



A large, stylized red logo consisting of the letters 'H', '&', and 'M' in a bold, brush-stroke font. The 'H' and 'M' are tall and narrow, while the '&' is smaller and positioned between them. The logo is set against a white background with a thin black crosshair in the upper left corner.

Hennes & Mauritz



A smaller version of the red H&M logo, positioned in the bottom right corner of the page.

Obstacles In Ensuring Information on Chemicals In Consumer Products

**The Flow of Materials is Also a Flow
of Chemicals**

Sweden, IGES, UNEP

New York, May 6, 2010

Mattias Bodin

Group Manager - Quality Assurance



Fotograf: Dan Martensen



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Fotograf: Dan Martensen

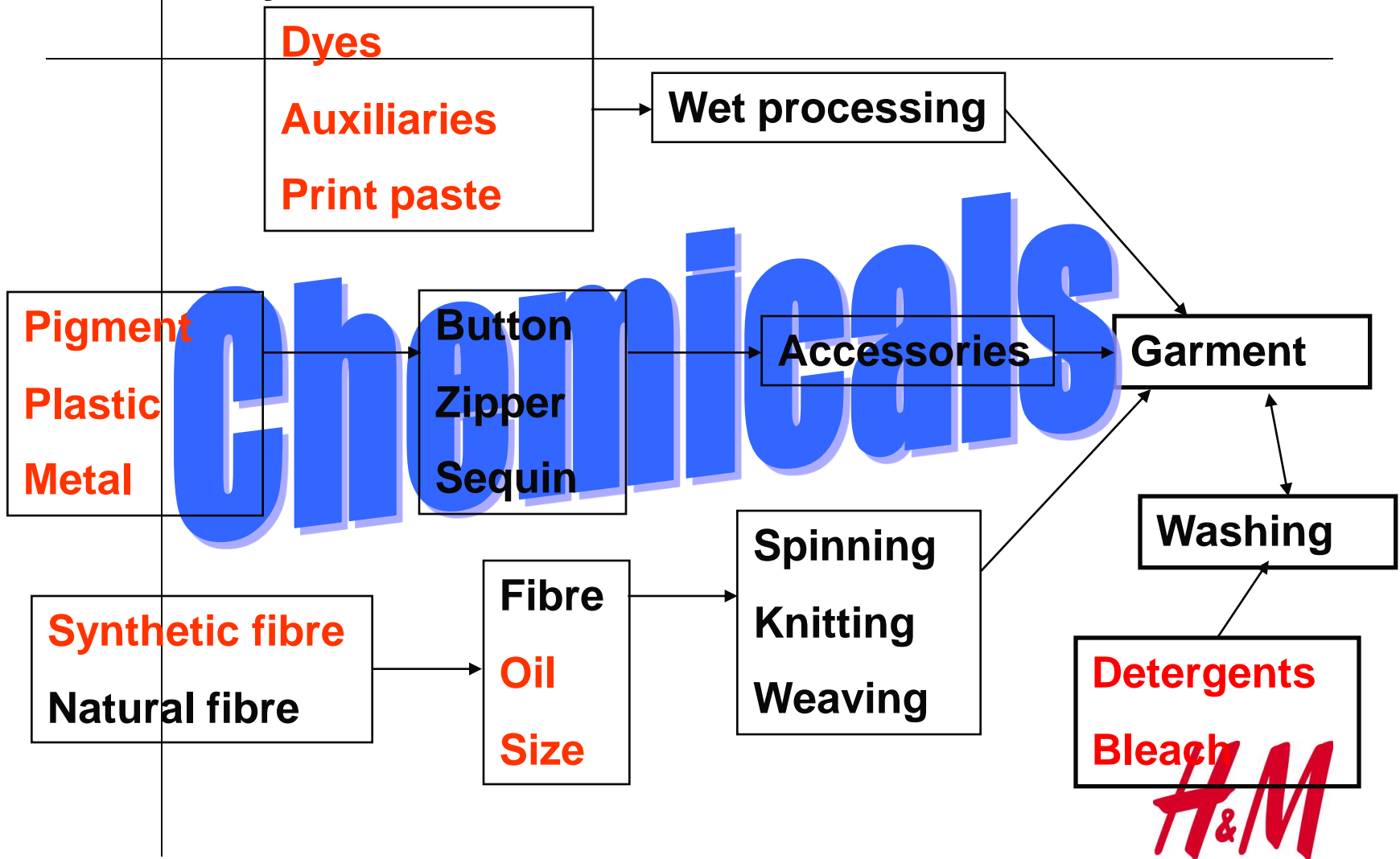
H&M

Facts About H&M

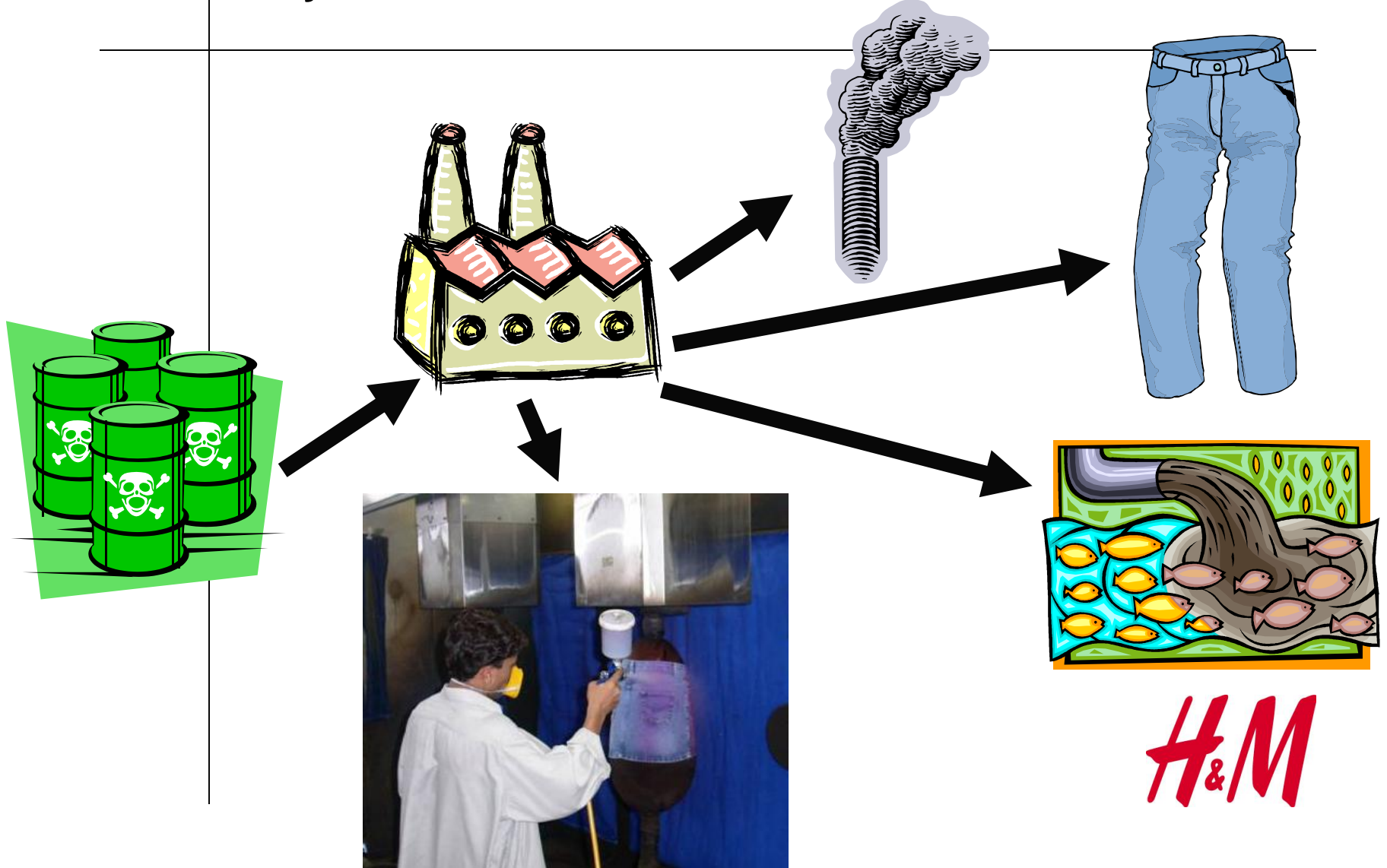
- International Fashion House
- Established in Sweden in 1947
- Around 2000 stores in 37 countries in Europe, Africa, Asia and North America
- Around 76,000 employees
- The turnover in 2009 was SEK 118 billions
- Around 700 suppliers
- Plans to open 240 stores during 2010
- Open stores in South Korea and Israel in 2010



Why Bother About Chemicals in Retail?



Why Bother About Chemicals in Retail?



Why Bother About Chemicals in Retail?

- Protect customers
- Protect environment
- Protect workers
- Legislation



Why Bother About Chemicals in Retail?

Protect Customer



H&M

Why Bother About Chemicals in Retail?

Protect Environment



H&M

Why Bother About Chemicals in Retail? Protect Workers

Legislation was introduced in May 1999 in the first of a two-part series from Guangzhou

Poisoned workers merely the tip of an iceberg

Nineteen-year-old Tang Wenyun lies on a Guangzhou hospital bed, out of breath after being helped to the water. She is 1.6 metres tall and weighs only 25kg.

The 19-year-old girl can barely use her hands. Twelve other women who used to work for the Anjia Shoe Factory in Dongguan are in the same hospital.

All are suffering the effects of benzene poisoning.

The Anjia women's story made national headlines last week after the company tracked down the ill migrant workers and sent them to Guangzhou Occupational Disease Treatment Centre in Guangzhou.

The women are from Guizhou, Henan, Sichuan and Hubei provinces.

The case has raised awareness of the mainland's poor record on occupational health and the lack of government supervision of workplaces.

A letter sent to the Guangdong Women's Federation on June 25 triggered the investigation. "The workers who worked on the viscose assembly line are exposed to sticky glue every day."

"The glue is toxic. If humans are exposed to it for a long period of time their limbs slowly start to become numb, then the hands

and feet swell. Then you cannot work so you have to go home. Most who returned home have become paralysed and are dying," the letter said. More than 50 people employed at the Taiwan-owned shoe factory in the past 10 years may have been affected, officials said. Some 30 former workers have still not been located.

Two weeks ago, the hospital sent a team of three doctors to the factory to test the assembly-line workers for benzene poisoning.

This is not the first time that large-scale benzene poisoning has made the headlines.

Six women died from exposure to benzene at a shoe factory in Hebei province in February and 70 workers were affected in a factory in Shenzhen as early as 1996, but it is certainly the first occupational health case to have received such media attention.

It follows Beijing's introduction of a new law on May 1 on the prevention and treatment of work-related illnesses.

Under the law, employers are held accountable for workplace safety and are legally bound to provide financial support and treatment to those who suffer from work-related illnesses and injuries.

Huang Hanlin, president of the Guangzhou hospital, said the incident was far from being an isolated case, as work-related illnesses were widespread.

According to statistics in the state media, more than 10 million people have been exposed to occupational disease hazards nationwide since 1989. The problem has become more serious in Guangdong because of its fast-developing industrial economy.

Before the 1990s, 70 per cent of work-related illnesses recorded were those of poisoning from heavy metals. But last year, the rate of poisoning from chemical substances had risen from 2.5 per cent in the 1980s to 80 per cent.

Employers and employees still seem to know little about the new Occupational Disease Law.

Anjia's Taiwanese general manager, Zhou Yousun, said he had not heard of the law. He also said the workers were poisoned because they refused to wear protective gloves and masks that the factory provided.

But the women said they were never given gloves or masks, nor were they informed of the danger of using glue containing benzene.

An inspection of the factory premises found that there was no ventilation system nor any windows in the workshop. There was also no sign warning workers of the potential health hazards.

Mr Zhou paid for the transport for the women to return to Guangzhou for treatment and has pledged to pay aside one million yuan (HK\$160,000) in a company fund for the treatment of the sick workers. He has also promised 200,000 yuan donations to the Guangdong Women's Federation to help publish the law.

One element that may have spurred Mr Zhou and the company to offer recovery was the cancellation of a few large orders from the US.



Tang Wenyun, paralysed and now weighing just 25kg, is treated by a fellow victim of benzene poisoning at a Guangzhou hospital. The women were poisoned while working for a Taiwan-owned shoe factory.

Owners greedy, and authorities turn blind eye

The Anjia women are among the few who have been given the opportunity of treatment. But the problem of occupational disease isn't going to go away.

Greedy factory owners are partially to blame but another reason is the lack of checks by authorities which has meant too little emphasis is placed on prevention.



Parasitised victims Wu Lei (left) and Ye Aifei plan to sue their employer.

Analysts said the government should emphasise prevention rather than treatment after the poisoning has taken place. Treatment is costly, about 10 times the cost of full recovery.

Very little attention is paid to work safety and preventing occu-

limited staffing for this purpose within government means that it is impossible for the thousands of small enterprises to be individually monitored and inspections are few and far between.

In addition, most of the enterprises in Guangdong are privately owned by individuals who may not be well educated and who have little knowledge of or respect for the law.

During an inspection tour by different departments to investigate occupational diseases in 2000 to Foshan, Nanhai, Shenzhen and Huizhou, it was found that Nanhai had more than 300



"Right to be informed about benzene poisoning," said Wu Lei.

After we became ill in the center last year, another factory came to see if we could give us any money."

Mr Wu said he had no other plan to sue his employer and claim compensation for emotional stress and health loss.

"We have been able to work for such a long time. We can't claim back our wage and sue for emotional and physical damages," he said.

"We have to have some idea to inspectors a day and need to give us six bottles of medicine."

All four said they had no legal knowledge or information on how to file a lawsuit, but their help would be available.

Worker Sun Yan, a young chairman woman who helped with benzene poisoning, said she and her husband, who are both of middle age, have been in the workshop. "Weeks only give them and weeks to see and that was because of bugs that their son



Why Bother About Chemicals in Retail?

Legislation

■ EU

- **REACH** (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals)

■ USA

- **California Proposition 65**
- **CPSIA (Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act)**

■ Japan

- **Law 112** (Law for the control of household products containing harmful substances)

■ China

- **GB 18401-2003** (National general safety technical code for textile products)

■ Etc.



What Do We Do Today?

- H&M Chemical Restrictions
- List of chemicals
 - legislations
 - chemicals of concern
- Introduced in 1995
- Updated in 1996, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009
- Dye stuffs, pesticides, heavy metals, formaldehyde, APEO, PVC, phthalates etc



H&M

What Do We Do Today?

H&M Chemical Restrictions

Chromium VI (Cr⁶⁺)	Not detected
Dyes	
Azo Dyes & Pigments*	20 ppm, per listed amine
Disperse Dyes*	1 mg/l extract, per listed disperse dye
Other Dyes*	Not detected, per listed other dye
Flame Retardants*¹	Not detected
Formaldehyde	
Products for children aged 0-3 years, incl. bed linen (e.g. 50-98 cl)	(A-A ₀) < 0.05 ²
Products for children above 3 years (e.g. 104-170 cl) and products for adults with direct skin contact, incl. bed linen	75 ppm
Products for adults without direct skin contact (e.g. outer wear, curtains)	300 ppm

What Do We Do Today?

Chemicals of Concern

- **Cancer**
- **Toxic for reproduction**
- **Mutagenic**
- **Environment**



H&M

Information Needs

- Compliance
 - no banned substances
- REACH
 - article 7.2
 - article 33
- Toxicity
 - environment
 - health



H&M

Information Sources

- From chemical manufacturers

- Material Safety Data Sheet
- Declarations of products' compliance with customers' requirements
- Labelled containers

- Requires

- Knowledge about chemical content
- Willingness to share knowledge
- Stringent and enforced regulations



Information Obstacles

■ Today's situation

- Different countries have different regulations
- Regulations are not enforced
- Developing countries tend to have less stringent regulations or lack of enforcement of regulations

■ Results in

- Manufacturers in developing countries need to buy and import chemicals from countries with more stringent regulations and enforcement practices
- Competitive disadvantage for developing countries



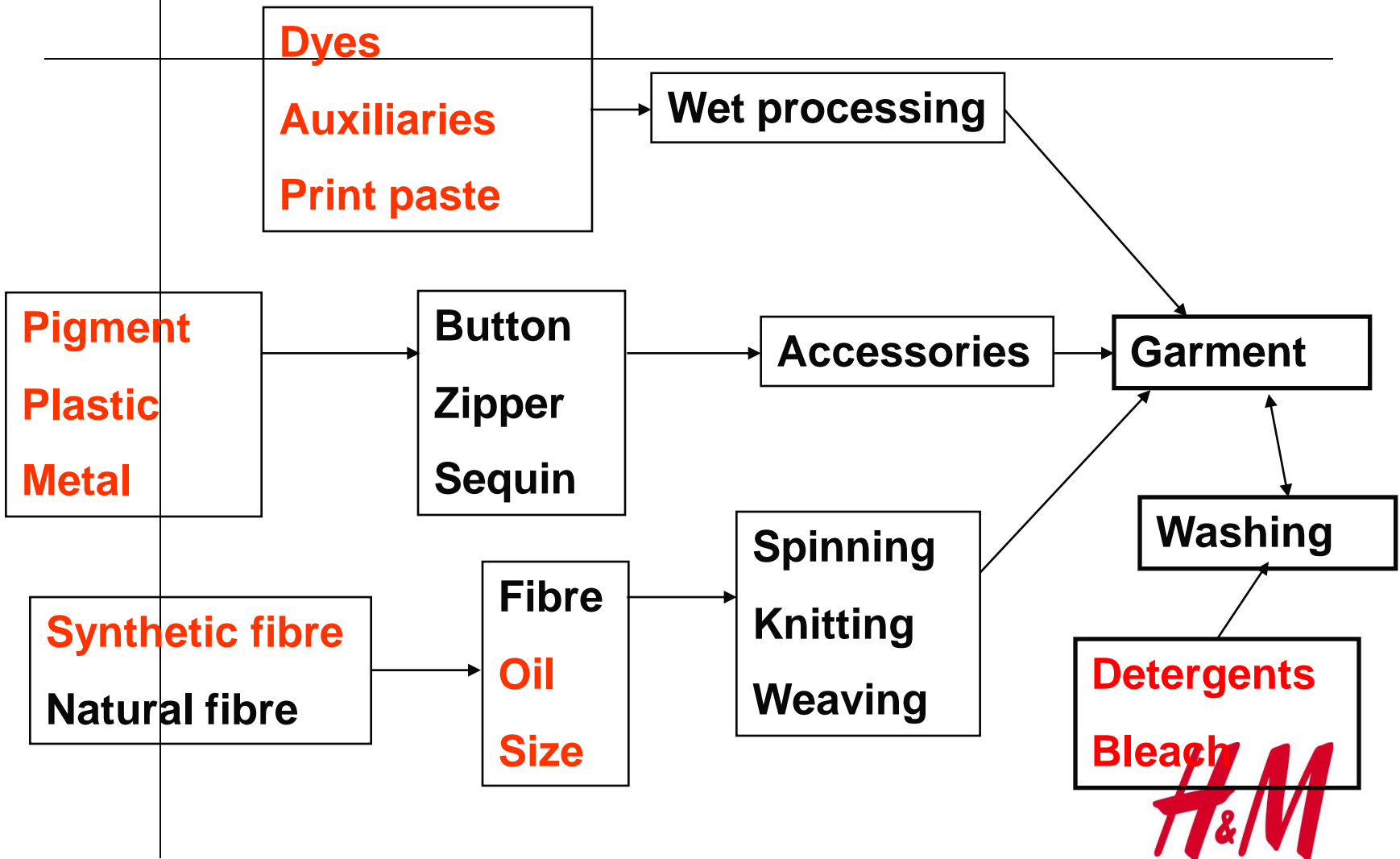
Information Obstacles



Information Obstacles



Information Obstacles



Recycled Material

■ Pre-consumer

- suppliers' wastage
- stopped/cancelled products

■ Post-consumer

- PET bottles (polyester)
- fish nets (polyamide/nylon)
- liquid food containers (polyethylene)
- used garments





Thank you!



Fotograf: Dan Martensen