



Firmennachrichten

Dunlop Conveyor Belting and Fenner Dunlop Americas announced Re-branding

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Fenner Dunlop BV trading, under the Dunlop Conveyor Belting brand name, and Fenner Dunlop Americas based in the USA, have announced a major step forward in global brand unification. Effective from 01 January 2024, the two divisions will be brought together under a common strategy, and both will trade under the 'Fenner Dunlop Conveyor Belting' brand name. Senior management says that there are many good reasons for taking this step, and that simply explaining the existing structure helps to make much of the rationale easy to understand.

The Present Structure



Fenner Dunlop's production facilities in Drachten, The Netherlands.

In Europe, and more particularly, The Netherlands, Fenner Dunlop BV currently trade under the brand name 'Dunlop Conveyor Belting'. Formed more than 100 years ago, the company has built a reputation for product quality and longevity. Their geographic sales domain is Europe, the Middle East, Africa, or EMEA in short.

Across the Atlantic, sister company, Fenner Dunlop Americas, is based in the USA and trades as Fenner Dunlop Conveyor Belting. The company's area of activity is North America, including Canada, and parts of South America such as Mexico and the Caribbean. Under the leadership of Executive Director Edwin Have, the two entities form the Northern Hemisphere division of the Fenner Group.

The Fenner Group, including Fenner Conveyor Belting in Australia, was founded in 1861 and is a manufacturer of industrial belting and other polymer-based products. Following a friendly acquisition in 2018, the Fenner Group became part of the Michelin Group, one of the world's biggest manufacturers of rubber products.

Brand Unification



One of Fenner Dunlop's manufacturing facilities in North America.

The Fenner Group has explained that although the brands are being unified, the structure itself will not be changing and will continue to have separate operations in the Northern and Southern hemispheres. What is changing is that the EMEA and the North American divisions of Fenner will be working much more closely together and each using the Fenner Dunlop Conveyor Belting brand name.

"The importance of brand recognition should never be under-estimated," says Fenner Dunlop's EMEA Marketing Manager, Maciej Wyrzykowski. "Brand unification is about creating a consistent brand presence and strategy across different geographical regions and divisions."

“This is a strategic move that will enhance our global reach, streamline communications and simplify and further improve brand awareness. What we are doing is to create a simpler, less confusing brand experience that is not only better for our customers but, equally importantly, for our service partner networks.”

The Importance of Recognition

Dunlop Conveyor Belting is embracing the Fenner name. Andries Smilda, Sales and Marketing Director of the EMEA division, is firmly behind the name change. “The fact is that in some parts of the EMEA sales region, we are better known as Fenner and our legal entity is Fenner Dunlop BV. In any case, we are of course retaining the legendary Dunlop name and the famous ‘Flying ‘D’ logo, so we believe this re-branding makes good sense.”

Another advantage of the change, says Smilda, is that it provides the opportunity to create distance from companies such as Dunlop Belting Products in South Africa, who are legally able to use the Flying ‘D’ Dunlop brand within southern Africa. This causes confusion in the marketplace, even though there is no connection between the two companies.

More than a Name Change

The changes that Fenner Dunlop has announced extend further beyond simply being a branding and marketing exercise. All those involved see it as formalising a working collaboration that has existed for many years and accelerated massively under the guidance of Executive Director Edwin Have.

“Perhaps not many people realise that one of our most successful ever products is the unique UsFlex belt, which sits on the very top of the tree when it comes to rip, tear and impact resistant belting. The UsFlex concept dates back more than 20 years and was the result of cooperation and invention on both sides of the Atlantic” says Have. “In more recent times we have enjoyed even more success in terms of product development thanks to the joint experience, expertise and facilities that comes from inter-company collaboration”.

Product Developments



Fenner Dunlop's fabric weaving facility in Lavonia, USA.

An example of product development success is a new generation of belt that is affordable and environmentally sustainable. An in-house fabric weaving facility in the USA was a particular advantage, where new thinking could be explored. The result was the creation of a high-strength single-ply belt that EMEA named Ultra X, while America adopted the name Patriot X. Under the unification process, both will be known as Ultra X in future.

The Ultra X breakthrough came six years ago and, the cross-Atlantic partnership went on to develop a second, higher tensile strength phase of single-ply belting, Nova X. Positioned between Ultra X and UsFlex, it completes a range of single and dual-ply belts that Fenner Dunlop Americas have named the 'X Series'. The X Series has become one of the first examples of product portfolio alignment, with its introduction as a key part of the EMEA product range.

As part of the unification project, EMEA will conduct a new product launch for Nova X in the new year, while UsFlex and Ultra X will both be given new logos that reflect their association with the X Series product line. "Nova X represents our commitment to single-ply technology", says Dr. Michiel Eijpe, Innovation and Sustainability Director, Fenner Dunlop EMEA, who feels that such advances would not be possible without the trans-Atlantic sharing of resources and expertise. "It provides us with a huge advantage over our competitors. Developing new and improved products has always been a part of our cultural history, both here and in North America. The X Series is a great example of what there is to be gained by a more structured unification. I feel that the best is yet to come."

One Vision

Much has been said about the shared branding and the unification of sales and marketing strategies and research and development, however, it has been shown that unity within the group has long predated this. There is a belief in pursuing a quality-driven market approach based on product performance and longevity; the unification is clearly not a marriage of convenience – it is a genuine case of a shared vision.