



THE ASSOCIATION & VOICE OF THE US SEWN PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

## MILLENNIAL CORNER:

**Finding a home in the textile industry possible for the younger generation, too.**

*Editor's note: Here is our latest installment of our Millennial Corner feature. This blog gives the younger generation – who in the near future will serve in leadership positions and guide the direction of the association – a larger voice and platform NOW and will help them engage more the entire SEAMS' membership while busting stereotypes.*

**By Brittany Beam**  
**Sales Representative**  
**Carolina Cotton Works**

Hi everyone! My name is Brittany Beam and I am 29 years young. I grew up in a small town called Blacksburg, located in the upstate of South Carolina. Between the ages of 18 and 27, I lived in six different states from Virginia to Nevada.

At 18, I wanted to get away from the small town life while at the same time staying semi-close to family. In 2009, I decided to attend the College of Charleston – a college that was near the beach and just far enough away where I could visit my family on the weekends but didn't have to worry about them bothering me incessantly. There, I studied biochemistry, which soon changed to accounting. I was always indecisive growing up about my future career. I had no clue what I wanted to do, but I knew I was a leader, that I had a passion for helping people, and I could make friends with just about anyone.

After a year and a half at the College of Charleston, I moved to Virginia Beach and transferred to Old Dominion University. I ended up leaving college after four and a half years of classes and switching majors three times. To make a long story short, after my college days, I became a server in Miami, Fla., and worked my way up to bartender and ultimately, part-time manager. I received my personal training certification after moving to Las Vegas and became a personal trainer while still bartending.

At 27, I decided it was time to move back home. My mother had just opened up her own business and it seemed she was in need of my help. I loved packing up my belongings and being able to move anywhere! I am currently enrolled in college again online to finish my Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance. I have already completed my first term and will be graduating August 2021.

Now after two years of being back home, I have been working at Carolina Cotton Works (CCW). CCW is a family-owned textile company located in Gaffney, SC, which specializes in the dyeing and finishing of fabric. We've been in business since 1995, so just over 25 years! I

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started out as an accounting clerk and did that for three months. I then transitioned to become a customer service representative, and now I am a sales representative for CCW.

In this ever-changing market, the owners have adapted and transitioned throughout the years; from bleaching cotton to jet dyeing different types of fibers and fabrics. I was blessed to grow up around the CCW family because my mother was their accountant for 20 years. Even though I knew where my mother worked, I didn't know anything about textiles and how much I would grow to love the industry! I am happy to say that I have found a place where I can utilize my passion for learning and establishing relationships with many different customers from so many different business sectors.

As a Millennial, I can appreciate the need for sustainability, especially in the textile world. With the market being ever-changing, the need to grow and adapt is imperative. Millennials are always looking for the next innovative idea that is going to help change the world. Working in the textile industry, there is a lot of wisdom and knowledge from the older generations that we, as Millennials, and even the future generations, can stand to gain.

Multi-generational differences can be challenging, but we must be open to listening to and learning from those that came before us. We also should strive to gain the respect from others that are a part of different generations.

Not only are Millennials innovative, we are also able to adapt rather easily to our environment and the multi-generational differences that they may encounter. Personally, in establishing business relationships with the older generation, I feel that I, too, have been able to easily adapt.

Maintaining an open mind is critical in textiles. In 2019, I was asked to join the SEAMS Millennial panel during its Networking Conference with a few other Millennials, where we were asked questions and expressed our opinions about what we have had to overcome. This was such an eye-opening panel that helped not only Millennials get their ideas and opinions out, but to also help the other generations ask questions and understand who we are.

Being able to have these conversations out loud with other textile professionals really assisted in overcoming the unspoken barriers oftentimes found in the textile workplace.

We all should continue these cross-generational discussions, for all of our betterment.

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