Yes, same here. I would like to add that it is a lovely job - exciting, versatile and stimulating. And when our products are being used there are always wonderful results with great feel-good potential.



"Staff members who are with us for a long time. Dependability not only in management."

## “Weaving company without looms”

Founded in 1866 by Eduard August Englisch and taken over by the Fleischmann family in 1902, the company began specialising in flame retardant fabrics in the '80s. Textile editor today:

For about 15 years now, englisch dekor has held the key to design and quality development of their fabrics in their hands.

### Market leader in flame retardant textiles

- More than **2,500** designs and a complete range of flame retardant textiles
  - **350 +** new own designs every year
  - **600,000** meters of textiles in stock
- Orders are processed in-house within **24h**
  - Delivery to **80** countries
- **300** rooms are furnished with englisch dekor fabrics every day

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