

**SEAMS' Member Spotlight:  
Gerald Schwartz Inc.**

*Note: Each edition of our newsletter, SEAMS features one of our esteemed members. In this edition of SEAMS Member Spotlight, Gerald Schwartz, Inc. (GSI), Tucker, Ga., is featured. Gerald Schwartz, chairman emeritus and sales consultant, responds to questions submitted by Devin Steele.*

**Year founded:** 1982

**Primary specialties:** A stocking distributor for textile trim items. This includes webbing, plastic and metal hardware, hook and loop, elastic, woven and knit, elastic cord, paracord, zippers, thread and Austri Alpin hardware.

**Location:** A warehouse in Tucker Ga.

**Markets served:** Primarily military, Homeland Security and law enforcement, but also commercial markets in sports, medical, recreational, tents, drapery, along with any application that needs its products

**Company's differentiators?**

"We specialize in providing an inventory of products available for immediate shipment. We pride ourselves in offering quality, consistent products, easy-to-work-with suppliers and reliable service."

**What else is special about the company:**

"GSI is willing to work with customers that need products that are not normal stock items. We will work with them, going the distance to make good and profitable situations for both parties."

**I understand your son Chuck is involved in the company as well and may be transitioning into the leadership role. Please speak to this.**

"Chuck joined the company in 1998, which immediately added overall value to the company. He provided extra leadership and ideas to help make the company grow. He was instrumental in setting up the distributorship for the Austri Alpin product line. Their products added a new dimension to the company and helped bring new customers to GSI. Chuck was the key to setting up and working with our international customers, that brought in new business. In 2011, Chuck and I worked out a contract for him purchasing the company. We've had tremendous growth with his dedication to details, and I continue to work with sales and purchasing. The number of customers sold continue to increase every year."

**How has your company adapted over the last five to 10 years to remain competitive?**

"We have moved two times in the last 10 years to larger spaces, allowing us to increase our overall inventory as well as add new items that has brought in new customers. We started to mold some of the plastic hardware we sell to provide a larger selection of colors offered. We mold in seven colors and stock them in our warehouse. We mold special plastic items for customers that need it."

**What are your thoughts on the made-in-America movement and do you have a strategy in place, stated or otherwise, to produce or source in this country?**

"The Made in America movement has been great in that it parallels the Berry Amendment requirements for selling to military manufacturers. We have seen more interest in Made in America for private commercial items and dealing with the military has allowed us to double duty our inventory for now multiple end users. It seems to be the new entrepreneurs and

small start-ups that are more willing to make their products in the USA. This is great for GSI as our companies' minimums are low and perfectly suited for the smaller companies while offering the larger companies the larger stocking programs. We also stock some imported items for our commercial customers to help them on cost."

**11) What are the biggest challenges and opportunities in bringing manufacturing back to the USA?**

"The main challenge seems to be the lack of people that are willing to sit behind a sewing machine or work in other jobs within a sewing facility. There are many manufacturers that we call on, wanting to expand their production but find a lack of trained personnel and or people wanting to work. These are good paying jobs in need of good service people."

**12) What is your business outlook for your company for the foreseeable future?**

"We continue to be optimistic for increased business as we sell the concept of service, inventory and industry knowledge."

**13) Please offer a comment on business conditions, your opinion on the health of the textile/sewn products industry markets you serve now and going forward and what things will make you successful in this environment?**

"Business conditions seem to be good at this time. There are some markets that might be a little soft but overall we find the health of the industry going well. There are new people getting into the industry with interesting new ideas and products. I was at a CTD meeting in Boone, N.C., and was amazed at the number of people that plan to open their own cut-and-sew operation. Companies in business today are sewing many different items and GSI feels that to service them best, we need to offer them our stocking capabilities all while delivering to them, in the most timely manner, the quantities they need with the quality we provide."

**14) How long have you been a member of SEAMS and please speak to the value it brings?**

GSI has been a SEAMS member for close to 30 years, with my having served as president for three of those years. The value of SEAMS is the opportunity to NETWORK with other companies and people in our industry. We are all working for the same objective: Keep Sewing Alive in America. SEAMS is a place to ask questions and get answers and to learn about new companies in the industry.