# THE VISION

N°2

Trends & Innovation news dedicated to abrasive producers [by Ahlstrom]

# Elevate your potential with the new offer, Infinity !



BREAKING NEWS **A new solution :** bringing Infinity within reach



INFINITY OF SOLUTIONS Infinite solutions at your fingertips



INFINITY OF EXPERTISE Welcome to the Academy



## A NEW SOLUTION : bringing Infinity within reach

Our Abrasives team has spent the last few years looking for ways to offer even more innovative products and services. The culmination of that work means that we are now able to update our original offering and bring you a new solution called INFINITY.



After more than 20 years, it is time for our iconic abrasives package, The A Solution, to retire. Our new offering is also driven by our commitment to excellence and embodies our philosophy of always moving forward to offer even more added-value for our customers and the abrasives community. Ahlstrom remains a crucial partner in the industry, with our inventive team brimming with boundary-breaking solutions and constantly developing original, unconventional ideas that have proved success. Examples include:

- DediCOATED online trade fairs, building a whole community around abrasives;
- > Our Coffee Talks, for sharing and learning;
- INFINITY Workshops, co-creation sessions in a ground-breaking format;
- Development of new products and finishes to open up new markets;
- New technical solutions thanks the transformation of our Machine 8;
- **Built-in sustainability** to meet challenges of the future.

As a logical extension, this new offering is called **INFINITY**: Design The Future Together. From 2025, it will be more aligned with your requirements in all areas, so that, together, we can retain our place at the forefront of the industry.

**INFINITY** highlights our fundamental values, which we are proud to share:



because through cooperation and constructive dialog we can build lasting relationships to work together intelligently on abrasive issues;

#### Excellence

because product *reliability* is linked to *consistent* quality, our expertise is to provide solutions and services that meet your needs;

#### Foresight

because being ready for the future means starting today, with more sustainable, safe products that we design with our unique vision.

#### INFINITY... In a nutshell



- A unique program dedicated to Ahlstrom customers and the abrasives community (see Page 6);
- New products, including our 'safe and sustainable' line;
- Expertise, available through our Academy, which is opening soon;
- The ambition to consolidate and strengthen the abrasives community.

The INFINITY program is structured into three complementary strands:



Through this approach, **INFINITY** is giving fresh impetus to our dynamism, our ability to be bold and to unite around the challenges of the future.

# WHEN OUR STRENGTHS take us to Infinity

When it comes to abrasives, Ahlstrom has always combined complementary approaches to deliver our best. Organized into three strands, the INFINITY package encompasses recognized expertise as well as the ability to provide customized solutions. Here is an exclusive preview of the shape of this revolution.



#### Infinity of Solutions for highperformance products

**INFINITY** of Solutions is the **product-focused component**. We all want products that are more sustainable, more innovative, more effective, etc. Our investment in Machine 8 (aptly renamed Infinity), is making these wishes a reality. **Access to our range has also been redesigned** to make it easier for you to find what you're looking for. More on Page 4.

#### P R O G R A M PFFINITY

### Program Affinity for stronger relationships

You can always do better and more when you're surrounded by the right people. That's why **INFINITY** only makes sense when we are all in it together. This unique program (see Page 6) encourages long-term relationships between partners and customers to **rethink abrasives, through premium services and unique tools**.

# EXPERTISE

### Infinity of Expertise for greater knowledge

Ahlstrom has been gaining experience since 1957. Now, INFINITY of Expertise brings together a wide range of expertise within our new Academy, (more on Page 5).

This strand also includes our **unique R&D** and technical capabilities that are at your disposal (Arches Lab, Research Center, etc.).

We are thus able to develop product formulas guaranteeing high quality and consistency right from the design stage, while keeping sustainability and product life cycle expertise at the forefront.

It also incorporates **innovation platforms**, where the limits of fiber are being investigated and pushed back to improve the properties of paper (e.g. transparency or barrier) and thus meet the challenges of tomorrow.

**INFINITY** reflects our unwavering commitment to quality, which we want to share with as many stakeholders as possible.



#### AN INSPIRATIONAL NEW LOGO



The **INFINITY** name is a natural follow-on from our workshops and Machine 8. Did you notice the references in the new logo?

The INFINITY package has been created from a strong legacy. Derived from the symbols that helped make the INFINITY Workshops and Machine 8 so successful, the INFINITY logo takes these figures one step further. By rotating the number 8 into the "INFINITY" symbol, the logo is a visual illustration of our drive for continuous innovation that is so essential for the development of tomorrow's solutions.

The A that illustrates the Affinity Program is a reference to the letter in The A Solution<sup>2</sup> and stands for several concepts that are important to Ahlstrom: Abrasive, Arches, A-grade, Advanced, Audacity, Agility, etc. It shows that this program incorporates all the ingredients for the community's success, beyond the basic question of abrasive backings.

Have you noticed the subtle hints about our summer holiday message? Now you have all the clues you need to understand it...

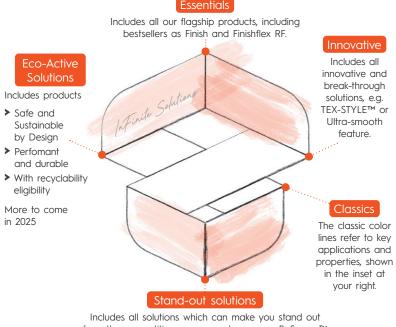
#### INFINITY OF SOLUTIONS

# INFINITE SOLUTIONS at your fingertips

You can't reach **INFINITY** without developing the right solutions. With our investment in the **INFINITY** Machine, we are pushing back the limits on how we make products. We've also been exploring how we can make our products more easily accessible.

Remember the traditional product line from The A Solution<sup>2</sup>? Today, the **INFINITY** machine broadens the range of what can be done with all the added benefits shown here. It offers a more finely-tuned response to your needs, while also improving the properties of the substrates and their mechanical quality.

Discover some new introductory ways to find the product you need:



from the competition, e.g. our color ranges, BeSecure™ security fibers, and pattern printings.

**INFINITY** of Solutions means more possibilities and more ways to improve your experience. And to make it even more easy to navigate the range and explore all solutions, a product search engine has been integrated in our Extranet. Interested to get an access? Reach out to your sales contact.

#### Do you remember?

#### Green Line/MULTI PURPOSE: Multi-purpose applications for DIY or PRO channel



#### Brown line / ANTISTATIC:

Antistatic, pre-treated papers to reduce the belt's dustload during sanding of non conductive materials



#### Blue Line / LATEX: Latex pre-impregnated papers, for DRY or WET use



#### Yellow Line/IMPREGNATION:

Backings with open structures to be impregnated



#### Re-Volution/EXTRA RESISTANT:

Extra Resistant composite backings combining the advantages of paper and cloth



**INFINITY** 

### THE TECHNICAL FEATS OF MACHINE



- Developments that rely on new formulations that improve surfaces textures and allow the adjustment of flexibility/rigidity to suit different needs and applications
- > Tools to shape the surface and smoothness by coating or calendering
- Optimization of the process of sheet formation during reeling to guarantee better look-through and dimensional stability
- **) Two-colored designs** produced 100% in line, for better service optimization and perfectly controlled and reproducible coating
- A variety of surface treatments that can be applied on the recto or verso or both sides of your backing, with variable thicknesses
- the recto: barrier coating, colored or not, antistatic coating
- the verso: FG<AS<ZS antislip coatings, colored or not, barrier/water-repellent coatings

#### INFINITY OF EXPERTISE

# WELCOME TO THE ACODEMY, where expertise is shared

In 2025, Ahlstrom's Academy will open as part of the **INFINITY** of Expertise strand. You can already explore the different training formats we have planned to give you the benefit of our cutting-edge expertise.

Ahlstrom has always made expertise a priority. The skills of our Abrasives team are widely recognized, not only their R&D capabilities, but also their knowledge of the market and customers' industrial processes. Our determination to remain a driving force in the world of abrasives confirms Ahlstrom's unique status, which is always one step ahead in ensuring consistent paper quality, reflected in the product's final application.

Today, as part of our forward-thinking approach, the Academy has been set up to showcase this innovative expertise and make it available to everyone.

#### A catalog of resources centralized in the Academy

With many years' experience, Ahlstrom believes that knowledge-sharing adds real value for customers and the abrasives community. Opening in 2025, the Academy will build on initiatives that we have already piloted, to offer a broader and more efficient range of training courses and tools for learning.

Here is an exclusive preview of four types of content that will be available:



20 sessions coming from the Coffee Breaks (webinars), Coffee Talks (interviews with an expert) and DediCOATED event available in VOD or as part of a live Q&A session. Examples of topics include:

- Key things to understand about the FRONT side of abrasive paper to ensure top performance
- Antistatic treatments for abrasive papers: why? how? Measurement best practices
- ► LCA: Case Study of TEX-STYLE™
- Decoding sustainability of abrasive paper backings
- Curtains up on rotogravure and its unimagined potential for abrasives
- Discover 3 magicians' secrets to unleash your creativity, become a solver and gain agility.

2 Our "Abrasive Paper Making Process" training the only course course, dedicated to the process of creating paper for abrasives. The course is held close to the machines themselves, operating within the Arches plant. It covers both theoretical and practical concepts at three levels:

- Level 101: Understand the general principles of papermaking and the specific characteristics of abrasive papers, from the formation of the sheet to the different possible treatments;
- Level 201: Gain a better understanding of the properties of the substrate (mechanical, color, creation of barriers, etc.) and an introduction to quality testing;
- Level 301: This premium course will cover processes and markets, as well as more advanced quality tests developed in our Research Center in Apprieu, including some customized tests (see Page 8 for more details).

**3** Our "Paper & Climate" training course offers an exhaustive, in-depth understanding of the impact of climate change on abrasive products and processes, as well as a better grasp of curling/cupping.



Our "Paper Troubleshooting" training courses will provide checklists and solutions to the most frequent issues: handling the reel, soft edges, splicing, loop knits adhesion, etc.

Do you have a topic you would like to explore further or a problem to solve? Talk to your Ahlstrom Contact to find the Academy resource to meet your needs.

#### AFFINITY PROGRAM

# **ASK ABOUT the Affinity Program!**

The Affinity Program is a further innovation in the **INFINITY** package, designed to facilitate dialog between everyone involved in abrasives. It is aimed at Ahlstrom customers and community partners, with their varied and complementary profiles: backing,



grits, resin and machine suppliers, manufacturers, technical consultants, etc.

This program provides access to all the tools developed in **INFINITY**, including the assistance and expertise of the Academy. In addition, innovative premium services (see Pages 7 and 8) are available under certain conditions to complement existing services.

Of course, you'll still be part of your existing meet-ups, such as our Coffee Talks and the Dedicoated trade fair. Not to mention receiving all the latest news and technical advice, which will be shared on regular base.



# INFINITY WORKSHOPS a unique premium service

Estelle Seibert, Marketing Manager, is in charge of **INFINITY** Workshops. Here, she tells us more about this unique and little-known premium service.

The A Vision **>** Estelle, how would you define an INFINITY Workshop?

**Estelle S.** This is a workshop with a unique format, where collaboration is the key to coming up with new ideas that emerge from thinking about things differently.

By drawing on our creative and collective intelligence, we can find answers to global questions about performance, product quality and market attractiveness in new and often innovative ways, and offer significant added-value.

### The A Vision > What is the purpose of the workshops?

Estelle S. These workshops allow us to challenge ideas and look at them from a new angle, so that we can keep reinventing ourselves. The starting point is a challenge that the customer has identified as relevant and key to solve. The issues can be anything from raw materials to processes to the market. The discussions between the participants and questions prompting lead very often to very creative solutions. Some of the subjects we have already worked on with customers include "How to boost the sales performance in the waterproof segment?", "How to bring product X to its full potential?" and "How to increase sustainability aspects of a given product?"

Abrasives community partners could also tackle subjects such as the interaction between paper and other raw materials (grain, resin, etc.) or optimizing rewetting in the process.



#### PROGRAM AFFINITY



The A Vision > So, the workshops are about thinking "out of the box"?

**Estelle S.** Absolutely! By using the principles of creative problem-solving and divergent/convergent thinking, we can reinvent the way we think, which is already ingrained in us. When we think outside the box, new ideas can emerge on the chosen topic.

So I start off by asking the usual questions, then break away from the norm by changing the rules of the game. Sometimes, I might even invite zany characters to join in our discussions to encourage the participants' creativity!

#### The A Vision > And how does it work in practice?

**Estelle S.** Defining the need is key. A discussion with our team helps to clarify the initial problem, to see whether the workshop is appropriate or not.

The workshop then takes place, in person, over a half-day or full day. It can be held on the customer's premises, or at our Arches plant if a plant tour or additional training on the paper-making process, for example, is requested..



In any case, it is important to have 5-10 participants with varied profiles around the table, to encourage collaboration and compare different approaches. "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together!"

Involving staff from purchasing, R&D, production, sales, marketing, etc. creates cross-functional involvement, generating new ideas and valueadd. At the end of the workshop, a report is sent out with new ideas for product development.

#### The A Vision **>** What results have you already achieved?

**Estelle S.** May we congratulate ourselves on the successes that have come out of these workshops, with, as an exemple, the creation of new products. Similarly, some clients came up with new process improvements to try out; others identified ways to improve specifications for future innovations. When customers and Ahlstrom gain a better understanding of an issue, it can lead to a better match between the formula and the process.

# The A Vision > Finally, customers have already called you from all over the world to take part – what do they think of the workshops?

Estelle S. > The feedback has all been very positive,



with participants saying they found it rewarding, as well as (re)discovering paper and our company from a new angle. The satisfaction survey of the event shows an excellent average score (4.6/5), reflecting a very warm welcome, the good general ambiance and a high level of trust in the creation of innovation.

Attendees, from various department, as marketing, R&D process and production, also tell us that this event creates a real opportunity for them to bring their own teams together to discuss a major issue and seek solutions together.

Our best ambassadors are our satisfied partners. When you read, "A great way to get a new product approach", we know that we have achieved the objective and the workshop is just waiting for new teams to come together.

TempTed ?

Do you have an issue you'd like to explore from a new angle? Contact Estelle Seibert (estelle.seibert@ahlstrom.com) to discuss whether the topic is suitable for an Infinity Workshop.

#### PROGRAM AFFINITY

# A SNEAK PREVIEW OF **3 premium Services**

Committed to providing the best possible service, Ahlstrom offers a range of premium Services for customers and members of the abrasives community who wish to fully invest in quality. Here are three innovative ones that may be of interest to you.



**3-DAY SEMINAR-PAPER** (ARCHES AND R&D CENTER)

#### **Objective**

Find out all there is to know about the paper-making process, based at the exceptional Arches' site and Apprieu or Pont-Evèque R&D centers. Stringent, customized quality tests illustrate the R&D aspect, not forgetting the link with process issues and abrasive markets.

#### Why attend?

- > Put the theory into practice, by opening up production and R&D sites. With access to Arches' paper facilities, the paper-making process will hold no more secrets for you;
- > Learn about customized tests and use them as inspiration for your own applications;



Make the most of the opportunity to discuss a particular issue with our expert teams.



#### SALES/DISTRIBUTOR TRAINING ON PAPER-**RELATED TOPICS**

#### **Objective**

Help your sales force understand the specific characteristics of paper that dictate the quality of abrasives. This course explains workshop will help you reinvent the different paper types, and their specific characteristics, with a view to building a solid sales pitch. Specific topics can also be covered on request, to support your expectations of distributors.

#### Why attend?

- Acquire detailed knowledge of papers and their technical features so you can refine your sales pitches;
- Understand key characteristics of papers for the right downsteam process and ultimate use;
- Have a panel of paper samples to touch for a better understanding.

# INFINITY WORKSHOP

#### **Objective**

Get creative to address a technical or business case. By addressing a global issue, this paper-making process, yourself and stay one step ahead, so you remain attractive to customers. Find out more in Estelle Seibert's interview. (Page 6).

#### Why attend?

- > Learn to think differently to come up with new ideas;
- Team-building around a collaborative but confidential, interactive piece of work facilitated by Ahlstrom;
- Make the most of Ahlstrom's technical input and recognized expertise.

#### THE 👌 VISION

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