Retail Innovation Shout Out: Machines that Knit Entire Garments

by Traci Stapleton

Since Adam and Eve donned the first outfits, innovation in terms of garment design has been incremental. Other industries might argue that there is no innovation in apparel - especially when compared to product development in industries like high tech and medical devices. However, most innovation in apparel is not around the garment, but around customer experience and in the manufacturing process itself. It was innovation in manufacturing process that gave us no-iron shirts, quick-dry performance active wear, and of course, hypercolor t-shirts (giving me away as a child of the 80s!)

Now, leading the way for the industry, Japan based SHIMA-SEIKI Mfg Ltd. has developed a knitting machine that can knit entire garments. The machine will link or sew all seams, so the process does not require additional handling.

This innovation is also capable of generating virtual samples that can be reviewed with 3D simulation for fitting, mapping, or modeling. Fewer samples means fewer fittings and increased cost savings.


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